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## 二刻拍案惊奇

AMAZING TALES

Second Series

II



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Chinese-English

# 二刻拍案惊奇

## Amazing Tales

### Second Series

#### II



凌濛初 著

李子亮 译

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## 目 录

- 卷之十 510  
赵五虎合计挑家衅 莫大郎立地散神奸
- 卷十一 550  
满少卿饥附饱颺 焦文姬生仇死报
- 卷十二 602  
硬勘案大儒争闲气 甘受刑侠女著芳名
- 卷十三 638  
鹿胎庵客人作寺主 剡溪里旧鬼借新尸
- 卷十四 680  
赵县君乔送黄柑 吴宣教干偿白镪
- 卷十五 740  
韩侍郎婢作夫人 顾提控掾居郎署
- 卷十六 802  
迟取券毛烈赖原钱 失还魂牙僧索剩命



## CONTENTS

- Tale 10* 511  
Five Tigers Zhao Cunningly Plot a  
Family Dispute  
Big Brother Mo Wisely Shatters a  
Sinister Scheme
- Tale 11* 551  
Lord Man Forsakes His Benefactor Spouse  
Jiao Wenji Takes Revenge after Death
- Tale 12* 603  
Out of Anger Over Trifles a Renowned Scholar  
Metes Out Reckless Punishment  
Ready to Accept a Heavy Penalty a Chivalrous  
Singsong Girl Leaves a Good Name
- Tale 13* 639  
Incidentally a Guest Acts as the Host in Doe  
Fetus Temple  
The Spirit of a Deceased Finds Reincarnation  
in a New Corpse in Shanxili Village
- Tale 14* 681  
Lady Zhao Feigns Respectability and Offers  
Mandarin Oranges  
Civil Official Wu Is Taken in by Tricks and  
Pays with Silver
- Tale 15* 741  
Deputy Director Han's Concubine Becomes a  
Madame with an Honorary Title  
Chief Commissioner Gu Is Promoted to the  
Post of a General Director of the  
Department of Rites
- Tale 16* 803  
Deferring the Return of a Pawn Ticket Mao  
Lie Disavows Having Received the Money  
Losing the Chance of Reviving after Death Monk  
Gao Extorts the Life of His Remaining Years



卷十七

844

同窗友认假作真 女秀才移花接木

卷十八

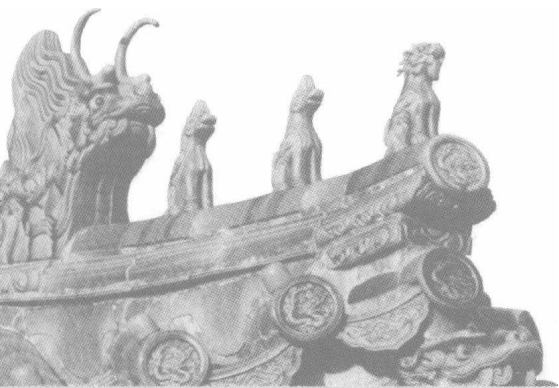
918

甄监生浪吞秘药 春花婢误泄风情

卷十九

962

田舍翁时时经理 牧童儿夜夜尊荣



<i>Tale 17</i>	845
Two Classmates Mistakenly Pass on the Girl in a Man's Makeup as a Man	
A Distinguished Woman Scholar in a Man's Makeup Grafts One Twig on Another	
<i>Tale 18</i>	919
Academician Zhen Recklessly Takes the Taoist's Medicine	
Servant Girl Chunhua Divulges the Whole Show by Mistake	
<i>Tale 19</i>	963
An Old Farmer Constantly Keeps Himself Busy with His Farm Work	
A Shepherd Boy Enjoys Dignity and Prestige Every Night	
<i>Notes</i>	1005



## 卷之十

赵五虎合计挑家衅 莫大郎立地散神奸

诗曰：

黑蟒口中舌，黄蜂尾上针。

两般犹未毒，最毒妇人心。

话说妇人家妒忌，乃是七出之条内一条，极是不好的事。却这个毛病，像是天生成的一般，再改不来的。

宋绍兴年间，有一个官人乃是台州司法，姓叶名荐。有妻方氏，天生残妒，犹如虎狼。手下养娘妇女们，箠楚挺杖，乃是常刑。还有灼铁烧肉，将锥搠腮。性急起来，一口咬住不放，定要咬下一块肉来；狠极之时，连血带生吃了，常有致死了的。妇女里头，若是模样略似人的，就要疑心司法喜他，一发受苦不胜了。司法那里还好解劝得的？虽是心里好生不然，却不能制得他，没奈他何。所以中年无子，再不敢萌娶妾之念。后来司法年已六旬，那方氏他也五十六七岁差不多了。司法一日悬





## *Tale 10*

### **Five Tigers Zhao Cunningly Plot a Family Dispute Big Brother Mo Wisely Shatters a Sinister Scheme**

A poem reads thus:

Venomous as are the tongues of pythons and the tails of wasps,  
They are not so vicious as a woman's heart.

In feudal China, it was justifiable for a husband to divorce his wife and send her home if she committed one of the seven offences. Woman's jealousy, which is really detestable, is one of the seven offences. In fact, this defect in women seems to be innate and can never be discarded.

During the Shaoxing reign (1131-1163) of the Song Dynasty, there lived an official named Ye Jian, a judge in Taizhou Prefecture. He had a wife, née Fang, who was wicked and jealous by nature like tigers and wolves. It was common practice for her to flog her female attendants with sticks. Sometimes she even scorched their flesh with burned irons or screwed their cheeks with awls. Once she was irritated, she would bite them until she took a piece of flesh. At times when she was desperate, she would swallow down the piece of flesh raw. Some attendants even lost their lives. When seeing good-looking women among the servants, she would suspect that the judge was attracted to them, and the women with good looks would suffer from her endless torment. The judge was so timid and incompetent that he could do nothing to stop her, though he hated her. As it turned out, he had not had a son at middle age and didn't dare have the intention of taking a concubine. With the elapse of time, the judge reached the age of sixty and his wife around fifty-six or fifty-seven.

One day the judge said to his wife pathetically, "Now I'm getting advanced in years. How could I be given to fun and women? I'm afraid I will feel lonely in my remaining years without a son. I was considering of taking a servant-girl as my concubine and have a son with her to carry on



求方氏道：“我年已衰迈，岂还有取乐好色之意？但老而无子，后边光景难堪。欲要寻一个丫头，与他养个儿子，为接续祖宗之计，须得你周全这事方好。”方氏大怒道：“你就匡我养不出，生起外心来了！我看自家晚间尽有精神，只怕还养得出来，你不要胡想！”司法道：“男子过了六十，还有生子之事。几曾见女人六十将到了，生得儿子出的？”方氏道：“你见我今年做六十齐头了么？”司法道：“就是六十，也差不多两年了。”方氏道：“再与你约三年，那时无子，凭你寻一个淫妇，快活死了罢了！”司法唯唯从命，不敢再说。

过了三年，只得又将前说提起。方氏已许出了口，不好悔得，只得装聋做哑，听他娶了一个妾。娶便娶了，只是心里不伏气，寻非厮闹，没有一会清净的。忽然一日对司法道：“我眼中看你们做把戏，实是使不得。我年纪老了，也不耐烦在此争嚷。你那里另拣一间房，独自关得断的，与我住了，我在里边修行，只叫人供给我饮食，我再不出来了，凭你们过日子罢。”司法听得，不胜之喜，道：“惭愧！若得如此，天从人愿！”遂于屋后另筑一小院，收拾静室一间，送方氏进去住了。家人们早晚问安，递送饮食，多时没有说话。

司法暗暗喜欢道：“似此清净，还像人家，不道他晚年心性这样改得好了。他既然从善，我们一发要还他礼体。”对那妾道：“你久不去相见了，也该自去问候一番。”妾依主命，独自走到屋后去了，直到天晚不见出来。司法道：“难道两个说



the family name. I would appreciate it if you could nod your approval." His wife rebuked angrily, "You think I'm sterile and you've harbored unfaithful intentions. I know I'm very energetic at night and I'm certain I can give birth to a son. Forget your fancies!" The judge said, "A man can have a son when he is in his sixties. Who has ever seen a woman of sixty who can give birth?" His wife retorted angrily, "Am I sixty years old?" The judge said, "Almost two years to go if not exactly sixty." His wife said, "You live with me for another three years. If I still cannot have a son with you, you're free to find a slut and have fun!" The judge, an absolutely obedient man, said no more.

Three years passed and the judge and his wife again brought up this subject. The wife felt herself in no position to go against her word, for she had promised him to allow him to take a concubine. Consequently, she played deaf and dumb as the judge took the concubine, though it was not out of her hearty consent. In spite of this, she kept on seeking quarrels and stirring up trouble with her husband. All of a sudden, she said to her husband, "I feel I can no longer put up with you two. I'm getting old and I'm tired of quarrelling with you. Please give me a room in a quiet place so that I can practice Buddhism. I only need you to provide me with food and drinks. I will not go out of it, and you may enjoy your life as you please." On hearing this, the judge was gladdened. He said, "If you mean what you said, Heaven has granted my wishes." Then the judge had a small house built in the backyard and got ready a room for her to live in. Soon his wife moved in. Members of the family paid their respects for her every morning and evening and delivered food and drinks to her everyday. Some time passed and no one had ever heard her talk.

The judge felt a surge of inmost joy secretly and said to himself, "Now we can live in peace. I never expected she could change her temper in her later years. Since she's returned to good, we should treat her nicely in return." Turning to his concubine, he said, "It's been a long time since you last saw her. You'd better go and pay her a visit." At the judge's order, the concubine, all by herself, entered the wife's house in the backyard. She didn't come back, though it was very late. The judge wondered, "Could it be possibly they're having an agreeable conversation



得投机，只管留在那里了？”未免心里牵挂，自己悄悄步到那里去看。走到了房前，只见门窗关得铁桶相似，两个人多不见。司法把门推推，推不开来；用手敲着两下，里头虽有些声响，却不开出来。司法道：“奇怪了！”回到前边，叫了两个粗使的家人，同到后边去，狠把门乱推乱踢。那门程脱了，门早已跌倒一边。一拥进去，只见方氏扑在地下。说时迟，那时快，见了人来，腾身一跳，望门外乱窜出来。众人急回头看去，却是一只大虫！吃了一惊。再看地上，血肉狼籍，一个人浑身心腹多被吃尽，只剩得一头两足。认那头时，正是妾的头。司法又苦又惊，道：“不信有这样怪事！”连忙去赶那虎，已出屋后跳去，不知那里去了。又去唤集众人点着火把，望屋后山上到处找寻，并无踪迹。

这个事在绍兴十九年。此时有人议论：“或者连方氏也是虎吃了的，未必这虎就是他！”却有一件，虎只会吃人，那里又会得关门闭户来？分明是方氏平日心肠狠毒，元自与虎狼气类相同。今在屋后独居多时，忿戾满腹，一见妾来，怒气勃发，遂变出形相来，恣意咀啖，伤其性命，方掉下去了。此皆毒心所化也。所以说道妇人家有天生成妒忌的，即此便是榜样。

小子为何说这一段希奇事？只因有个人家，也为内眷有些妒忌，做出一场没了落事，几乎中了人的机谋，哄弄出拆家荡产的事来。若不亏得一个人有主意，处置得风恬浪静，不知炒



and she's forgotten to return?" Feeling a bit worried, he went there stealthily to have look. To his surprise, he found the door and the windows were tightly closed and both his wife and concubine were not there around the place. He pushed at the door, but he could not open it. Then he knocked at the door a couple of times. There was some noise inside, but no one came to answer it.

He muttered, "So strange!" He returned home and asked a couple of male servants who did manual labor to go there with him. After a series of pushing and kicking, the door bolt slid and the door fell down. Dashing into the room, they saw the judge's wife lying prostrate on the ground. Just at this instant, the wife jumped out of the room like an arrow at the sight of these people. The judge and the servants turned around and found it was a tiger. All were startled with awe and terror. It was a mess of blood and flesh on the floor. The tiger had eaten up a person except the head and two feet. The head was none other than the concubine's. With utter pain and surprise, judge said, "How strange!" Collecting himself together, he hurried off to chase the tiger. But it had already gone to the mountains behind the house. He gathered a group of men and, carrying torches, went into the mountains to hunt for the tiger, but to no avail.

This event took place in the nineteenth year of the Shaoxing reign. Some people then commented, "The judge's wife might have been eaten up by the tiger. She was not necessarily the tiger." But there is one thing I don't understand. It's true tigers eat people, but how can they bolt the doors? Obviously, the judge's wife's viciousness on ordinary days resembled that of tigers. Having stayed alone for such a long time in the room, she transformed herself into a tiger due to her pent-up anger, and then she swallowed the concubine. This is an instance of women's innate viciousness and jealousy.

Do you have any idea why I tell you such a strange story? Once there was also such a wicked and jealous wife who did something inhuman. She was almost fooled by others' manoeuvrers and nearly lost all the family's wealth and property. However, there was also an intelligent man in this family, who later handled the matter appropriately. Otherwise, had it not been for this intelligent man's handling of this matter, I can't imagine

到几年上才是了结。有诗为证：

些小言词莫若休，不须经县与经州。

衙头府底赔杯酒，赢得猫儿卖了牛。

这首诗，乃是宋贤范舛所作，劝人休要争讼的话。大凡人家些小事情，自家收拾了，便不见得费甚气力；若是一个不伏气，到了官时，衙门中没一个肯不要赚钱的。不要说后边输了，就是赢得来，算一算费用过的财物，已自合不来了。何况人家弟兄们争着祖、父的遗产，不肯相让一些，情愿大块的东西作成别个得去了？又有不肖官府，见是上千上万的状态子，动了火，起心设法，这边送将来，便道：“我断多少与你。”那边送将来，便道：“我替你断绝后患。”只管理着根脚漏洞，等人家争个没休歇，荡尽方休。又有不肖缙绅，见人家是争财的事，容易相帮。东边来说，也叫他“送些与我，我便左袒”；西边来说，也叫他“送些与我，我便右袒”。两家不歇手，落得他自饱满了。世间自有这些人在那里，官司岂是容易打的？自古



when the trouble in this family would have come to an end. Fan Yan, a Song Dynasty poet once wrote a poem to admonish people against any lawsuits. It reads thus:

Never take issue with each other over trifles.  
Never bring disputes over trifles to the court.  
Otherwise you'll be penny wise and pound foolish.  
And you will certainly pay for it.

Generally speaking, it will not cause much trouble if some insignificant disputes in a family are settled on their own. If anyone refuses to make any concessions and brings it to court, the whole family would become victims of the court officials, because all court officials are greedy. Taking into account the cost of engaging in a lawsuit, it's not worthwhile to go to law even if one is on the winning side, let alone he might also probably be the loser. However, the fact is that most brothers would rather fight against each other and give a large proportion of their family wealth to somebody else than equally share the legacy left by their forefathers. Moreover, corrupt court officials seeing that the indictment concerned thousands of taels of silver, would always get worked up by avarice and use all means they could think up to take some briberies. When one party came to him for help with the indictment, the corrupt court official would say, "I'll settle your lawsuit by granting you such and such an amount." When the other party came to him for help with the indictment, the corrupt court official would say, "I'll help you remove causes of future trouble." Corrupt court officials would try everything possible to cover up the loopholes and the truth of the matter until the two parties lost their family fortune in its entirety in their endless quarrels. Also unworthy gentry with official titles, seeing that it was about a fight for family fortune would always be ready to pop up to offer help. When one party came to him for help, the unworthy gentry would say, "I'll take sides with you if you give me some money." When the other party came to him for help, the unworthy gentry would say, "I'll be partial to you if you give me some money. As neither party would make any concessions, the unworthy gentry got quite a lot of gains. Indeed, there is such kind of people in our world, but lawsuits will never be settled easily.



说，“鹬蚌相持，渔人得利”，到收场想一想，总是被没相干的人得了去。何不自己骨肉，便吃了些亏，钱财还只在自家门里头好？今日小子说这有主意的人，便真是见识高强的。

这件事也出在宋绍兴年间。吴兴地方有个老翁，姓莫，家资巨万，一妻二子，已有三孙。那莫翁富家性子，本好淫欲。少年时节，便有娶妾买婢好些风流快活的念头，又不愁家事做不起，随他讨着几房，粉黛三千、金钗十二也不难处的。只有一件不凑趣处，那莫老姥却是十分利害。他平生有三恨：

一恨天地，二恨爹娘，三恨杂色匠作。

你道他为甚么恨这几件？他道自己身上生了此物，别家女人就不该生了，为甚天地没主意，不惟我不为希罕，又要防着男人。二来爹娘嫁得他迟了些个，不曾眼见老儿破体，到底有些放心不下处。更有一件，女人溺尿总在马子上罢了，偏有那些烧窑匠、铜锡匠弄成溺器与男人撒溺，将阳物放进放出形状看不得。似此心性，你道莫翁少年之时，容得他些松宽门路么？后来生子生孙，一发把这些闲花野草的事体，回个尽绝了。

此时莫翁年已望七，莫妈房里有個丫鬟，名唤双荷，十八岁了。莫翁晚间睡时，叫他擦背捶腰。莫妈因是老儿年纪已高，





As an old saying goes, “When the snipe and the clam grapple, it’s the fisherman who stands to benefit.” Why did it always turn out that it was always the one who had nothing to do with it got all the gains? Brothers should show forbearance to each other and keep their family fortune to themselves, though one might suffer some minor losses. The intelligence of the man in my following story is indeed extraordinary.

\* \* \*

During the Shaoxing reign (1131-1163) of the Song Dynasty, there lived a wealthy old man by the name of Mo in Wuxing. He and his wife had two sons and three grandsons. Brought up as the prodigal son of rich stock, Mo was naturally lascivious. Since his youth he had been obsessed with the idea of obtaining concubines and buying girl servants for himself. Due to his affluent family background, his adulthood provided him with the financial ability to afford many concubines and to maintain a sizable corps of girls. His wild wishes went uncurbed except for the fact that he had an overbearing and shrewish wife.

Mo’s wife hated three things most. First, she hated nature, secondly she hated her parents and lastly she hated all kinds of artisans. Do you know why? In her mind, she thought since she’d already got a private part, other women should not have got theirs. Why was nature so muddle-headed, making me not the only woman with that thing? And for this reason I had to keep an eye on my husband. Secondly, she hated her parents because they married her off so late that she missed the chance to be her husband’s first love. And this kept her in suspense greatly. Lastly, all women had to sit on chamber pots to pee, while artisans made night pots for men to pass water, allowing men’s private parts to go in and out of the pots. She hated the shape of the night pots for men. Do you think she could go easy on her husband’s lustfulness when he was young? Now as Mo grew old and raised his sons and grandsons, he simply gave up carrying on love affairs.

Now Mo was close to seventy years old. His wife had an eighteen-year-old servant girl named Shuang He. Mo asked Shuang He, the servant girl, to give him a massage before bedtime every night. His wife cared little about her husband’s request, knowing that her husband was old.



无心防他这件事。况且平时奉法惟谨，放心得下惯了。谁知莫翁年纪虽高，欲心未已，乘他身边伏侍时节，与他捏手捏脚，私下肉麻。那双荷一来见是家主，不敢则声；二来正值芳年，情窦已开，也满意思量那事，尽吃得这一杯酒，背地里两个做了一手。有个歌儿，单嘲着老人家偷情的事：

老人家再不把淫心改变，见了后生家只管歪缠。怎知道行事多不便：搵腮是皱面颊，做嘴是白须髯，正到那要紧关头也，却又软软软软软。

说那莫翁与双荷偷了几次，家里人渐渐有些晓得了。因为莫妈心性利害，只没人敢对他说。连儿子媳妇为着老人家面上，大家替他隐瞒。谁知有这样不作美的冤家勾当，那妮子日逐觉得眉粗眼慢，乳胀腹高，呕吐不停。起初还只道是病，看看肚里动将起来，晓得是有胎了。心里着忙，对莫翁道：“多是你老没志气，做了这件事，而今这样不尴尬起来。妈妈心性，若是知道了，肯干休的？我这条性命眼见得要葬送了！”不住的眼泪落下来。莫翁只得宽慰他道：“且莫着急，我自有个处置在那里。”莫翁心下自想道：“当真不是耍处！我一时高兴，与他弄一个在肚里了。妈妈知道，必然打骂不容，枉害了他性命。纵或未必致死，我老人家子孙满前，却做了这没正经事，炒得家里不静，也好羞人！不如趁这妮子未生之前，寻个人家



Shuang He, who used to serve him, was compliant and virtuous. But old as Mo was, his sexual desires were still active. He seized this opportunity to satisfy his lust by fondling Shuang He as she rubbed his back and limbs. Accepting these sexual advances with no complaints and recognizing her subordinate status, Shuang He even enjoyed the affair. As their two states of mind chimed perfectly, they made love. The following is a song that describes such old guys carrying on such secret love affairs:

The old man is as lustful as in his youthful days;  
He pesters any young lady who comes up his way.  
But, alas, lovemaking gives him away.  
He rubs his wrinkled face against chubby cheeks  
And presses his white beard on ruby lips.  
The worst of all, when combat draws near,  
He is too weak to raise his spear.

After a few more sessions of lovemaking, their intimate relations gradually became known to most of the family members. But nobody in the family mentioned a word of their affair in front of the Mrs. Mo. Even the sons and sisters-in-law hid the disgrace for the old master. However, things evolved against their wishes. The girl servant gradually grew thick eyebrows, swollen breasts and a swelling belly. She also kept throwing up. At first she thought she was sick. But after something started wriggling inside her, she knew she was expecting a baby. Greatly worried, she said to the old master, "For shame! You have made me pregnant. Your wife is so jealous. I doubt she'll let me go easily once she knows about it. I'm going to meet my doom!" So saying, tears streamed down her cheeks.

The old master tried to calm her down. "Don't worry," he said. "I know how to deal with her." But he thought to himself, "This is by no means a joking matter. I enjoyed myself at that time with no thought of the consequence of making her pregnant. If my wife learns about it, she'll definitely abuse the girl and even kill her. But even if she survives, I'll be in disgrace. Being oldest of the family with grandsons, I have committed this shameful act and it will turn the family upside down. I'd better marry this girl off now and let her give birth to a baby in somebody else's home.



嫁了出去，等他带胎去别人家生育了，糊涂得过再处。”算计已定，私下对双荷说了。双荷也是巴不得这样的，既脱了狠家主婆，又别配个后生男子，有何不妙？方才把一天愁消释了好些。

果然莫翁在莫妈面前，寻个头脑，故意说丫头不好，要卖他出去。莫妈也见双荷年长，光景妖娆，也有些不要他在身边了。遂听了媒人之言，嫁出与在城花楼桥卖汤粉的朱三。朱三年纪三十以内，人物尽也济楚。双荷嫁了他，算做得郎才女貌，一对好夫妻。莫翁只要着落得停当，不争财物。朱三讨得容易，颇自得意，只不知讨了个带胎的老婆来。

渐渐朱三识得出了，双荷实对他说道：“我此胎实系主翁所有，怕妈妈知觉，故此把我嫁了出来，许下我看管终身的。你不可说甚么打破了机关，落得时常要他周济些东西，我一心与你做人家便了。”朱三是个人行中人，只要些小便宜，那里还管青黄皂白？况且晓得人家出来的丫头，那有真正女身？又是新娶情热，自然含糊忍住了。

娶过来五个多月，养下一个小厮来，双荷密地叫人通与莫翁知道。莫翁虽是没奈何嫁了出来，心里还是割不断的。见说养了儿子，道是自己骨肉，瞒着家里，悄悄将两挑米、几贯钱先送去与他食用。以后首饰衣服与那小娃子穿着的，没一件不



That will help me for the time being.” Having made up his mind, he talked to Shuang He about this plan of his. Shuang He readily agreed, hoping that she would leave the bitchy mistress and live with a young husband. What else could she hope for? She felt a little easier.

Mo took the opportunity to say something to his wife against Shuang He, suggesting that they sell her to a certain man. Mrs. Mo had thought about dispensing with the girl, too, feeling uncomfortable with the girl’s attractive figure and mature posture. On the basis of a matchmaker’s advice, Shuang He was married to Zhu San, a man in his late twenties, who was honest and handsome. He sold starch noodles by Flower Chamber Bridge in the town. A capable husband and a good-looking wife, they were a well-matched couple. Intending to get the girl out of sight, Mo didn’t haggle over the betrothal gifts from the bridegroom, while Zhu San was blissful, taking this marriage as a good deal, although he was ignorant of his bride’s pregnancy.

However, things began revealing themselves slowly. Shuang He had to tell her husband, “I’ve gotten this baby by my old master. To hide our affair from the master’s wife, he married me to you and promised to take care of the child throughout its life. Please be sure not to mention a word about it to others so as not to incur trouble. We may depend upon him in future for financial assistance. Trust me — I’ll behave and live with you for the rest of my life.” Being a businessman, Zhu San only hankered after petty profits and cared nothing else. Besides, he was familiar with the fact that almost no young lady who had worked as a servant girl for a wealthy family came out of it still a virgin. Furthermore, the initial joy marriage offered him so overwhelmed him that he swallowed this humiliation and dropped the matter.

Five months after their marriage, a baby boy was born. Shuang He sent a secret message to Master Mo about it. Since the girl had been married off under pressure, the old master was very much concerned about her. Knowing the baby boy was his son, he sent two shoulder-poles of rice and several strings of copper coins in secret to Shuang He’s place as a token of his financial support for the boy. Later, a steady flow of jewelry and clothing for the mother and son went to the starch-noodle seller’s

支持了去。朱三反靠着老婆福荫，落得吃自来食。那儿子渐渐大起来，莫翁虽是暗地周给他，用度无缺，却到底瞒着生人眼，不好认帐。随那儿子自姓了朱，跟着朱三也到市上帮做生意。此时已有十来岁，街坊上人点点搐搐，多晓得是莫翁之种。连莫翁家里儿子媳妇们，也多晓得老儿有这外养之子，私下在那里盘缠他家的，却大家装聋做哑，只做不知。莫姥心里也有些疑心，不在眼面前了，又没人敢提起，也只索罢了。

忽一日，莫翁一病告殁。家里成服停丧，自不必说。在城有一伙破落户，管闲事吃闲饭的没头鬼光棍，一个叫做铁里虫宋礼，一个叫做钻仓鼠张朝，一个叫做吊睛虎牛三，一个叫得洒墨判官周丙，一个叫得白日鬼王瘪子，还有几个不出名提草鞋的小伙，共是十来个。专一捕风捉影，寻人家闲头脑，挑弄是非，扛帮生事。那五个为头，在黑虎玄坛赵元帅庙里歃血为盟，结为兄弟。尽多姓了赵，总叫做“赵家五虎”。不拘那里有事，一个人打听将来，便合着伴去做，得利平分。平日晓得卖粉朱三家儿子是莫家骨血，这日见说莫翁死了，众兄弟商量道：





family. Owing to his wife, Zhu San became comfortably off. As the boy grew up, Mo secretly kept providing him with all living necessities. But the old man had to be content with keeping his blood ties with the boy from the public.

The boy adopted Zhu San's family name and, later, at the age of about ten, became an assistant in his business in the market. However, gossip never failed to circulate and his origin was something known to the neighbors. Even Master Mo's sons and daughters-in-law got the general idea that the old master was raising a bastard outside of his house. But they never broached the subject, acting as if nothing had happened. Meanwhile Mrs. Mo also became suspicious about it. But Shuang He and her boy were not around the family and no one ventured to talk to her about the issue. So she had to let the matter take its own course.

One day, Master Mo suddenly died of a disease. The whole family became busy with funeral arrangements.

There was a group of ruffians living in the town. They were good-for-nothings who set their minds to prying into others' business and living on gains obtained by taking advantage of others. Among them were Song Li, nicknamed Iron-piercing Bug, Zhang Chao, nicknamed Hamster, Niu San, nicknamed Oblique-eyed Tiger, Zhou Bing, nicknamed Learned Judge in Hell, Tramp Wang, nicknamed Night-owl, and a few others without real names, totaling about a dozen. All day long they did nothing but snoop into other people's affairs and inquire about other people's privacy, stirring up trouble and teaming up for their personal gains. The five people had gone to the Temple of Marshal Zhao, where they swore an oath of alliance by smearing the blood of a sacrifice. Most of them took Zhao as their family name to show their loyalty. So they called themselves the Five Tigers of the Zhao Family. They went wherever there was a sign of making a profit, according to clues provided by any one of them. They worked in collaboration and shared the gains.

The fact that master Mo was the real father of the son of the starch-noodle seller Zhu San was no news to these racketeers. Now, having learned that master Mo had died, they gathered in consultation. "Here's a big deal for us!" one of them remarked. "That old man left behind him a



“一桩好买卖到了！莫家乃巨富之家，老妈妈只生得二子，享用那二三十万不了。我们撞掇朱三家那话儿去告争，分得他一股，最少也有几万数，我们帮的也有小富贵了。就不然，只要起了官司，我们打点的打点，卖阵的卖阵，这边不着那边着，好歹也有几年缠帐了，也强似在家里嚼本。”大家拍手道：“造化！造化！”铁里虫道：“我们且去见那雌儿，看他主意怎么的，设法诱他上这条路便了。”多道：“有理！”一齐向朱三家里来。

朱三平日卖汤粉，这五虎日日在衙门前后走动，时常买他的点饥，是熟主顾家。朱三见了，拱手道：“列位光降，必有见谕。”那吊睛虎道：“请你娘子出来，我有一事报他。”朱三道：“何事？”白日鬼道：“他家莫老儿死了。”双荷在里面听得，哭将出来道：“我方才听得街上是这样说，还道未的。而今列位来的，一定是真了。”一头哭，一头对朱三说：“我与你失了这泰山的靠傍，今生再无好日了。”钻仓鼠便道：“怎说这话？如今正是你们的富贵到了。”五人齐声道：“我兄弟们特来送这一套横财与你们的。”朱三夫妻多惊疑道：“这怎么说？”铁里虫道：“你家儿子乃是莫老儿骨肉。而今他家里万万贯家财，田园屋宇，你儿子多该有分。何不到他家去要分他的？他若不肯分，拚与他吃场官司，料不倒断了你们些去。撞住打到底，苦你儿子不着，与他滴起血来，怕道不是真的？这一股稳





huge fortune. The mistress had only two sons to inherit that wealth of two-hundred thousand or three-hundred thousand strings of coins. Let's go to Zhu San and talk him into seizing a share of the legacy for his son, tens of thousands at least. We should get paid for our help and then we'll be a lot better off than we are now. If he is not successful in bargaining with the family, let him sue them and we'll try our best to help him. We can rest assured that we will come by some money eventually, a lot more than what we make by staying idle and doing nothing every day." Everybody around jumped with joy at the idea, all shouting, "Wonderful! Wonderful!" Iron-piercing Bug suggested, "Let's first go and see what that bitch of his thinks about it. We'll try to direct her into this business." The rest responded in chorus, "Exactly." They then left for Zhu San's place.

These five men used to be regular customers of Zhu San, often picking up some of starch noodles from his stall as they waited daily by the entrance to the local government office. Seeing the five of them making their way toward his stall, Zhu San greeted them with a hand-cupped salute, asking, "What can I do for you?" Oblique-eyed Tiger replied, "Please get your wife out here. I've got something to talk to her." Zhu San asked, "What is it?" Night-owl butted in, "Her ex-master died." Hearing this, Shuang He rushed out of the room and broke into tears. She said, "I overheard people talking about his death just a moment ago. I couldn't believe it. Now that you gentlemen are saying the same thing, I'm convinced." As she wept, she turned to her husband and said, "Our pivotal source of livelihood is gone. We're going to suffer."

Hamster, however, replied, "What are you talking about? It is the beginning of your prosperous life?" The rest all said in unison, "That's right. We brothers are bringing you a fortune today." Taken aback, the couple asked, "How?" Iron-piercing Bug then said, "Your son is a descendant of Mo. The old guy left a huge legacy, including a large block of real estate. Your son legally deserves a portion of it. Why not go there and claim your part. If they turn you down, take them to court. You may have to spend a certain sum, but just hang on. If your son still can't make it, ask the court to do a blood test to prove their relationship. They can't



稳是了。”朱三夫妻道：“事倒委实如此，我们也晓得。只是轻易起了个头，一时住不得手的。自古道贫莫与富斗，吃官司全得财来使费。我们怎么敌得他过？弄得后边不伶不俐，反为不美。况且我每这样人家，一日不做，一日没得吃的，那里来的人力，那里来的工夫去吃官司？”铁里虫道：“这个诚然也要虑到，打官司全靠使费与那人力两项。而今我和你们熟商量：要人力时，我们几个弟兄相帮你衙门做事尽勾了，只这使费难处，我们也说不得，小钱不去，大钱不来。五个弟兄，一人应出一百两，先将来下本钱，替你使用去。你写起一千两的借票来，我们收着，直等日后断过家业来到了手，你每照契还我。只近得你每一本一利，也不为多。此外谢我们的，凭你们另商量了。那时是白得来的东西，左右是不费之惠，料然决不怠慢了我们。”朱三夫妻道：“若得列位如此相帮，可知道好，只是打从那里做起？”铁里虫道：“你只依我们调度，包管停当。且把借票写起来为定。”朱三只得依着写了，押了个字，连儿子也要他画了一个，交与众人。众人道：“今日我每弟兄且去，一面收拾银钱停当了，明日再来计较行事。”朱三夫妻道：“全仗列位看顾。”

当下众人散了去，双荷对丈夫道：“这些人所言，不知如何，可做得来的么？”朱三道：“总是不要我费一个钱。看他



beat that!"

The couple replied, "Well, that's true and we understand. The problem is that once we get involved with the court, it will not be easy for us to wind up the matter. An old saying goes, 'It's sagacious for the poor to shun facing the rich in a conflict.' A lawsuit calls for a huge sum of money. How can we compete with the Mo family in this regard? Eventually we may go broke. That would be something we would hate to see. In addition, people like us depend on labor for a living. We can't stop working even for one day. How can we take energy and time out to do things like that?"

Iron-piecing Bug replied, "Yes, you're right. You need to think about that. Everybody will need money and manpower for a lawsuit. Let's make a deal. We brothers will do our best to work for you in dealing with the court. The lawsuit costs are a problem. But you have to venture a small amount of capital if you want to make a huge profit. So we five will each offer one hundred taels of silver for you to use. You just write us a receipt for the loan of one thousand taels of silver with a hundred percent interest. Later on, after you win the lawsuit and obtain the property, you'll simply return the loan to us with the payment of the interest, which is fairly reasonable. In terms of reward for our help, you two may decide on whatever you consider appropriate to give us. Since it'll be an unexpected windfall, I'm sure you will be quite generous about the matter by that time."

Zhu San and his wife agreed to the proposal, saying, "Certainly, we would appreciate it very much, gentlemen. But what we should do to begin with?" Iron-piercing Bug answered, "Don't worry about that. We'll take care of everything. Just write us a receipt for the loan and the matter is decided." Zhu San did as he was told. A loan receipt was written with his signature on it. His son was also required to sign it. The men then took the receipt, saying, "We're leaving now. We'll scrape the loan together today and be back tomorrow to get down to business." Seeing them off, the couple said, "We'll be counting on you, gentlemen."

Shuang He said to her husband, "I wonder whether they were serious about what they said. Can we act according to their plan?" Zhu San answered, "Well, it won't cost us a single coin. We'll just wait and see



们怎么主张，依得的只管依着做去，或者有些油水也不见得。用去是他们的，得来是我们的，有甚么不便宜处？”双荷道：“不该就定纸笔与他。”朱三道：“秤我们三个做肉卖，也不值上几两。他拿了我千贯的票子，若不夺得家事来，他好向那里讨？果然夺得来时，就与他些也不难了。况且不写得与他，他怎肯拿银子来应用？有这一纸安定他每的心，才肯尽力帮我。”双荷道：“为甚孩子也要他着个字？”朱三道：“夺得家事是孩子的，怎不叫他着字？这个到多不打紧，只看他们指拨怎么样做法便了。”

不说夫妻商量，且说五虎出了朱家的门，大家笑道：“这案子被我们说得动火了，只是扯下这样大谎，那里多少得些与他起个头？”铁里虫道：“当真我们有得己里钱先折去不成？只看我略施小计，不必用钱。”这四个道：“有何妙计？”铁里虫道：“我如今只要拿一匹粗麻布做件衰衣，与他家小厮穿了，叫他竟到莫家去做孝子。撩得莫家母子恼躁起来，吾每只一个钱白纸告他一状，这就是五百两本钱了。”四个拍手道：“妙！妙！事不宜迟，快去！快去！”

铁里虫果然去誊那了一匹麻布，到裁衣店剪开了，缝成了一件衰衣，手里拿着道：“本钱在此了。”一涌的望朱三家里来。朱三夫妻接着，道：“列位还是怎么主张？”铁里虫道：“叫你儿子出来，我教道他事体。”双荷对着孩子道：“这几位伯伯，



what they do. Just do what seems to be practical. Who can tell we're not going to benefit. But they'll pay for what's needed and we'll reap whatever gain this lawsuit brings. What else can we expect as a deal?" Shuang He said, "But I don't think we should have written them a loan receipt. "We're an impoverished family of three," Zhu San replied, "and all our property doesn't amount to anything. What could they do to us with that receipt of a loan, if we fail in the lawsuit? But if we obtain the property as expected, we won't mind giving them a certain sum as a reward. Besides, would they have lent us the money without a receipt? With something tangible in hand, they'll be assured and will go all out to work for us. Shuang He asked, "Why did they ask our young boy to sign on it, too?" Zhu San said, "Why not? The whole business is for the boy. It doesn't matter anyway. We'll just wait and see how they are going to work it out."

After the five men left the Zhus, they said to one another, laughing, "We've aroused their fantasies for riches! Now since we told such a lie, where can we go to gather that amount of money?" They had a discussion. "Do you think we meant what we said and will work for their gain at our expense?" Iron-piercing Bug replied, "No! It will just be a piece of cake for me to handle. Look! It will cost us nothing." The rest all said, "Tell us what's on your mind."

Iron-piercing Bug explained, "I only need a piece of coarse sack-cloth to make a suit of mourning apparel. Let that lad of theirs wear it and go to attend the funeral rites at Mo's home as a son of the dead master. That will certainly stir up a dispute between the mother and her sons. Then our only expense will be just a piece of paper on which we'll file the form for a lawsuit. That'll be our capital of the five hundred taels of silver." The other four cheered, "Marvelous! Please go and get it right now!" Iron-piercing Bug left. He managed to find a piece of coarse sack-cloth and took it to a tailor, who made a suit of mourning apparel. With this in hand, Iron-piercing Bug said, "Here's our capital." The five men then made their way to Zhu San's home.

Zhu San and his wife greeted them, asking, "What are you going to do?" Iron-piercing Bug said, "Bring your son to us. I've got something for him to do." Shuang He brought the boy out and said to him, "Here are



帮你去讨生身父母的家业，你只依着做去便了。”那儿子也是个乖的，说道：“既是我生身的父亲，那家业我应得有的。只是我娃子家，教我怎的去讨才是？”铁里虫道：“不要你开口讨，只着了这件孝服，我们引你到那里。你进门去，到了孝堂里面看见灵帋，你便放声大哭，哭罢就拜，拜了四拜，往外就走。有人问你说话，你只不要回他，一径到外边来，我们多在左侧茶坊里等你便了。这个却不难的。”朱三道：“只如此有何益？”众人道：“这是先送个信与他家。你儿子出了门，第二日就去进状。我们就去替你使用打点。你儿子又小，官府见了，只有可怜，决不难为他的。况又实实是骨血，脚踏硬地，这家私到底是稳取的了。只管依着我们做去！”朱三对妻子道：“列位说来的话，多是有着数的，只教儿子依着行事，决然停当。”那儿子道：“只如方才这样说的话，我多依得。我心里也要去见见亲生父亲的影像，哭他一场，拜他一拜。”双荷掩泪道：“乖儿子，正是如此。”朱三道：“我倒不好随去得。既有列位同行，必然不差，把儿子交付与列位了，我自到市上做生意去，晚来讨消息罢。”当下朱三自出了门。

五虎一同了朱家儿子，径往莫家来。将到门首，多走进一个茶坊里面坐下，吃个泡茶。叮嘱朱家儿子道：“那门上有丧牌孝帘的，就是你老儿家里。你进去，依着我言语行事。”遂把衰衣与他穿着停当了。那孩子依了说话，不知其么好歹，大



a few uncles who will help you claim your share of property from your father's legacy. Please do what you're told." Young and innocent as he was, the boy said, "Since he was my father, I deserve part of his property. But I'm a little boy. I don't know what to say to get it." Iron-piercing Bug replied, "You don't need to say anything. You simply wear this suit of mourning apparel and follow us to Mo's home. You'll walk directly into the mourning hall. In front of the casket, you'll break into crying and then make four kowtows. After that, you'll turn around and get out of there. Don't say anything if you're spoken to. Once you get outside, we'll be waiting for you in the teahouse to the left of their home. This should be an easy thing for you to do."

Zhu San asked, "What's the point of his doing this?" The others replied, "This is meant to send a message to them. After he gets home, your son will go to court the next day and present the lawsuit. We'll make arrangements to assist him. He's so young that the government officials will be compassionate. They won't be hard to him. In addition, he has the solid ground that he is related to the old master by blood ties. Just do what we've said. You can be assured of achieving your share of the fortune." Then Zhu San turned to his wife and said, "I think what they've said is thoughtful and well planned. Let our son do as they've planned. There won't be any problem." The little boy agreed, saying, "I'll do it. I really want to see the picture of my father, mourn him and pay my homage to him." Shuang He tearfully replied, "You're right, my clever boy." Zhu San said, "I think I should stay away. If you gentlemen go with him, nothing will go wrong. So I'll leave the boy with you. I'll go to the market and attend to my business. In the evening when I get back, I should be able to hear what happened from you."

As Zhu San left, the five men and the little boy made their way to the house of the Mos. They went into a teahouse nearby and ordered some tea. Then the men told the boy, "See that gate hung with a mourning board and strips of satin? That's your old man's home. Go inside and do as we told you." They then helped him put on the mourning apparel. With nothing else but their words in mind, the boy strode through the gate and went straight into the mourning hall. He fell on his knees in front of the



踏步走进门里面来。一直到了孝堂，看见灵帋，果然唵天倒地价哭起来，也是孩子家天性所在。

那孝堂里头听见哭响，只道是吊客来到，尽皆来看。只见是一个小厮，身上打扮与孝子无二，且是哭得悲切，口口声声叫着亲爹爹。孝堂里看的，不知是甚么缘故，人人惊骇道：“这是那里说起？”莫妈听得哭着亲爹，又见这般打扮，不觉怒从心上起，恶向胆边生，嚷道：“那里来这个野猫，哭得如此异样！”亏得莫大郎是个老成有见识的人，早已瞧科了八九分，忙对母亲说道：“妈妈切不可造次，这件事了不得！我家初丧之际，必有奸人动火，要来挑衅，扎成火囤。落了他们圈套，这人家不经折的。只依我指分，方免祸患。”

莫妈一时间见大郎说得利害，也有些慌了，且住着不嚷，冷眼看那外边孩子。只见他哭罢就拜，拜了四拜，正待转身，莫大郎连忙跳出来，一把抱住道：“你不是那花楼桥卖粉汤朱家的儿子么？”孩子道：“正是。”大郎道：“既是这等，你方才拜了爹爹，也就该认了妈妈。你随我来。”一把扯他到孝幔里头，指着莫妈道：“这是你的嫡母亲，快些拜见。”莫妈仓卒之际，只凭儿子，受了他拜已过。大郎指自家道：“我乃是你长兄，你也要拜。”拜过，又指点他拜了二兄，以次至大嫂、二嫂，多叫拜见了。又领自己两个儿子、兄弟一个儿子，立齐了，对孩子道：“这三个是你侄儿，你该受拜。”拜罢，孩子又望外





altar table and started crying, as any boy of his age would naturally behave in such a situation.

His cries aroused attention throughout the house. The family members, thinking another mourner must have arrived, gathered in the mourning hall. In front of them was the little boy dressed as a son in mourning, a boy who kept calling out, "My father! My father!" Astonished, the family members couldn't make head or tail of the sight. "What's wrong with the boy?" they asked each other. The sudden commotion of the boy's mourning also caught the attention of Mrs. Mo. Rage immediately rose inside her. Viciously, she shouted, "What's brought this bastard here, making such weird howls?" It was Big Brother who deciphered the puzzle. He said to his mother, "Don't behave rashly, please. This is not something we can trifle with. I think someone is trying to take advantage of my father's death in order to prey on us. If we fall into the trap, our family fortune will be further split. Only if you do as I arrange will a calamity be avoided."

His words curbed Mrs. Mo's fury, and her yells dropped to silence. She calmly observed the boy. Out there in the mourning hall, the boy was performing four kowtows with tears in his eyes. As he pulled himself onto his feet to leave, Big Brother rushed out and held him, saying, "I think you're the son of Zhu San, am I right?" The boy answered, "Exactly." Big Brother then said, "Since you've come to claim your blood relation to your father, it's only natural for you to also meet your mother. Come with me." He pulled the boy behind the mourning drapes and, pointing to Mrs. Mo, said to him, "Here's your own mother. Come on and show your reverence to her." The unprepared Mrs. Mo, in compliance, hurriedly received the boy's reverence. Then Big Brother pointed to himself and said, "I'm your elder brother. You must also do obeisance to me." After that he let the boy make further kowtows to his second elder brother and two sisters-in-law in sequence. Finally, he introduced the boy to his two sons and one son from his younger brother, the three of them standing in a row as required, by saying, "These are your nephews. You should receive their reverence."

The formalities now being over, the boy turned around and was about to leave. But Big Brother stopped him and said, "Where are you going,



就走。大郎道：“你到那里去？你是我的兄弟，父亲既死，就该住在此居丧。这是你家里了，还到那里去？”大郎领他到里面，交付与自己娘子，道：“你与小叔叔把头梳一梳，替他身上出脱一出脱。把旧时衣服脱掉了，多替他换了些新鲜的，而今是我家里人了。”孩子见大郎如此待得他好，心里虽也欢喜，只是人生面不熟，又不知娘的意思怎么，有些不安贴，还想要去。大郎晓得光景，就着人到花楼桥朱家去唤那双荷到家里来，说道有要紧说话。

双荷晓得是儿子面上的事了，亦且原要来吊丧，急忙换了一身孝服，来到莫家。灵前哭拜已毕，大郎即对他说：“你的儿子今早到此，我们已认做兄弟了。而今与我们一同守孝，日后与我们一样分家，你不必记挂。所有老爹爹在日给你的饭米衣服，我们照帐按月送过来与你，与在日一般。这是有你儿子面上。你没事不必到这里来，因你是有丈夫的，恐防议论，倒妆你儿子的丑。只今日起，你儿子归宗姓莫，不到朱家来了。你分付你儿子一声，你自去罢。”双荷听得，不胜之喜：“若得大郎看死的老爹爹面上，如此处置停当，我烧香点烛，祝报大郎不尽。”说罢，进去见了莫妈与大嫂、二嫂，只是拜谢。莫妈此时也不好生分得，大家没甚说话，打发他回去。双荷叮嘱儿子：“好生住在这，小心奉事大妈妈与哥哥嫂嫂。你落了好处，我放心得下了。方才大郎说过，我不好长到这里。你在此



boy? Now you're my brother. Our father is dead and you should stay here to go through the mourning ceremony with us. Here is your home. Where are you heading?" He then led the boy into his room and said to his wife, "Please comb the hair for your younger brother-in-law. Strip off his untidy clothes and dress him in some neat ones. From now on he is one of us." The kindness Big Brother displayed delighted the boy. Yet he felt a little nervous and still wanted to leave, since what he saw around him were only strange faces and he was not sure of his real mother's intention. Big Brother read his mind and sent for Shuang He with the words, "I've something important to talk over with you."

Upon receiving this message, Shuang He knew the matter was related to her son. As she had originally planned to make a trip of mourning to Mo's home, she slipped into a set of mourning attire and arrived there. In the mourning hall, she cried and kowtowed. Then Big Brother said to her, "Your son came here this morning and we identified each other as brothers. He's going to stay with us to observe the period of mourning for our father. Later he'll receive his share of the property. Don't worry about that. Besides, we'll continue to send you the amount of food and clothing each month that you used to receive in the past from my father. Nothing will change in that regard because of your son's ties with us. However, please do not come here unless it is absolutely necessary. You have a husband, it's wise not to raise gossip and disgrace your son. From now on, your son belongs to our family and he'll adopt the family name of Mo. He won't go to your house anymore. Please go and talk to your son briefly and then leave." Shuang He was overjoyed and said, "I'm very pleased that you've made such arrangements in agreement with the intentions of the late master. I'll burn incense and light candles to express my profound gratitude." Then she went inside to meet Mrs. Mo and the two sisters-in-law and expressed her thanks to them.

Mrs. Mo had to hold back her resentment, and things got settled smoothly. Before leaving, Shuang He said to her son, "Stay here and behave yourself on good terms with Mrs. Mo, brothers and sisters-in-law. Now you're well placed here, and I'm at ease. On the basis of your big brother's suggestion, I won't come to see you very often. You should



过几时，断了七七四十九日，再到朱家来相会罢。”孩子既见了自家的娘，又听了分付的话，方才安心住下。双荷自欢欢喜喜，与丈夫说知去了。

且说那些没头鬼光棍赵家五虎，在茶房里面坐地，眼巴巴望那孩子出来，就去做事，状子多打点停当了。谁知守了多时，再守不出。看看到晚，不见动静，疑道：“莫非我们闲话时，那孩子出来，错了眼，竟到他家里去了？”走一个到朱家去看，见说儿子不曾到家，倒叫了娘子去，一发不解。走来回复众人，大家疑惑，就像热盘上蚊子，坐立不安。再着一个到朱家伺候，又说见双荷归来，老大欢喜，说儿子已得认下收留了。众人尚在茶坊未散，见了此说，个个木呆。正是：

思量拔草去寻蛇，这回却没蛇儿弄。

平常家里没风波，总有良平也无用。

说这几个人，闻得孩子已被莫家认作儿子了，许多焰腾腾的火气，却像淋了几桶的冰水，手臂多索解了。大家嚷道：“悔气！撞着这样不长进的人家。难道我们商量了这几时，当真倒单便宜了这小厮不成？”铁里虫道：“且不要慌！也不到得便宜了他，也不到得我们白住了手。”众人道：“而今还好在那里入脚？”铁里虫道：“我们原说与他夺了人家，要谢我们一千银子。他须有借票在我手里，是朱三的亲笔。”众人道：“他家先自收拾了，我们并不曾帮得他一些，也不好替朱三讨得。况且朱三是穷人，讨也没干。”铁里虫道：“昨日我要那孩子也着个字的，而今拣有头发的揪。过几时，只与那孩子讨，等他说没有，就告了他。他小厮家新做了财主，定怕吃官司的，央人来



stay here for the mourning period of forty-nine days and then come over to see us.” The meeting with his mother and his mother’s words soothed the boy. Shuang He left happily to tell her husband about what had happened.

In the meantime, the Five Tigers waited in the teahouse ready to file the lawsuit once the boy got away from the Mo family. They had already composed a written statement for the lawsuit. Hours passed and the boy didn’t show up. As afternoon yielded to evening, there was still no sign of him. They became suspicious. “Did we somehow miss seeing him while we were talking to each other so that he went straight back home?” one of them asked. Another rushed to Zhu San’s place and found out that the boy was not back home yet, but his mother was summoned to the Mo family. As this message reached the men, confusion turned to agitation, and they became restless as if they were ants jumping on a hot pan. Then another one went to check with the Zhu family and brought back the word, “Shuang He’s back home, very happy. She said, ‘My son’s been kept there as one of their family members’.”

This news exploded in their minds like a few buckets of icy water dumped on flames. It sent shudders down their arms. “Damn it! Such a stupid family we have to deal with!” they shouted. “Do we really want to see that little son of bitch make off with the gain after we’ve put in so much work?” However, Iron-piercing Bug said, “Hold on now! We surely won’t let him off with the gain. Nor shall we willingly give up.” The rest asked, “What can we do at this point?” Iron-piercing Bug said, “We’ve reached an agreement with them that once they obtain the property, they must give us a thousand taels of silver as payment. I have the receipt with me. It’s in Zhu San’s handwriting.” The rest said, “But they’ve given up the court case and we didn’t do anything for them in terms of help. It’s not appropriate to claim that payment from Zhu San. Even if we decide to do so, we can’t expect to get anything from him because he’s too poor.” Iron-piercing Bug said, “Well, I had the boy sign the receipt, too. Now we have to count on whoever offers a butt of attack. Let’s wait for a few days and ask the boy to pay us. If he rejects us, we’ll sue him. He’s a rich boy now. I’m sure he will fear going to court against us. He’ll send



与我们讲和，须要赎得这张纸去才干净。难道白了不成？”众人道：“有见识，不枉叫你做铁里虫，真是见识硬挣！”铁里虫道：“还有一件，只是眼下还要从容。一来那票子上日子没多两日，就讨就告，官府要疑心；二来他家方才收留，家业未有得就分与他，他也便没有得拿出来还人，这是半年一年后的事。”众人道：“多说的是。且藏好了借票，再耐心等等弄他。”自此一伙各散去了。

这里莫妈性定，抱怨儿子道：“那小业种来时，为甚么就认了他？”大郎道：“我家富名久出，谁不动火？这兄弟实是爹爹亲骨肉，我不认他时，被光棍弄了去，今日一状、明日一状告将来，告个没休歇。衙门人役个个来诈钱，亲眷朋友人人来拐骗，还有官府思量起发，开了口不怕不送。不知把人家折到那里田地！及至拌得到底，问出根由，少不得要断这一股与他，何苦作成别人肥了家去？所以不如一面收留，省了许多人的妄想，有何不妙？”妈妈见说得明白，也道是了，一家欢喜过日。

忽然一日，有一伙人走进门来，说道要见小三官人的。这里门上方要问明，内一人大声道：“便是朱家的拖油瓶。”大郎见说得不好听，自家走出来，见是五个人雄赳赳的来施礼，问



somebody to us to resolve the dispute and redeem the receipt. Now do you think we've made a futile effort?" The rest cheered, "A terrific idea! No wonder you're called Iron-piercing Bug. What a smart person you are!"

Iron-piercing Bug added, "One more thing. We should take our time. First, we got this receipt only a few days ago. If we sue him now, the court will be suspicious. Secondly, the Mo family just admitted his kinship and it'll take some time before the division of property takes place among the brothers. So the boy's not yet in a position to pay us. That can only be done in half a year or more." The group said, "Exactly. Hang onto the receipt. Let's be patient." Then the group scattered.

At that moment, Mrs. Mo, still nursing her resentment, complained to her eldest son, Big Brother, saying, "Why did you so readily identify with that son of bitch?" Big Brother Mo answered, "We're a well-known wealthy family. How can we avoid being the target of envy after the death of my father? After all, the little boy is a son by my father. If we refuse to recognize his kinship, some rascals will take him as a pawn and launch an endless course of lawsuits against us. By then the government officials would take advantage of the situation to blackmail us. Relatives and friends would not let us go without being skinned. Besides, the court would be another source of drainage on our wealth in terms of bribery. We can't beat that. Who knows what kind of wretched state our family might end up in? Actually the dispute would eventually be traced back to its origin and we would not be able to avoid giving up a share of our property to the boy. Given that possibility, why should we let some outsiders benefit? That's why I decided to accept the boy into our home, smashing those people's wild dreams. Don't you agree with me?" His explanation convinced his mother and nothing more was said in the family about the issue.

Peace continued for a time and then a mob broke in one day, demanding to see the third little master. These men were stopped by an inquiry as to their business. A yell broke out among them: "We want to talk to Zhu San's step-son!" The unpleasant remark brought out Big Brother as the five ring-leaders swaggered into the hall, greeting him and asking, "Is



道：“小令弟在家么？”大郎道：“在家里。列位有何说话？”五个人道：“令弟少在下家里些银子，特来与他取用。”大郎道：“这个却不知道，叫他出来就是。”

大郎进去对小兄弟说了，那孩子不知是甚么头脑，走出来一看，认得是前日赵家五虎，上前见礼。那几个见了孩子，道：“好个小官人！前日是我们送你来的，你在此做了财主，就不记得我们了？”孩子道：“前日这边留住了，不放我出门，故此我不出来得。”五虎道：“你而今既做了财主，这一千银子该还得我们了。”孩子道：“我几曾晓得有甚么银子？”五虎道：“银子是你晚老子朱三官所借，却是为你用的，你也着得有花字。”孩子道：“前日我也见说，说道恐防吃官司要银子用，故写下借票。而今官司不吃了，那里还用你们甚么银子？”五虎发狠道：“现有票在这里，你赖了不成？”大郎听得声高，走出来看时，五虎告诉道：“小令弟在朱家时借了我们一千银子不还，而今要赖起来。”大郎道：“我这小兄弟借这许多银子何用？”孩子道：“哥哥，不要听他！”五虎道：“现有借票，我和你衙门里说去。”一哄多散了。

大郎问兄弟道：“这是怎么说？”孩子道：“起初这几个撺掇我母亲告状，母亲回他没盘缠吃官司。他们说：‘只要一张借票，我每借来与你。’以后他们领我到这里来，哥哥就收留下，不曾成官司。他怎么要我起银子来？”大郎道：“可恨这些光棍，早是我们不着他手，而今既有借票在他处，他必不肯干休，定然到官。你若见官，莫怕！只把方才实情，照样是





your little brother in?" Big Brother said, "Yes, he's at home, gentlemen. May I know what your business is?" The five men said, "He owes us some money and we're here to get it." Big Brother said, "Sorry, I know nothing of it. I'll bring him out." Big Brother then went inside and told this to his little brother.

The boy emerged, confused, only to find the Five Tigers waiting there. His greetings to them met with the men's shouts, "What have you been doing, Little Master? We sent you here some time ago. Now you're rich and we are wondering whether you still remember us?" The boy said, "The family asked me to stay here. I was held up and couldn't go home." The five men said, "But since you're rich now, it's time for you to pay back to us the thousand taels of silver." "Sorry," the boy replied, "I've no knowledge about that money." The five men said, "That amount of money was loaned to your step-father, Zhu San. But it was for you and the receipt bears your signature." The boy said, "Yes, I know we talked about the suing expenses that day. So we wrote a loan receipt to you. But we gave up the idea of going through the lawsuit and didn't use any of the loan. Why do I owe you money?" The men flared up, "We've got the receipt with us. Are you going to disown it?"

As Big Brother Mo heard this cry and came out, the Five Tigers said him, "Your little brother got a loan of one thousand taels of silver from us at Zhu San's place. But he's repudiating it now!" Big Brother said, "He's still a little kid. I don't see why he would have borrowed such a huge sum of money?" The boy said to his brother, "Don't believe what they are saying, Big Brother." The Five Tigers replied, "All right. We've got the receipt. Let's go to court." And out they stalked.

The Big Brother then turned to the boy and asked, "What's this all about?" The boy replied, "At first they urged my mother to go to court. She said we had no money. Then they said, 'Just write a receipt. We'll give you the loan.' Then they led me here. You took me in. We didn't proceed with the lawsuit. Why are they now asking me for the money?" Big Brother said, "Damn those gangsters! Fortunately we didn't fall into their trap. Now they hold the written statement, they won't let go of the issue and will unquestionably sue us. But, when you have to appear in



这等一说，官府自然明白的。没有小小年纪断你还他银子之理，且安心坐着，看他怎么！”

次日，这五虎果然到府里告下一纸状来，告了朱三、莫小三两个名字骗劫千金之事，来到莫家提人。莫大郎、二郎等商量，与兄弟写下一纸诉状，诉出从前情节，就用着两个哥哥为证，竟来府里投到。

府里太守姓唐名篆，是个极精明的。一千人提到了，听审时先叫宋礼等上前问道：“朱三是何等人？要这许多银子来做甚么用？”宋礼道：“他说要与儿子置田买产，借了去的。”太守叫朱三问道：“你做甚么勾当，借这许多银子？”朱三道：“小的是卖粉羹的经纪，不上钱数生意，要这许多做甚么？”宋礼道：“见有借票，我们五人二百两一个，交付与他及儿子莫小三的。”太守拿上借票来看，问朱三道：“可是你写的票？”朱三道：“是小的写的票，却不曾有银子的。”宋礼道：“票是他写的，银子是莫小三收去的。”太守叫莫小三，那莫家孩子应了一声走上去。

太守看见是个十来岁小的，一发奇异，道：“这小厮收去这些银子何用？”宋礼争道：“是他父亲朱三写了票，拿银子与这莫小三买田的。见今他有许多田在家里。”太守道：“父姓朱，怎么儿子姓莫？”朱三道：“瞒不得老爷，这小厮原是莫



court, simply tell the truth as you did just now. The judge should be clear-minded and not let a little boy such as you pay them the money. Don't worry. Let's wait and see!"

On the next day, the Five Tigers filed a lawsuit with the court against Zhu San and the Third Brother Mo on a charge of repudiating the debt of one thousand taels of silver. Officials arrived at Mo's home to take the accused. After consultation, Big Brother and Second Brother decided to compose an appeal for their little brother, recounting the details of the issue and offering themselves as witnesses. The three brothers then made their way to the court.

The Prefect of Wuxing Prefecture was named Tang Tuan, who was a capable and intelligent official. When the accusers and defendants arrived at the court, Prefect Tang called the Five Tigers in the court and asked them, "What's Zhu San to you? And for what purpose did he get such a huge loan from you?" Iron-piercing Bug answered, "Zhu San said he needed the loan to buy his son some real estate." Prefect Tang turned to Zhu San, asking, "What would you do with this huge sum of money?" Zhu San replied, "I'm a petty businessman selling starch noodles. My deals seldom amount to a sum. I had no reason to get such a great loan." Iron-piercing Bug said, "Look at the receipt he wrote for us. We five each loaned him and the Third Brother of Mo two hundred taels of silver." The receipt was then handed over to the prefect. The prefect took a look at it and asked Zhu San, "Did you write this?" Zhu San said, "Yes. I wrote it, but I never got the loan." Iron-piercing Bug said, "He wrote it, but Third Brother Mo took the silver." As the prefect called Third Brother Mo, the boy stepped forward with an answer.

The prefect was surprised to see a little boy about ten years old appear before him. He asked, "What could a little boy like you do with so much money?" Before the boy could reply, words rolled out of Iron-piercing Bug's mouth, "His father, Zhu San, wrote the receipt and used the money to buy him some land. Now the boy owns a large piece of land." The prefect said, "I don't quite understand why the father's family name is Zhu, while his son's is Mo?" Zhu San replied, "To be frank, this boy is in fact a son by the late master, Mo, and my wife. His mother was later



家孽子，他母亲嫁与小的，所以他自姓莫。专为众人要帮他莫家去争产，哄小的写了一票，做争讼的用度。不想一到莫家，他家大娘与两个哥子竟自认了，分与田产。小的与他家没讼得争了，还要借银做甚么用？他而今据了借票生端要这银子，这那里得有？”太守问莫小三，其言也是一般。

太守点头道：“是了，是了。”就叫莫大郎起来，问道：“你当时如何就肯认了？”莫大郎道：“在城棍徒无风起浪，无洞掘蟹。亏得当时立地就认了，这些人还道放了空箭，未肯住手，致有今日之告。若当时略有推托，一涉讼端，正是此辈得志之秋。不要说兄弟这千金要被他诈了去，家里所费又不知几倍了。”太守笑道：“妙哉！不惟高义，又见高识。可敬，可敬！我看宋礼等五人，也不像有千金借人的，朱三也不像借人千金的。元来真情如此，实为可恨！若非莫大有见，此辈人人饱满了。”提起笔来判道：

千金重利，一纸足凭。乃朱三赤贫，贷则谁与？莫子乳臭，须此何为？细讯其详，始烛其诡。宋礼立衰蹄之约，希蜗角之争；莫大以对床之情，消阅墙之衅。既渔群谋而丧气，犹挟故纸以垂涎。重创其奸，立毁其券！



married to me. So his family name is Mo. These men urged him to seize a share of the real estate that the old master had left behind. They coaxed me into writing them a receipt for a loan from them for the expense of bringing a court suit. But it turned out that, as the boy went to the Mo family, Mrs. Mo and the two brothers identified him as a member of their family and decided to give him his deserved part of the property. Thus the dispute dissolved without any lawsuit. Why should we have needed that loan? But now they're showing that receipt and asking for payment of the loan. Do you think we should pay them the money?" The prefect asked the boy about the matter and heard the same account. Then he nodded his understanding. "Now I'm getting to the point," he said.

Then he asked Big Brother, "Tell me why you took back your younger brother after your father's death?" Big Brother answered, "Racketeers around the town usually raise disputes out of peaceful lives and stir up trouble out of nothing for their own profit. Fortunately I took the boy back into our family immediately after he came - that's why these men are not satisfied and are bringing us to court today. If I hesitated that day and a lawsuit was brought up, these racketeers would have achieved their treacherous objective. By then what I would have lost would not simply be a sum of one thousand taels of silver. Our damages would have been multifold." All smiles, the prefect said, "Excellent! What remarkable moral courage and wisdom you've displayed! I admire you. The five plaintiffs are not likely to be lenders of one thousand taels of silver and Zhu San not likely to be a loan receiver either. Now we've got to the bottom of the story. What treachery! Without Big Brother's control of the situation, these rascals would have made a fortune." Then he picked up his brush and dashed off his verdict:

A gain of one thousand taels of silver hinges on the receipt of a loan. Who would lend Zhu San in utter destitution this huge loan? For what purpose would Third Brother Mo, an infant, have this great sum of money? After a thorough investigation has been conducted, the truth has surfaced that the mystery originated in a scheme of vice. Song Li procured a deed aiming at a gain. Big Brother Mo values fraternity and dissolved an otherwise brotherly dispute. The schemers, dismayed in their miscalculation, turned to the scrape of paper

当时将宋礼等五人，每人三十大板，问拟了“教唆词讼，诈害平人”的律，脊杖二十，刺配各远恶军州。吴兴城里去了这五虎，小民多是快活的，做出几句口号来：

铁里虫有时蛀不穿，钻仓鼠有时吃不饱，吊睛老虎没威风，洒墨判官齐跌倒，白日里鬼胡行，这回儿不见了。

唐太守又旌奖莫家，与他一个“孝义之门”的匾额，免其本等差徭。此时莫妈妈才晓得儿子二郎的大见识。世间弟兄不睦，靠着外人相帮起讼者，当以此为鉴。诗曰：

世间有孽子，亦是本生枝。  
只因靳所为，反为外人资。  
渔翁坐得利，鹬蚌枉相持。  
何如存一让，是名不漏卮。





as a last resort. The evil plot is to be severely punished and the receipt should be destroyed at once.

Then a punishment of thirty floggings was meted out to each one of Five Tigers. They each received another twenty cudgel thrashings on the back in compliance with the law regarding their manipulation of the innocent by fomenting ill will and cheating. Finally, with their faces tattooed, they were sent to a remote border area to perform military service.

The people in the town of Wuxing were happy for the removal of the Five Tigers. They composed the following lines: There are also times when Iron-piercing Bug fails to eat the wood; there are also times when Hamster goes hungry; there are also times when Oblique-eyed Tiger loses its power and prestige; there are also times when Learned Judge in Hell falls full length on the ground and now Night-owl can nowhere be found.

To commend Big Brother Mo, Tang Tuan, the Prefect of Wuxing, rewarded the Mo family with a horizontal board on which the characters inscribed were, "The Family of Filial Dedication and Virtue," and they were given a waiver of the forthcoming corvée. It was not until now did Mrs. Mo fully comprehend her elder son's initial wisdom. It is indeed a lesson to be remembered by those who get involved in a dispute with their brothers and intend to file a lawsuit with the help of outsiders.

Among brothers sprung from the selfsame root,  
Some are wicked and treacherous.  
Being stingy by nature,  
They only fatten the purses of outsiders'.  
Two dogs strive for a bone,  
And a third runs away with it.  
Why not make a concession  
To keep all benefits for their own families?



## 卷 十 一

### 满少卿饥附饱颺 焦文姬生仇死报

诗云：

十年磨一剑，霜刃未曾试。

今日把赠君，谁有不平事？

话说天下最不平的，是那负心的事，所以冥中独重其罚，剑侠专诛其人。那负心中最不堪的，尤在那夫妻之间。盖朋友内忘恩负义，拚得绝交了他，便无别话。惟有夫妻是终身相倚的，一有负心，一生怨恨，不是当要可以了帐的事。古来生死冤家，一还一报的，独有此项极多。

宋时衢州有一人，姓郑，是个读书人，娶着会稽陆氏女，姿容娇媚。两个伉俪绸缪，如胶似漆。一日，正在枕席情浓之际，郑生忽然对陆氏道：“我与你二人相爱，已到极处了。万一他日不能到底，我今日先与你说过：我若死，你不可再嫁；你若死，我也不再娶了。”陆氏道：“正要与你百年偕老，怎生说这样不祥的话？”

不觉的光阴荏苒，过了十年，已生有二子。郑生一时间得





## *Tale 11*

### **Lord Man Forsakes His Benefactor Spouse Jiao Wenji Takes Revenge after Death**

A poem reads thus:

Ten years it has taken to sharpen this sword

And nothing has its shining edge touched.

This sword to you I present.

Do away with whatever injustice you come across.

Heartlessness in love is usually regarded as the worst of all injustices. That's why those who are heartless in love will be most severely punished after their death and also why swordsmen especially kill them. Heartless husbands and wives among those who are heartless in love are the most intolerable. When facing ungrateful friends, people will not find it difficult to break off their relations. However, husbands and wives are lifelong companions. Once ungratefulness occurs between a husband and a wife, hatred will accompany them throughout their life, and this account will not be settled easily. For this reason, heartless husbands or wives have come out first among life and death foes since ancient times.

During the Song Dynasty, there lived a scholar surnamed Zheng in Quzhou Prefecture. He married a beautiful girl surnamed Lu. The young couples were so deeply in love that they were almost inseparable. One day while they were head over heels in love, Zheng suddenly said to Lu, "Our love for each other has reached the peak of perfection. Now I'd like to tell you something in case our love fails to carry on to the end. If I die, you should not to remarry. If you die, I'm not to remarry either." Lu replied, "I'm thinking of living together with you to be a hundred. Why do you say such unlucky things?"

Ten years passed without their realizing it and the couple had had two sons. All of a sudden, Zheng got an incurable illness. As he lay dying, he



了不起的症候，临危时对父母道：“儿死无所虑，只有陆氏妻子恩深难舍，况且年纪少艾，日前已与他说过：‘我死之后，不可再嫁。’今若肯依所言，儿死亦瞑目矣！”陆氏听说到此际，也不回言，只是低头悲哭，十分哀切，连父母也道他没有二心的了。

死后数月，自有那些走千家管闲事的牙婆每，打听脚踪，探问消息。晓得陆氏青年美貌，未必是守得牢的人，挨身入来，与他来往。那陆氏并不推拒那一伙人，见了面就千欢万喜，烧茶办果，且是相待得好。公婆看见这些光景，心里嫌他，说道：“居孀行径，最宜稳重。此辈之人没事不可引他进门。况且丈夫临终怎么样分付的？没有别的心肠，也用这些人不着。”陆氏由公婆自说，只当不闻，后来惯熟，连公婆也不说了，果然与一个做媒的说得入港，受了苏州曾工曹之聘。公婆虽然恼怒，心里道：“是他立性既自如此，留着也落得做冤家，不是好住手的，不如顺水推船，等他去了罢。”只是想着自己儿子临终之言，对着两个孙儿，未免感伤痛哭。陆氏多不放在心上，才等服满，就收拾箱匣停当，也不顾公婆，也不顾儿子，依了好日，喜喜欢欢嫁过去了。

成婚七日，正在亲热头上，曾工曹受了漕帅檄文，命他考试外郡，只得收拾起身，作别而去。去了两日，陆氏自觉凄凉，



said to his parents, “Nothing worries me except my wife Lu. We love each other so much and I really loathe to part from her. Moreover, she is still so young. I told her some time ago, ‘You should not to remarry after my death.’ If she will do as I requested, I’ll rest easy in my grave.” Hearing these words, Lu uttered nothing. With her head lowered, she kept on weeping sadly. Even Zheng’s parents also took it for granted that she would remain faithful to her deceased husband.

Several months after Zheng’s death, those old ladies who loved to poke their noses into other people’s businesses frequented Lu’s house, because they knew that Lu, still young and beautiful, might not be the kind of person who could remain single for long. Lu didn’t refuse their visits. Instead, she treated them with pleasure, making tea for them and offering them fruits. Seeing this, her parents-in-law started to complain of her conduct, saying, “A widow should be steady. Better not let these women come to our house. Remember what your husband said to you before his death? If you have no other thought, you don’t need to contact these people.” Lu turned a deaf ear to their complaint. As these ladies became familiar with Lu later, the parents-in-law decided to let things run their own course. Eventually Lu married an official surnamed Zeng from Suzhou.

Though Zheng’s parents were angry at what she had done, they thought, “It’s her nature to have this choice. It’s really hard for us to stop her. Even if we keep her in our house, she’ll be our foe. Why not let matters slide and see her off?” However, the old couple couldn’t hold back their tears of sadness when they thought of their son’s last words and saw their grandsons. Lu, on the contrary, cared nothing about this. The moment her mourning period is over, she got her chests and boxes ready and, after choosing a lucky date, got remarried happily, without giving any thought to her parents-in-law and her two sons.

On the seventh day of their marriage, while the newly-weds were head over heels in love, the governor of Suzhou issued an official announcement to Zeng, ordering him to inspect some places out of Suzhou. Zeng said goodbye to his wife and left reluctantly. Two days after Zeng’s departure, Lu started to feel sad and lonely. When dusk fell, she came out of her

傍晚之时，走到厅前闲步。忽见一个后生像个远方来的，走到面前，对着陆氏叩了一头，口称道：“郑官人有书拜上娘子。”递过一封柬帖来。陆氏接着，看到外面封筒上题着三个大字，乃是“示陆氏”三字。认认笔踪，宛然是前夫手迹。正要盘问，那后生忽然不见。陆氏惧怕起来，拿了书急急走进房里来，剔明灯火，仔细看时，那书上写道：

十年结发之夫，一生祭祀之主。朝连暮以同欢，资有馀而共聚。忽大幻以长往，慕他人而轻许。遗弃我之田畴，移蓄积于别户。不念我之双亲，不恤我之二子。义不足以为人妇，慈不足以为人母。吾已诉诸上苍，行理对于冥府。

陆氏看罢，吓得冷汗直流，魂不附体，心中懊悔不及。怀着鬼胎，十分惧怕，说不出来。茶饭不吃，嘿嘿不快，三日而亡。眼见得是负了前夫，得此果报了。

却又是一件，天下事有好些不平的所在！假如男人死了，女人再嫁，便道是失了节，玷了名、污了身子，是个行不得的事，万口訾议。及至男人家丧了妻子，却又凭他续弦再娶，置妾买婢，做出若干的勾当，把死的丢在脑后不提起了，并没人道他薄幸负心，做一场说话。就是生前房室之中，女人少有外情，便是老大的丑事，人世羞言。及到男人家撇了妻子，贪淫好色，宿娼养妓，无所不为，总有议论不是的，不为十分大害。所以女子愈加可怜，男人愈加放肆，这些也是伏不得女娘们心里的所在。不知冥冥之中，原有分晓。若是男子风月场中略行着脚，



room to take a stroll in the courtyard. Suddenly, she saw a young man coming towards her. This young man, who seemed to have come from a distant place, came to her and kowtowed, saying, "Here is a letter for you from Mr. Zheng." Lu took it in her hand and looked at the characters written on the envelope, which read, "For Lu." She examined the handwriting carefully and found it was exactly that of her deceased husband's. As she was about to ask more, the young man disappeared abruptly. Feeling a bit scared, she hurried back into her room with the letter. She picked the wick in the lamp and started to read the letter:

*For ten years we used to be husband and wife and we were so deep in love. But you got remarried after my death, deserting our land and taking away our savings, forsaking my parents and my children. As far as virtue is concerned, you're not a qualified wife; as far as kindness is concerned, you do not deserve to be a mother. I've voiced my grievances to Heaven and we'll have to reason things out in the underworld.*

Terribly scared out of her wits, Lu shuddered with cold sweat and was filled with profound remorse. The more she thought of it, the more terrified she became. Having no one to turn to for help, she sunk into dreadfulness. Taking neither water nor food, she died in three days. Obviously, this is a judgment on her for her heartlessness to her deceased husband.

It is true injustices do prevail in the world. If the wife remarries after her husband dies, people will say that she's lost her integrity and brought disgrace to her family, which is absolutely forbidden. Thus the wife becomes the target of reproach of all. However, a man can remarry or even buy servant girls after the death of his wife and gives no thought at all to the deceased wife. When this happens, no one thinks he is being unfaithful to his wife. Once the wife has an affair outside her marriage, she will be regarded as having committed the most disgraceful offence and will be despised by all.

On the contrary, it is permissible for the husband to go whoring. Though people may talk about his indecency, they do not think it a serious offence. All these result in the pitiable wretchedness of women and the bold willfulness of men. At this point, all women remain unconvinced. However, the truth is that the outcomes of every affair is perfectly certain



此是寻常勾当，难道就比了女人失节一般？但是果然负心之极，忘了旧时恩义，失了初时信行，以至误人终身，害人性命的，也没一个不到底报应的事。从来说王魁负桂英，毕竟桂英索了王魁命去，此便是一个男负女的榜样，不止女负男如所说的陆氏，方有报应也。今日待小子说一个赛王魁的故事，与看官每一听，方晓得男子也是负不得女人的。有诗为证：

由来女子号痴心，痴得真时恨亦深。

莫道此痴容易负，冤冤隔世会相寻！

话说宋时有个鸿胪少卿姓满，因他做事没下稍，讳了名字不传，只叫他满少卿。未遇时节，只叫他满生。那满生是个淮南大族，世有显宦。叔父满贵，见为枢密副院。族中子弟，遍满京师，尽皆富厚本分。惟有满生心性不羁，狂放自负。生得一表人材，风流可喜。怀揣着满腹文章，道早晚必登高第。抑且幼无父母，无些拘束，终日吟风弄月，放浪江湖，把些家事多弄掉了，连妻子多不曾娶得。族中人渐渐不理他，满生也不在心上。



and clear in the unseen world. Can all men go unpunished if they have had the so-called ‘nothing serious’ outside marriage affairs while women have to pay for it? Nevertheless, Heaven have eyes. Anyone, either a man or a woman, who becomes extremely heartless and ungrateful by breaking his first promises and harming others’ lives, is bound to get retribution. The story of Zheng and Lu is an instance in which the wife becomes heartless and ungrateful. Here I’d like to tell you a story to prove that a man can never be heartless and ungrateful to his wife either. The following lines can serve as a proof:

Girls are innocent and often cherish adoring love,  
Their infatuation in love, in turn, nurtures deep resentment.  
Such girls are never to be forsaken,  
Otherwise they will come back to take revenge even generations after.

\* \* \*

Once upon a time during the Song Dynasty (960-1279), there was a deputy minister of foreign and ethnic affairs whose family name was Man. Because he didn’t come to an honorable end, his full name has now been tossed into oblivion, and he is known simply as Deputy Minister Man. Before he came to his position, he was addressed as Master Man. He was born into a well-known aristocratic family in the region south of the Huaihe River, and many of his family members held high-ranking positions in government offices in each generation. His uncle, Man Gui by name, was currently holding the position of deputy director of the Privy Council. Other members of the family were scattered throughout the capital city. They were all honest persons.

However, Master Man was a different character. A handsome youth with scholastic achievements, he was ambitious, conceited and free of conventions, never doubting his capability to make a successful career of his learning in the future. As his parents had died while he was still a child, he led a carefree life, spending his days composing poems on subjects such as snow, wind, plants and the moon, and traveling freely far and wide. His family fortune was thus squandered, and he had little left for marriage. Though his family members gradually turned away from him, he still maintained his style of living, giving no thought of their



有个父亲旧识，出镇长安。满生便收拾行装，离了家门，指望投托于他，寻些润济。到得长安，这个官人已坏了官，离了地方去了，只得转来。满生是个少年孟浪不肯仔细的人，只道寻着熟人，财物广有，不想托了个空，身边盘缠早已罄尽。行到汴梁中牟地方，有个族人在那里做主簿，打点与他寻些盘费还家。那主簿是个小官，地方没大生意，连自家也只好支持过日，送得他一贯多钱。还了房钱饭钱，余下不多，不能勾回来。此时已是十二月天气，满生自思囊无半文，空身家去，难以度岁，不若只在外厢行动，寻些生意，且过了年又处。关中还有一两个相识在那里做官，仍旧掇转路头，往西而行。

到了凤翔地方，遇着一天大雪，三日不休。正所谓：

云横秦岭家何在？雪拥蓝关马不前。

满生阻住在饭店里，一连几日。店小二来讨饭钱，还他不勾，





attitude toward him.

Having learned that a friend of his father's was now holding a government position in the city of Chang'an, he decided he might turn to this official for an improvement in his living conditions. Thus he packed his things and set off on a journey to that city. Unexpectedly, upon his arrival, he was told that the official had lost his tenure due to negligence of his duties and had departed. Master Man, therefore, had to turn back. Being a thoughtless rash young man, Master Man had anticipated nothing but that this acquaintance would supply him with everything to meet his financial needs. Now he had lost ground and his money was all gone. On his way back, he stopped at Zhongmu County, which was to the west of the city of Kaifeng, where one of his clansmen served as a clerk in the government office. He decided to call on the relative and obtain some money to cover the cost for the rest of his homeward journey. However, this relative barely survived on a meager income in his modest business, so the most he could do to help Master Man was to give him just a string of copper coins.

Man found this sum only enough to pay for his room and board in the town, with almost nothing left to cover his trip home. It was the twelfth month. Master Man calculated that if he went home with no coins to jingle in his pockets, he would not be able to tide over the hard time before the Spring Festival. He thus decided to stay in this place and get some odd jobs for a living. In this way he might be able to tide over the crisis of the Spring Festival and then he could think of returning home after the holiday season. He started trekking westwards instead of eastwards, thinking that a couple of his friends holding government positions in the Guanzhong region (the area along the Weishui River in Shaanxi Province) might be of some help.

As he reached Fengxiang County, he was caught in a snowstorm that lasted three days. His plight is thus depicted:

While my horse balks in snow gathering around a pass,

I ask the towering mountains in mist, where my home is.

Snowed in at a small inn for days on end, Master Man couldn't even pay the innkeeper for his meals. So the innkeeper stopped bringing him



连饭也不来了。想着自己是好人家子弟，胸藏学问，视功名如拾芥耳；一时未际，浪迹江湖，今受此穷途之苦，谁人晓得我是不遇时的公卿？此时若肯雪中送炭，真乃胜似锦上添花。争奈世情看冷暖，望着那一个救我来？不觉放声大哭。早惊动了隔壁一个人，走将过来道：“谁人如此啼哭？”——那个人怎生打扮？

头戴玄狐帽套，身穿羔羊皮裘。紫膛颜色，带着几分酒，脸映红桃；苍白须髯，沾着几点雪，身如玉树。疑在浩然驴背下，想从安道宅中来。

那个人走进店中，问店小二道：“谁人啼哭？”店小二答道：“覆大郎，是一个秀才官人，在此三五日了，不见饭钱拿出来。天上雪下不止，又不好走路，我们不与他饭吃了，想是肚中饥饿，故此啼哭。”那个人道：“那里不是积福处？既是个秀才官人，你把他饭吃了，算在我的帐上，我还你罢。”店小二道：“小人晓得。”便去拿了一分饭，摆在满生面前道：“客官，是这大郎叫拿来请你的。”满生道：“那个大郎？”只见那个人已走到面前，道：“就是老汉。”满生忙施了礼道：“与老丈素昧平生，何故如此？”那个人道：“老汉姓焦，就在此酒店间壁居住。因雪下得大了，同小女烫几杯热酒暖寒。闻得这壁厢悲怨之声，不像是个以下之人，故步至此间寻问。店小二说是个秀才雪阻了的，老汉念斯文一脉，怎教秀才忍饥？故此教他送饭。荒店



food. Under such a miserable circumstance, Master Man couldn't help thinking to himself, "I'm from a respected family and well learned. Obtaining an official position is for me as easy as picking up a blade of grass. Since my star hasn't risen yet, I have to ramble everywhere. Who could recognize me as a minister-to-be in adversity? I would greatly appreciate it if someone came to my rescue right now, but company and success go hand in hand. Should I really expect sympathy at this point of my life?" So thinking, he was overwhelmed with sadness and broke into crying. A man next door was disturbed and came over to ask, "Who's crying here?" The man was dressed this way:

He wore a sheepskin coat with a fox-fur cap sitting on his head; a faint intoxication caused a flush over his face with a burgundy complexion; he emerged in white with snow-dotted gray hair and beard; he looked like a poet on donkey back; or a scholar in a leisure boat on a snowy night.

"Who's crying there?" the old man entered the inn and asked a waiter. The waiter replied, "It's a scholar. He's been snowed in here for a few days, unable to pay for his meals. It's been snowing and he can't continue on his journey. Because he can't pay, we stopped providing him with food. I guess he's crying because of his hunger." Then the old man said, "One can do a favor to others anywhere and secure blessing from Heaven. Since he's a scholar, please give him some food on my account. I'll pay you for the food." The waiter replied, "I see, sir," and brought a dinner to Master Man, saying to him, "Sir, here's your dinner. Dalang ordered me to serve you this." Master Man, of course, asked, "Who is Dalang?" The old man came over to him and said, "It's me."

Man hurriedly paid him courtesy, saying, "We haven't met each other before. Why are you so generous?" The old man replied, "My family name is Jiao. I live next door to this inn. It's snowing heavily. I was staying inside with my daughter, having a drink of warm wine to keep away the cold when I heard someone crying. It didn't sound like a laborer, so I came over to take a look. The innkeeper told me that you are a scholar snowed in here. I respect refined upbringing. I could not bear watching a learned man suffer from hunger, so I had the dinner brought to you. This suburban inn has nothing special with which to treat you. Besides, in



之中，无物可吃，况如此天气，也须得杯酒儿敌寒。秀才宽坐，老汉家中叫小厮送来。”满生喜出望外道：“小生失路之人，与老丈不曾识面，承老丈如此周全，何以克当？”焦大郎道：“秀才一表非俗，目下偶困，决不是落后之人。老汉是此间地主，应得来管顾的。秀才放心，但住此一日，老汉支持一日，直等天色晴霁好走路了，再商量不迟。”满生道：“多感！多感！”焦大郎又问了满生姓名乡贯明白，慢慢的自去了。

满生心里喜欢道：“谁想绝处逢生，遇着这等好人。”正在徯幸之际，只见一个笼头的小厮拿了四碗嘎饭、四碟小菜、一壶热酒送将来，道：“大郎送来与满官人的。”满生谢之不尽，收了摆在桌上食用。小厮出门去了，满生一头吃酒，一头就问店小二道：“这位焦大郎是此间甚么样人？怎生有此好情？”小二道：“这个大郎是此间大户，极是好义。平日扶穷济困，至于见了读书的，尤肯结交，再不怠慢的。自家好吃几杯酒，若是陪得他过的，一发有缘了。”满生道：“想是家道富厚？”小二道：“有便有些产业，也不为十分富厚。只是心性如此。官人造化，遇着了，他便多住几日，不打紧的了。”满生道：“雪晴了，你引我去拜他一拜。”小二道：“当得，当得。”过了一会，焦家小厮来收家伙，传大郎之命分付店小二道：“满大官人供给，只管照常支应。用酒时，到家里来取。”店小二领命，果然支持无缺，满生感激不尽。

过了一日，天色晴明。满生思量走路，身边并无盘费。亦



such weather, you need a few drinks of wine to keep warm. Please stay here and I'll send a servant to bring you some wine." Man was overjoyed and said, "I'm stranded on my journey. I've never seen you before. So it's very kind of you to treat me with such generosity and care. Your hospitality is really too much for me."

Jiao Dalang said, "You look a cut above the ordinary. It's merely a time of difficulty in your life, and I'm sure you'll be successful in future. I'm a native and should play the host. Please rest at ease. So long as you stay here, I'll take care of everything. Don't worry about your journey until the weather clears up." Master Man said, "I am deeply indebted to you." Then Jiao Dalang inquired about Man's name and native town before he left him.

Master Man was delighted with his good luck, thinking to himself, "I didn't expect to meet such a generous person in my desperate situation." As he was pondering over this in glee, a servant-boy came up with four dishes, four plates of tidbits and a pot of wine. He said to Man, "Dalang asked me to bring this food to you, sir." Man thanked the boy and put the dishes on the table. Then the boy left.

Taking sips of the wine, Man asked the waiter of the inn, "Who is this Jiao Dalang, and why is he so hospitable?" The waiter answered, "He's a magnate. He's kind and upright and never fails to come to the rescue of the poor. He's particularly fond of making friends with learned scholars, and he treats them very nicely. He also loves to drink. If you can drink with him to his heart's content, he will be even more intimate with you." Man asked, "So he must be rich?" The waiter replied, "He has some property, but I can't say he's very rich. He's just a generous person. You're lucky to have run into him. I don't think he will mind your staying here a few more days." Man then asked, "Do you mind taking me to his home when the snow stops?" The waiter answered, "Sure." A moment later, the servant-boy came back to clean up, bringing to the waiter Jiao Dalang's message, "Please let Man have whatever food he needs here and come to our home to fetch more wine for him." The waiter nodded in agreement and supplied the things accordingly. Man was profoundly grateful.

The following day it became clear and sunny. Master Man wanted to



且受了焦大郎之恩，要去拜谢。真叫做人心不足，得陇望蜀，见他好情，也就有个希冀借些盘缠之意。叫店小二在前引路，竟到焦大郎家里来。焦大郎接着，满面春风。满生见了大郎，倒地便拜，谢他：“穷途周济，殊出望外。倘有用着之处，情愿效力。”焦大郎道：“老汉家里也非有馀，只因看见秀才如此困厄，量济一二，以尽地主之意，原无他事，如何说个效力起来？”满生道：“小生是个应举秀才，异时倘有寸进，不敢忘报。”大郎道：“好说，好说！目今年已傍晚，秀才还要到那里去？”满生道：“小生投人不着，囊匣如洗，无面目还乡，意思要往关中一路寻访几个相知。不期逗留于此，得遇老丈，实出万幸。而今除夕在近，前路已去不迭，真是前不巴村，后不巴店。没奈何了，只得在此饭店中且过了岁，再作道理。”大郎道：“店中冷落，怎好度岁？秀才不嫌家间淡薄，搬到家下，与老汉同住几日，随常茶饭，等老汉也不寂寞，过了岁朝再处，秀才意下何如？”满生道：“小生在饭店中总是叨忝老丈的，就来潭府，也是一般。只是萍踪相遇，受此深恩，无地可报，实



depart, but he had no money on him. Besides, he thought he should call on Jiao Dalang to express his indebtedness. He also anticipated an offer of funds from such a noble man to cover his need of traveling expenses. This exemplifies the prevalent saying, "Give someone an inch and they'll take a mile." With the waiter leading the way, Man made straight for Jiao Dalang's place. The old man rose to greet him joyfully. Master Man dropped to his knees and expressed his thanks, saying, "I deeply appreciate your kindness in assisting me in my time of difficulty. I will absolutely put myself at your disposal should you need my services in the future." Jiao Dalang replied, "Mine is not an affluent family. But I saw you were in a wretched state. It's out of my sense of duty that as host I offered you some help, nothing much. How could I deserve your services as payment in future?" Man replied, "I'm going to take the imperial court examinations soon. It will be my responsibility to pay for your kindness once I'm successfully established in my career."

Dalang replied, "All right. But it's getting close to the end of the year. I wonder where you're going now?" Man said, "I failed to find an acquaintance of mine as I had originally planned. I had spent all the money I had brought with me. I felt too ashamed to go home. Then I changed my mind and decided go to the Guanzhong region so that I could turn to a couple of my friends there for help. I didn't know, as I was held up here, that I was to have such good luck in encountering you. The Eve of the Spring Festival is getting closer, and now it looks rather impossible for me to continue my planned journey. This is just like the saying, 'A traveler finds himself stranded in an isolated area.' I'm afraid I have to stay at the inn until after the Spring Festival." Dalang said, "But the inn is not a place for you to spend the Spring Festival. Please stay at my place for a few days, if you don't mind my modest abode. I would like to have the pleasure of your company over meals and tea. You may schedule your trip for Guanzhong after the Spring Festival. What do you think of that?"

Man said, "I was a lot of bother to you when staying at the inn. I'm afraid that my moving into your home will cause more inconvenience. You've treated me with great benevolence and I feel sorry that I may not be able to return your kindness later." Dalang responded, "All men are



切惶愧耳。”大郎道：“四海一家。况且秀才是个读书之人，前程万里。他日不忘村落之中有此老朽，便是愿足，何必如此相拘哉？”

元来焦大郎固然本性好客，却又看得满生仪容俊雅，丰度超群，语言倜傥，料不是落后的，所以一意周全他，也是满生有缘，得遇此人。果然叫店小二店中发了行李，到焦家来。是日焦大郎安排晚饭与满生同吃，满生一席之间，谈吐如流，更加酒兴豪迈，痛饮不醉。大郎一发投机，以为相见之晚，直吃到兴尽方休，安置他书房中歇宿了不提。

大郎有一室女，名唤文姬，年方一十八岁，美丽不凡，聪慧无比。焦大郎不肯轻许人家，要在本处寻个衣冠子弟，读书君子，赘在家里，照管暮年。因他是个市户出身，一时没有高门大族来求他的，以下富室痴儿，他又不肯。高不凑，低不就，所以蹉跎过了。那文姬年已长大，风情之事，尽知相慕。只为家里来往的人，庸流凡辈颇多，没有看得上眼的。听得说父亲在酒店中，引得外方一个读书秀才来到，他便在里头东张西张，要看他怎生样的人物。那满生仪容举止，尽看得过，便也有一二分动心了。这也是焦大郎的不是，便做道疏财仗义，要做好人，只该赍发满生些少，打发他走路才是。况且室无老妻，家有闺女，那满生非亲非戚，为何留在家里宿歇？只为好着几





brothers. Further more, you're a learned man, full of promises. Once you make a name for yourself in the future and still remember me, an old man living in the remote country, I will feel quite content. Why, I wonder, are you showing so much reserve and courtesy?"

Dalang was, in fact, a person who enjoyed a social life. He took to Man and did his best to accommodate him because of the young man's good looks, civilized conduct and eloquent speech. Man was lucky to encounter such a good man. The waiter from the inn brought over his baggage, and Dalang had dinner with Man that evening. The guest talked eloquently and drank profusely in high spirits, with no sign of intoxication, while the host enjoyed the dinner, feeling sorry that he had had few chances of pleasure like this in the past. When they were tired, a room was arranged for Man to retire.

Dalang had an eighteen-year-old daughter named Wenji, who was unmatched both in beauty and intelligence. The father would not marry her off to an ordinary person. He wanted to find her a husband in the local area, who, refined and literate, would come and live with his daughter so that he himself might be taken care of in his later years. However, his civil social position never attracted the attention of influential families in terms of marriage, and mediocre young men from wealthy families were beneath his notice. Therefore his choice of marriage for his daughter was a dilemma to him, and the years flashed past until Wenji was a grown-up.

Now, with enough knowledge of love and marriage, the girl paid attention to whichever young men came into her sight. But most of the visitors to her house were commonplace, none of them capturing her fancy. As she learned her father had brought a scholar home from the nearby inn, she fidgeted in her room, hoping to catch a glimpse of him. Man's appearance and manner were impressive and her passion was somewhat stirred up.

This was partly Dalang's fault. It was generous of him to help Master Man in his time of need, but Dalang should have given the young man some money for traveling expenses and sent him on his journey. Because Dalang was a widower, living with his unmarried daughter, why should he go out of his way to accommodate Man at his home? It was true that

杯酒，贪个人作伴，又见满生可爱，倾心待他。谁想满生是个轻薄后生，一来看见大郎殷勤，道是敬他人才，安然托大，忘其所以。二来晓得内有亲女，美貌及时，未曾许人，也就怀着希冀之意，指望图他为妻。又不好自开得口，待看机会。日挨一日，径把关中的念头丢过一边，再不提起了。

焦大郎终日懵懵醉乡，没些搭煞，不加提防。怎当得他每两下烈火干柴，你贪我爱，各自有心，竟自勾搭上了。情到浓时，未免不避形迹。焦大郎也见了些光景，有些疑心起来。大凡天下的事，再经有心人冷眼看不起的。起初满生在家，大郎无日不与他同饮同坐，毫无说话。比及大郎疑心了，便觉满生饮酒之间，没心没想，言语参差，好些破绽出来。

大郎一日推个事故，走出门去了。半日转来，只见满生醉卧书房，风飘衣起，露出里面一件衣服来。看去有些红色，像是女人袄子模样，走到身边仔细看时，正是女儿文姬身上的，又吊着一个交颈鸳鸯的香囊，也是文姬手绣的。大惊诧异道：“奇怪！奇怪！有这等事？”满生睡梦之中，听得喊叫，突然惊起，急敛衣襟不迭，已知为大郎看见，面如土色。大郎道：“秀才身上衣服，从何而来？”满生晓得瞒不过，只得诌个谎道：“小生身上单寒，忍不过了，向令爱姐姐处，看老丈有旧衣借一件。不想令爱竟将一件女袄拿出来，小生怕冷，不敢推辞，权穿在此衣内。”大郎道：“秀才要衣服，只消替老夫讲，岂有与闺中





Dalang loved drinking with friends and, greatly attracted by Man's personality, was glad to treat him well. But it never struck Dalang that his guest might not be honest. Man took advantage of his host's hospitality and respect for learning, and gradually put on an air of arrogance. He also had the thought in mind that, because the old man had a beautiful daughter, he might be fortunate enough to marry the woman. As Master Man found it hard to get this idea across, he had to wait as the days went by, and his plan for going to the Guanzhong region was thrown into oblivion.

Jiao Dalang indulged himself in daily drinking, unwatchful against his guest. The attraction that Master Man and Wenji showed to one another gradually grew into a passionate love and they carried on with each other behind the old man's back. But their frequent contact eventually revealed their affair to others. Occasionally their behavior caught Dalang's attention, and suspicion rose in him. Attention produces understanding. At the beginning of his stay, Master Man had easy and free talks with Dalang each day over wine. As Dalang became skeptical later, he realized that Master Man was absent-minded and confusingly verbose while drinking wine with him, certainly not the person he had been earlier.

One day Dalang went out on an excuse and came back half a day later. He found Man asleep from tipsiness in his study. A gust of wind caught the young man's garments, revealing underneath a reddish dress, like something a lady usually wore. Dalang stepped forward to take a closer look. It was indeed his daughter's dress, over which dangled a sachet with the design of a couple of mandarin ducks on it, embroidered by his daughter. Astonished, the old man let out a cry, "How strange!" Awakened, Man got up and hastily adjusted his clothing. His face became ghastly white, knowing Dalang had seen the dress he had on. "Where did you get that dress you're wearing, master?" asked Dalang. Realizing that he could no longer deny that dress, Man quickly made up a story by saying, "I didn't have enough clothing and couldn't stand the cold. So I went to see your daughter, hoping to borrow some clothes of yours. But she offered me one of her own. I felt the cold and didn't hesitate to take it and wear it underneath my garments." Dalang replied, "If you needed clothing, you should have talked to me about the matter. How can you have personal



女子自相往来的事？是我养得女儿不成器了。”抽身望里边就走。恰撞着女儿身边一个丫头，叫名青箱，一把挝过来道：“你好好实说姐姐与那满秀才的事情，饶你的打！”青箱慌了，只得抵赖道：“没曾见甚么事情。”大郎焦躁道：“还要胡说，眼见得身上袄子多脱与他穿着了！”青箱没奈何，遮饰道：“姐姐见爹爹十分敬重满官人，平日两下撞见时，也与他见个礼。他今日告诉身上寒冷，故此把衣服与他，别无甚说话。”大郎道：“女人家衣服，岂肯轻与人着！况今日我又不在家，满秀才酒气喷人，是那里吃的？”青箱推道不知。大郎道：“一发胡说了，他难道再有别处啜酒？他方才已对我说了，你若不实招，我活活打死你！”青箱晓得没推处，只得把从前勾搭的事情一一说了。

大郎听罢，气得抓耳挠腮，没个是处，喊道：“不成才的歪货！他是别路来的，与他做下了事，打点怎的？”青箱说：“姐姐今日见爹爹不在，私下摆个酒盒，要满官人对天罚誓，你娶我嫁，终身不负，故此与他酒吃了。又脱一件衣服，一个香囊，与他做纪念的。”大郎道：“怎了！怎了！”叹口气道：“多是我自家热心肠的不是，不消说了！”反背了双手，踱出外边来。

文姬见父亲挝了青箱去，晓得有些不尴尬。仔细听时，一句句说到真处来。在里面正急得要上吊。忽见青箱走到面前，



contact with a young lady in her maidenhood? My daughter is disgraceful!”

Thus said, he marched toward the inside of the house. A servant-girl, Qing Xiang by name, was going out at that moment and bumped into him. Dalang grabbed her and said, “Tell me everything about your young lady’s relation with that scholar and I’ll spare you a flogging!” Very much scared, Qing Xiang stammered around for a cover-up, and then said, “I haven’t seen anything about that.” Dalang became irritated. “Don’t fool me!” he shouted. “I’ve seen her dress on him.”

Knowing she was in a dilemma, the servant-girl, still not telling the whole story, said, “Because the young lady saw that you treated him with respect, she showed courtesy each time she met him. When he told her he felt cold today, she lent him one of her dresses. They didn’t talk about anything else.” Dalang then said, “Is it decent conduct for a young lady to lend a man one of her dresses? I was out this morning, but when I came back, I found the young man smelling of alcohol. Where did he get the drinks?” Qing Xiang hemmed and hawed. “I really have no idea about it,” she said. Dalang shouted, “Bullshit! Did he have anywhere else to go for a drink? He told me everything about it just now. You’d better tell me the truth, or I’ll beat you to death!” Having no other choice, Qing Xiang had to tell him the whole story as it was.

Anger rose in Dalang. He trembled and cried, “What a good-for-nothing! And she had an affair with a stranger. What shall I do next?” Qing Xiang said, “My young lady took the chance while you were away to set up food and drink. She asked the scholar to take an oath that they would get married and be faithful throughout the rest of their lives. They drank together. Then my young lady took off her dress and gave it, together with a sachet, to him as a souvenir.” Dalang howled, “What should I do then?” Then, with a sigh, he muttered, “It’s all my fault for being hospitable. I can blame nobody else.” He walked out with his hands clasped behind his back.

Meanwhile, seeing that her father was questioning Qing Xiang, Wenji knew something had gone wrong. She secretly overheard Qing Xiang’s thorough account of the story. She was frightened. When Qing Xiang came into her room, Wenji knew that her father had left. Wenji collected



已知父亲出去了，才定了性，对青箱道：“事已败露至此，却怎么了？我不如死休！”青箱道：“姐姐不要性急！我看爹爹叹口气，自怨不是，走了出去，到有几分成事的意思在那里。”文姬道：“怎见得？”青箱道：“爹爹极敬重满官人，已知有了此事，若是而今赶逐了他去，不但恶识了，把从前好情多丢去，却怎生了结姐姐？他今出去，若问得满官人不曾娶妻的，毕竟还配合了才好住手。”文姬道：“但愿是如此便好。”

果然大郎走出去，思量了一回，竟到书房中带着怒容问满生道：“秀才，你家中可曾有妻未？”满生跼蹐无地，战战兢兢回言道：“小生湖海飘流，实未曾有妻。”大郎道：“秀才家既读诗书，也该有些行止！吾与你本是一面不曾相识，怜你客途，过为拯救，岂知你所为不义若此！点污了人家儿女，岂得君子之行？”满生惭愧难容，下地叩头道：“小生罪该万死！小生受老丈深恩，已为难报。今为儿女之情，一时不能自禁，猖狂至此。若蒙海涵，小生此生以死相报，誓不忘高天厚地之恩。”大郎又叹口气道：“事已至此，虽悔何及！总是我生女不肖，致受此辱。今既为汝污，岂可别嫁？汝若不嫌地远，索性赘入我家，做了女婿，养我终身，我也叹了这口气罢！”满生听得此言，就是九重天上飞下一纸赦书来，怎不满心欢喜？又



herself together and said to Qing Xiang, "Now that my father knows everything, what should I do? I would rather die!" Qing Xiang consoled her by saying, "Don't worry. I saw your father sigh, blaming himself. I guess he does not wholly object to your love." Wenji asked, "How do you know it?"

Qing Xiang replied, "He has held Master Man in high esteem. If he should throw him out, he will offend the scholar and the hospitality he has showed will be reversed. And where would that leave you, his daughter? I think your father is going to talk to Man. If he makes sure that he is not married, he might agree to your marriage." "I hope this is true," said Wenji.

Exactly as Qing Xiang had predicted, Dalang went out contemplatively. Then he turned around and made his way into Man's study. "Do you have a wife at home?" he asked Man sternly. Shivering in panic, Man murmured in reply, "I've been a vagabond and never got married." Then Dalang said, "You're a learned man. You should know the code of decent conduct. I didn't know you before, but I felt sympathetic for you after seeing you in trouble. So I did my best to help you. But what a despicable thing you have done, ruining my daughter's reputation? That's something utterly beyond a gentleman's conduct?" With a deep sense of shame, Master Man fell to his knees and kowtowed, saying, "I'm terribly guilty of the offense against you. I feel an immense gratitude for what you have done for me. But I was driven by my passion and committed an injury to you. If you pardon me this time, I will dedicate myself to you in return and never forget your kindness for the rest of my life."

Dalang sighed and said, "Well, since what is done cannot be undone, I should take the blame in that I didn't bring up my daughter with good morals so she has been disgraced. Since you have had an affair with her, how can I marry her off to someone else? I suggest that you move into my home and stay with us as my son-in-law, if you don't mind the distance from your native place. I will be satisfied to have someone taking care of me in my advanced years."

Dalang's words filled Master Man with boundless joy, as if a special amnesty had been granted to a criminal. He dropped to his knees for



叩着头道：“若是如此玉成，满某即粉身碎骨，难报深恩！满某父母双亡，家无妻子，便当奉侍终身，岂再他往？”大郎道：“只怕后生家看得容易了，他日负起心来——”满生道：“小生与令爱恩深义重，已设誓过了，若有负心之事，教满某不得好死！”大郎见他言语真切，抑且没奈何了，只得胡乱拣个日子，摆些酒宴，配合了二人。正是：

绮罗丛里唤新人，锦绣窝中看旧物。

虽然后娶属先奸，此夜恩情翻较密。

满生与文姬，两个私情，得成正果。天从人愿，喜出望外。文姬对满生道：“妾见父亲敬重君子，一时仰慕，不以自献为羞，致于失身。原料一朝事露，不能到底，惟有一死而已。今幸得父亲配合，终身之事已完，此是死中得生，万千侥幸，他日窃不可忘！”满生道：“小生飘蓬浪迹，幸蒙令尊一见如故，解衣推食，恩已过厚；又得遇卿不弃，今日成此良缘，真恩上加恩。他日有负，诚非人类！”两人愈加如胶似漆，自不必说。满生在家无事，日夜读书，思量应举。焦大郎见他如此，道是许嫁得人，暗里心欢。自此内外无间。

过了两年，时值东京春榜招贤，满生即对丈人说要去应举。





another kowtow, swearing, “I couldn’t pay for your benevolence even with my life. My parents are dead and I’m single. I’ll be willing to serve you for the rest of my life. I will go nowhere.” Dalang said, “That’s easier said than done, I’m afraid. I wonder whether you’ll become unfaithful later on.” Master Man said, “Your daughter and I are deeply in love. We’ve taken an oath. If I turn out to be disloyal, let me die a wretched death!” Seeing that he was sincere, Dalang had to be content with what he had promised. A date for the marriage was picked at random and a feast was held to celebrate the marriage of the young couple. The marriage is depicted as follows:

The bride in new silk attire arranged;  
In draped bed none of their parts were strange.  
Though the lady was made honest after conduct amiss,  
The wedding night was spent in no less bliss.

Master Man and Wenji were overjoyed that their initial secret infatuation had burgeoned into a happy marriage. Wenji said to him, “At first I saw my father respected you, and out of admiration for you I gave up my virginity at the risk of dishonoring myself. After my father learned about our affair, I didn’t think we could go on any further, and death would be my only choice. Fortunately, my father backed down and granted our marriage. Now I’m very happy that I narrowly escaped death. You mustn’t forget this.” “I was nothing but a vagrant,” Man said. “But your father treated me as if I were an old friend, providing me with food and clothing, with far more than I can ever repay. Moreover, you didn’t frown upon me, but loved me deeply so that we could get married. This is the double kindness I’ve received. If I were to turn ungrateful, I should not be considered human.”

Naturally, they grew more passionate. Man, not occupied, read day and night, hoping to take part in the next imperial court examinations. Dalang was pleased that he had gotten a worthy son-in-law, and felt very happy with his present life.

In the spring two years later, notices were issued that the imperial court examinations were to be conducted at the capital city. Man expressed to his father-in-law his wish to participate in the examinations. Dalang



焦大郎收拾了盘费，赍发他去。满生别了丈人、妻子，竟到东京，一举登第。才得唱名，满生心里放文姬不下，晓得选除未及，思量道：“汴梁去凤翔不远，今幸已脱白挂绿，何不且到丈人家里，与他们欢庆一番，再来未迟？”此时满生已有仆人使唤，不比前日。便叫收拾行李，即时起身。

不多几日，已到了焦大郎门首。大郎先已有人报知，是日整备迎接，鼓乐喧天，闹动了一个村坊。满生绿袍槐简，摇摆进来。见了丈人，便是纳头四拜。拜罢，长跪不起，口里称谢道：“小婿得有今日，皆赖丈人提携；若使当日困穷旅店，没人救济，早已填了丘壑，怎能勾此身荣贵？”叩头不止。大郎扶起道：“此皆贤婿高才，致身青云之上，老夫何功之有？当日困穷失意，乃贤士之常；今日衣锦归来，有光老夫多矣！”满生又请文姬出来，交拜行礼，各各相谢。其日邻里看的挨挤不开，个个说道：“焦大郎能识好人，又且平日好施恩德，今日受此荣华之报，那女儿也落了好处了。”有一等轻薄的道：“那女儿闻得先与他有须说话了，后来配他的。”有的道：“也是大郎有心把女儿许他，故留他在家里住这几时。便做道先有



agreed and gathered a sum of money for his traveling expenses before he sent his son-in-law off on the journey. Leaving his father-in-law and wife behind, Master Man reached the capital city, took the examinations and passed them with flying colors. Soon after this, he and other successful examinees had an audience with the emperor. Master Man, missing his wife and realizing that it would take some time before he could receive the formal appointment to a government position, thought to himself, "It's not a long distance to Fengxiang. My white civil robe has been replaced by a green official one. Why not take the time to go home and be together with them for a celebration!" Now tended by servants, Master Man called on them to do the packing and then he set off for Fengxiang at once.

In a few days he was at the gate of Dalang's house. Dalang had received a message about his son-in-law's imminent arrival, and he busied himself the whole day with preparations for a welcoming homecoming. With the beat of drums and the playing of music, Man strode into the house in his green robe with a white skirt. As soon as he met his father-in-law, he fell to his knees to make four kowtows before him. He didn't rise to his feet immediately, instead, he uttered his words of gratitude, "I owe my present-day success to your help," he said. "If I had been left alone and penniless at that inn, I would have been dead long ago and would never have achieved such wealth and honor." Then he started kowtowing again. Dalang raised him up, replying, "Your talent deserves this grace. Don't mention my help. You had adversity in those days like any virtuous person often undergoes. You've graced me a great deal with your return in honor." Then Man met Wenji formally with an exchange of compliments.

Neighbors thronged around the house to see Man. Some said, "Jiao has a keen eye for virtuous person and he is benevolent to others. This is indeed a reward he deserves. And his daughter benefits from a good husband, too." The sarcastic remarks, however, were, "It's said the girl had an affair with the man before marriage." Another person added, "Dalang had the idea in his mind that he would marry his daughter to this young man. That's why he let him stay with them. It doesn't matter if they had an affair. They have become husband and wife anyway and so



些什么，左右是他夫妻，而今一床锦被遮盖了，正好做院君夫人去，还有何妨？”议论之间，只见许多人牵羊担酒，持花捧币，尽是些地方邻里亲戚，来与大郎作贺称庆。

大郎此时把个身子抬在半天里了，好不风骚！一面置酒款待女婿，就先留几个相知亲戚相陪。次日又置酒请这一干作贺的，先是亲眷，再是邻里，一连吃了十来日酒。焦大郎费掉了好些钱钞，正是欢喜破财，不在心上。满生与文姬夫妻二人，愈加厮敬厮爱，欢畅非常。连青箱也算做日前有功之人，另眼看觑，别是一分颜色。有一首词，单道着得第归来，世情不同光景：

世事从来天定，天公任意安排。寒酸忽地上金阶，立看许多渗漉。熟识还须再认，至亲也要疑猜。夫妻行事别开怀，另似一张卵袋。

话说满生夫荣妻贵，暮乐朝欢。焦大郎本是个慷慨心性，愈加扯大，道是靠着女儿女婿，不忧下半世不富贵了。尽心竭力，供养着他两个，惟其所用。满生总是慷他人之慨，落得快活。过了几时，选期将及，要往京师。大郎道是选官须得使用才有好地方，只得把膏腴之产尽数卖掉了，凑着偌多银两，与



the disgrace is erased. She will be a ranking lady. What more can you say about them?" Amid the gossip came a number of people leading sheep and shouldering jugs of wine, most of them being close neighbors and relatives presenting their congratulations to Dalang.

At this moment, Dalang was totally carried away with these flatteries and felt quite proud. He threw a party for his son-in-law, inviting a few close kinsmen and friends for company. The next day another party was held for those who had come to see them with their congratulations. The celebrations continued for about ten days, with relatives and neighbors treated in succession. It cost Dalang a lot of money, but he felt exactly as the saying goes, "One spends generously at a time of bliss." At the same time, Master Man and Wenji enjoyed happy moments of love. Even Qing Xiang received attention and respect for her services in the past. The following *ci* poem may well describe the fickleness of the world when a man returns home after passing the imperial examination:

Man proposes, God disposes.

By passing the imperial examination,

A man suddenly extricates himself from his shabby  
and miserable circumstances.

All the people around will betray their hideous features.

Former acquaintances have to consider their relationships  
in a new light,

While mutual distrust arises among family members.

Husband and wife go on a merrymaking spree.

As the husband and wife, now in their glory, spent their days making merry, Dalang, in all his kindness, had gone on a spending spree and his expenses kept climbing. He counted on the wealth of his daughter and son-in-law to keep him for the rest of his life, so he spared nothing in delighting the young couple. Man was a person who always enjoyed himself at others' expense. As the appointment of government position drew near, Man was about to leave. Dalang believed that in order to be appointed to a choice position, Man needed to present the official with some gifts. So Dalang sold the best part of his real estate and scraped together an impressive sum of silver for the use of his son-in-law. This

满生带去。焦大郎家事原只如常，经这一番弄，已此十去八九，只靠着女婿选官之后，再图兴旺，所以毫不吝惜。

满生将行之夕，文姬对他道：“我与你恩情非浅。前日应举之时，已曾经过一番离别，恰是心里指望好日，虽然牵系，不甚伤情。今番得第已过，只要去选地方，眼见得只有好处来了，不知为甚么心中只觉凄惨，不舍得你别去，莫非有甚不祥？”满生道：“我到京即选，甲榜科名必为美官。一有地方，便着人从来迎你与丈人同到任所，安享荣华。此是算得定的日子，别不多时的，有甚么不祥之处？切勿挂虑！”文姬道：“我也晓得是这般的，只不知为何有些异样，不由人眼泪要落下来，更不知为甚缘故。”满生道：“这番热闹了多时，今我去了，顿觉冷静，所以如此。”文姬道：“这个也是。”两人絮聒了一夜，无非是些恩情浓厚，到底不忘的话。

次日天明，整顿衣装，别了大郎父女，带了仆人，径往东京选官去了。这里大郎与文姬父女两个，互相安慰，把家中事件，收拾并叠，只等京中差人来接，同去赴任，悬悬指望不题。

且说满生到京，得授临海县尉。正要收拾起身，转到凤翔，接了丈人妻子一同到任，拣了日子，将次起行。只见门外一个人大踏步走将进来，口里叫道：“兄弟，我那里不寻得你到，你



fundraising consumed almost all the possessions that Dalang had, since he was not wealthy in the first place. However, he was at ease, anticipating a recovery after his son-in-law's appointment to a government position.

As Man was leaving, Wenji said to him, "We're deeply in love. Before you left for the imperial court examinations, I suffered a lot from the sadness of parting from you. But I knew we were expecting something good from your trip, so I was not too depressed. It's different this time. Though you have passed the exams and will assume office, I have a strange sense of foreboding in seeing you off. Do you think there's going to be bad luck for us?"

Man replied, "I'm going to take office as one of the top winners in imperial court examinations. I should be assigned one of the best government positions. As soon as this is done, I will come back to fetch you and your father. We'll go to live there with untold wealth and high honors. All this is guaranteed and won't take long. Why are you talking about bad luck? Don't worry about it."

Wenji said, "I know this. However, I have a strange feeling and I can't hold back my tears. I don't know why." Man said, "Well, I guess it's because you're aware of the forthcoming loneliness following the revels and my departure." Wenji agreed, "Maybe you're right." They didn't stop talking intimately in this way, but reassured one another of their love until dawn.

The next day saw Man packing his clothes, taking leave of his wife and father-in-law, and setting off with his servant on his journey to the capital city for his assumption of office. Dalang and Wenji comforted each other as they started straightening up their own things in the hope that they would be sent for in the days to come so as to join Man in his tenure of office.

Upon his arrival in the capital city, Man was appointed the position of Director of Public Security of Linhai County. As he scheduled his departure and got ready to return to Fengxiang County to pick up his wife and father-in-law, a man stalked into his room, addressing a greeting to him. "Hello, brother," the man said. "I couldn't find you anywhere. But you're here!"



元来到此！”满生抬头看时，却是淮南族中一个哥哥，满生连忙接待。那哥哥道：“兄弟几年远游，家中绝无消耗，举族疑猜，不知兄弟却在那里，到京一举成名，实为莫大之喜。家中叔叔枢密相公见了金榜，即便打发差人到京来相接，四处寻访不着，不知兄弟又到那里去了。而今选有地方，少不得出京家去。恁哥哥在此做些小前程，干办已满，收拾回去，已顾下船在汴河，行李多下船了。各处挨问，得见兄弟，你打迭已完，只须同你哥哥回去，见见亲族，然后到任便了。”满生心中一肚皮要到凤翔，那里曾有归家去的念头？见哥哥说来意思不对，却又不好直对他说，只含糊回道：“小弟还有些别件事干，且未要到家里。”那哥哥道：“却又作怪！看你的装裹多停当了，只要走路的，不到家里却又到那里？”满生道：“小弟流落时节，曾受了一个人的大恩，而今还要向西路去谢他。”那哥哥道：“你虽然得第，还是空囊，谢人先要礼物为先，这些事自然是到了任再处。况且此去到任所，一路过东，少不得到家边过，是顺路却不走，反走过西去怎的？”满生此时只该把实话对他讲，说个不得已的缘故，他也不好阻当得。争奈满生有些不老气，恰像还要把这件事瞒人的一般，并不明说，但只东支西吾，凭那哥哥说得天花乱坠，只是不肯回去。那哥哥大怒起来，骂道：“这样轻薄无知的人！书生得了科名，难道不





Looking up, Man recognized that he was one of his cousins in their large clan. Man rose to welcome him. The man said, "In the past few years, you've been away from home traveling around. You didn't even send a word home, but kept our whole family in suspense. Then you suddenly emerged from nowhere in the capital city and stunned the world with your fame. Our entire family was overjoyed. Your uncle, the Deputy Director of the Privy Council, saw your name on the list of winners in the exams and sent people to bring you back home. But you were nowhere to be found. Now that you've been appointed an official position, you should spare some time and come home to see us. I came here for some business and I'm done now. So I have rented a boat down there at the bank of the Bianhe River, with my belongings thrown into it. I've been looking for you. Since you've gotten everything ready, let's go home together and meet our kinsmen before your departure for your office."

Man's mind was on Fengxiang and not on his old home. His cousin's words ran against his will, but he didn't want to make this clear. So he gave a perfunctory reply, "I've got other business to tend to, Brother. I can't go home right now." His cousin said, "You're kidding! Look at your packed baggage. You're ready to take off. Where are you going if you don't return home?" Man replied, "I received very generous treatment from a man during my time of difficulty. Now I'm going west to express my thanks to him." His cousin responded, "You are a newly appointed official and are not rich yet. You need money to buy gifts for your benefactor. You should take your time to do that after you assume office. Besides, you can stop at home on your way east to the place of your office. Why are you taking the opposite direction and going instead to the west?"

At this point, Man should have told his cousin the truth and expressed his regrets for being unable to return home, and the latter might have shown some understanding. However, not experienced in such situations, Man kept his own counsel, equivocating this way and that way, refusing to change his mind no matter how much his cousin pushed him. Then flaring up, his cousin swore, "What a shallow, irrational bum you are! Should one be content with staying away from home, after making a



该归来会一会宗族邻里？这也罢了，父母坟墓边，也不该去拜见一拜见的？我和你各处去问一问，世间有此事否？”满生见他发出话来，又说得正气了，一时也没得回他，通红了脸，不敢开口。那哥哥见他不再说了，叫些随来的家人，把他的要紧箱笼，不由他分说，只一搬竟自搬到船上去了。满生没办法，心里想道：“我久不归家了，况我落魄出来，今衣锦还乡，也是好事。便到了家里，再去凤翔，不过迟到些日子，也不为碍。”对那哥哥道：“既恁地，便和哥哥同到家去走走来。”只因这一去，有分交：

绿袍年少，别牵系足之绳；青鬓佳人，立化望夫之石。

满生同那哥哥回到家里，果然这番宗族邻里比前不同，尽多是呵痒捧屁的。满生心里也觉快活，随去见那亲叔叔满贵。那叔叔是枢密副院，致仕家居。既是显官，又是一族之长，见了侄儿，晓得是新第回来，十分欢喜道：“你一向出外不归，只道是流落他乡，岂知却能挣扎得第做官回来！诚然是与宗族争气的。”满生满口逊谢。满枢密又道：“却还有一件事，要与你说。你父母早亡，壮年未娶。今已成名，嗣续之事最为紧要。前日我见你登科录上有名，便已为你留心此事。宋都朱从简大夫有一次女，我打听得才貌双全。你未来时，我已着人去相求，



name for himself, forgetting all about his family members, relatives and close neighbors? If you feel pushed to do that, that's fine. But won't you come back and pay tribute at the grave of your parents? Let's talk to people and see whether your conduct is acceptable or not."

His cousin's forceful rebuke brought a flush of shame to Man's cheeks, who found himself unable and afraid as well, to give a reply. Seeing that Man was thus silenced, his cousin called the servants to move Man's carry-on suitcase onto the waiting boat, regardless of his protests. Unable to stop him, Man figured, "I've been away from home quite a long time. I was a wretch when I left home. It's not unsuitable for me to go back home now with honor. And I don't think it will be of grave consequence if I go home before I return to Fengxiang." Then he turned to his cousin and said, "Okay, I will go home with you." However, this trip brought a result that:

While the green-robed youth was bound to new conjugal ties,

The dark-haired beauty was left in eternal hopeless waiting.

Man went back home with his cousin. His impression of the relatives and neighbors, most of them despicable flatterers, struck him quite differently than it had before. But he was satisfied with the change in his life. He went straight to see his uncle, Man Gui, who was now not only high on the social ladder as a retired deputy director of the Privy Council but was also the patriarch for the whole clan.

Seeing his nephew return with honor, the uncle was delighted. "You've been away from home all these years," the uncle said. "I thought you must have settled somewhere else and I never expected you would finally pull through, passed the imperial examinations and come back home with the appointment to a government position. You truly have done our family credit." Man made a lot of modest remarks. His uncle continued, "I've one more thing to talk over with you. Your parents died long ago and you missed the prime of youth for marriage. Now that you're established with honor and fame, the first priority should be your marriage. The other day when I saw your name on the list of winners in the imperial court exams, I began thinking about this matter. I have heard that the second daughter of Zhu Congjian, a senior official working in the capital city, is beautiful



他已许下了，此极是好姻缘。我知那临海前官尚未离任，你到彼之期还可从容。且完此亲事，夫妻一同赴任，岂不为妙？”满生见说，心下吃惊，半晌作声不得。满生若是个有主意的，此时便该把凤翔流落、得遇焦氏之事，是长是短，备细对叔父说一遍，道“成亲已久，负他不得，须辞了朱家之婚，一刀两断”，说得决绝，叔父未必不依允。争奈满生讳言的是前日孟浪出游光景，恰像凤翔的事是私下做的，不肯当场明说，但只口里唧唧。枢密道：“你心下不快，敢虑着事体不周备么？一应聘定礼物，前日我多已出过。目下成亲所费，总在我家支持，你只打点做新郎便了。”满生道：“多谢叔叔盛情，容侄儿心下再计较一计较。”枢密正色道：“事已定矣，有何计较？”满生见他词色严毅，不敢回言，只得唯唯而出。

到了家里，闷闷了一回，想道：“若是应承了叔父所言，怎生撇得文姬父女恩情？欲待辞绝了他的，不但叔父这一段好情不好辜负，只那尊严性子也不好冲撞他。况且姻缘又好，又不要我费一些财物周折，也不该挫过！做官的，人娶了两房，原



and intelligent. I sent a matchmaker to talk to him about his daughter's marrying you and he granted the betrothal. It's going to be a wonderful marriage for you. I know the Director of Public Security of Linhai County has not been relieved of his position yet. You'll have plenty of time before you have to be there to replace him in office. I think you should get married first and then leave with your wife for your new position. Don't you think that's a good idea?"

His uncle's words took Man aback and, for a while, he found himself completely tongue-tied. If Man had known what was what, he would have told his uncle everything about his earlier predicament and happy encounter with Dalang in Fengxiang and made the clear-cut statement, "I'm sorry but I got married long ago and should be faithful to my wife. I request you terminate this betrothal with the daughter of the Zhu." If he had displayed such resolution, his uncle would not have pushed any further. However, Man would not give tongue to his early vagabond experience and marriage in Fengxiang as if it was a disgrace. He simply equivocated his disagreement. Then his uncle said again, "I see you are finding it hard to make up your mind. Are you worried about the lack of a satisfactory arrangement for the marriage on my part? I sent betrothal gifts to the girl's family the other day. You can count on me for the rest of the marriage expenses. You just get ready to be the bridegroom." Man replied, "I'm much obliged for your kindness. But I think I need more time to think about this marriage." His uncle put on a grave look and said, "Now everything's ready. What else do you want to think about?" His uncle's harsh voice and stern face silenced Man, and he withdrew from the room in submission.

Back in his own room, Man became lost in thought. If I yield to my uncle's demand, he thought to himself, what should I do about the kind treatment I received from Wenji and her father? But if I reject this arranged marriage, I will not only hurt my uncle's feelings by ignoring his good intentions, but I will hardly be able to speak out my refusal in front of him, given his pride. Admittedly, this will be a good match for me in terms of marriage and it will cost me nothing. I shouldn't let this chance slip away. Being married to two women at the same time is not uncommon



不为多。欲待两头绊着，文姬是先娶的，须让他做大；这边朱家，又是官家小姐，料不肯做小，却又两难。”心里真似十五个吊桶打水，七上八落的，反添了许多不快活。踌躇了几日，委决不下。

到底满生是轻薄性子，见说朱家是宦室之女，好个模样，又不费己财，先自动了十二分火。只有文姬父女这一点念头，还有些良心不能尽绝。肚里展转了几番，却就变起卦来。大凡人只有初起这一念，是有天理的，依着行去，好事尽多。若是多转了两个念头，便有许多奸贪诈伪、没天理的心来了。满生只为亲事摆脱不开，过了两日，便把一条肚肠换了转来，自想道：“文姬与我起初只是两个偷情，真得个外遇罢了，后来虽然做了亲，尤不是明婚正配。况且我既为官，做我配的须是名门大族，焦家不过市井之人，门户低微，岂堪受朝廷封诰作终身伉俪哉？我且成了这边朱家的亲，日后他来通消息时，好言回他，等他另嫁了便是。倘若必不肯去，事到其间，要我收留，不怕他不低头做小了。”

算计已定，就去回覆枢密。枢密拣个黄道吉日，行礼到朱大夫家，娶了过来。那朱家既是宦家，又且嫁的女婿是个新科，愈加要齐整，妆奁丰厚，百物具备。那朱氏女生长宦门，模样



among government officials. But the problem is that I would be tied to both women. I'll let Wenji be my first lady because I married her first, the young lady from the Zhus, the descendant of a noble family, will surely refuse to stoop to a position beneath Wenji. That would be a tough nut to crack. He wrestled with such thoughts in a gloomy mood for days on end without solution.

Then Man's frivolous personality began to take a grip over him, as he succumbed to the allure of the fact that Miss Zhu was a good-looking lady from a family of high social position and that the marriage would demand of him no money. But he was still a little conscience-stricken over the thought of his indebtedness to Wenji and her father. The struggle in his mind lingered on for a time before he came to a decision. A person usually acts rationally on his or her initial idea and chances are they will do something good in the end. But if one haggles over his losses and gains, some vicious ideas tend to arise.

Man continued to be obsessed with the idea of marriage for two more days before he made up his mind. As he figured it: "At first I had an affair with Wenji and so she can be counted at most as one of my loves. Though we got married later, our union was not completed through appropriate ceremonies. I'm now a government official and deserve someone of privileged origin to be my life partner. Since the Jiaos are no more than ordinary townsfolk, humble in their social position, is Dalang's daughter suitable to receive the honor of an imperial appointment in the future and of being my wife for the rest of my life? I'll marry Zhu's daughter for the moment. If Wenji comes to see me later on, I'll use gentle words to persuade her into marrying to someone else. If she wants to stay with me, I'll have to keep her. But then she can't refuse to be my concubine."

With this idea in mind, Man went to his uncle to let him know his decision. His uncle chose an auspicious date and went to the house of the Zhus with greetings, and accepted the bride. The Zhu regarded the marriage as an important occasion, given the fact that they were not an ordinary family and their son-in-law was a newly appointed official. The dowry was comprehensive and well prepared. Brought up in an official household, the bride was well known for her beauty, and equally admirable for her



又是著名出色的，真是德、容、言、功，无不具足。满生快活非常，把那凤翔的事丢在东洋大海去了。正是：

花神脉脉殿春残，争赏慈恩紫牡丹。

别有玉盘承露冷，无人起就月中看。

满生与朱氏门当户对，年貌相当，你敬我爱，如胶似漆。满生心里反悔着凤翔多了焦家这件事，却也有时念及，心上有些遣不开。因在朱氏面前，索性把前日焦氏所赠衣服、香囊拿出来，忍着性子，一把火烧了，意思要自此绝了念头。朱氏问其缘故，满生把文姬的事略略说些始末，道：“这是我未遇时节的事，而今既然与你成亲，总不必提及了。”朱氏是个贤慧女子，到说道：“既然未遇时节相处一番，而今富贵了，也不该便绝了他。我不比那世间妒忌妇人，倘或有便，接他来同住过日，未为不可。”怎当得满生负了盟誓，难见他面，生怕他寻将来，不好收场，那里还敢想接他到家里？亦且怕在朱氏面上不好看，一意只是断绝了，回言道：“多谢夫人好意。他是小人家儿女，我这里没消息到他，他自然嫁人去了，不必多事。”自此再不提起。初时满生心中怀着鬼胎，还虑他有时到来，喜得那边也绝无音耗。俗语云：“孝重千斤，日减一斤。”





morals, proper speech and diligence in housework. Man was overjoyed, and thoughts of his connection with Fengxiang seldom again surfaced in his mind.

As spring is drawing to a close,  
All the flowers, with tenderness and loving affection,  
Feast their eyes on the blooming purple peony in Enci Temple in Xi'an.  
The moon is shedding its beams over the cool dew, but in total oblivion.  
None takes the trouble to have a look.

The match was perfect in terms of social status, age and appearance and the couple indulged in deep love. Now Man was bothered with regrets over his former marriage to Wenji. Occasionally those memories of the past slid into his mind and stung for some moments. Therefore, he took out the garment and sachet Wenji had given him and, steeling his heart, set fire to them in front of his new wife in an attempt to sever his links with his previous marriage. As his wife was curious about what he was doing, he briefly recounted to her his marriage with Wenji, and then said, "That's what happened to me when I fell into adversity. Now I'm married to you. Don't mention that any more."

A virtuous woman, his wife said in response, "Since you and she went through hard times together, you shouldn't forget about her once you're prosperous. I'm not one of those jealous wives. If you have a chance someday to bring her here, let her stay with us. I don't mind."

However, as Man had broken the oath he took with Wenji, he didn't want to see her again in case he would face a disgraceful and difficult situation. How could he go even further now to bring Wenji to live with them? Besides, he feared that Zhu might be humiliated if Wenji was brought there. So he rejected Zhu's proposal. He said, "I appreciate your kindness, madam, but she's from lowly origins. If she hears nothing from me for some time, she will surely marry someone else. Don't worry about it, please." With the passing of time, the matter was never brought up again. At first Man was ill at ease with his ignoble motives. He feared that Wenji might come to see him some day. But his anxiety gradually turned to joy as nothing happened for a long time. An old saying goes: "One's strong sense of filial respect for one's older generations fades



满生日远一日，竟自忘怀了。

自当日与朱氏同赴临海任所，后来作尉任满，一连做了四五任美官，连朱氏封赠过了两番。不觉过了十来年，累官至鸿臚少卿，出知齐州。那齐州厅舍甚宽，合家人口住着像意。到任三日，里头收拾已完，内眷人等要出私衙之外，到后堂来看一看。少卿分付衙门人役尽皆出去，屏除了闲人，同了朱氏，带领着几个小厮、丫鬟、家人媳妇，共十来个人，一起到后堂散步，各自东西闲走看耍。

少卿偶然走到后堂右边天井中，见有一小门。少卿推开来看，里头一个穿青的丫鬟，见了少卿，飞也似跑了去。少卿急赶上去看时，那丫鬟早已走入一个破帘内去了。少卿走到帘边，只见帘内走出一个女人来，少卿仔细一看，正是凤翔焦文姬。少卿虚心病，元有些怕见他的，亦且出于不意，不觉惊惶失措。文姬一把扯住少卿，哽哽咽咽哭将起来道：“冤家，你一别十年，向来许多恩情一些也不念及，顿然忘了，真是忍人！”少卿一时心慌，不及问他从何而来，且自辨说道：“我非忘卿，只因归到家中，叔父先已别聘，强我成婚，我力辞不得，所以蹉跎至今，不得来你那里。”文姬道：“你家中之事，我已尽知，不必提起。吾今父亲已死，田产俱无，刚剩得我与青箱两人，别无倚靠。没奈何了，所以千里相投。前日方得到此，门上人又不肯放我进来。求恳再三，今日才许我略在别院



away with each passing day.” Gradually the burden fell from his mind.

With his new wife, he went to Linhai County and took office. In the ten years that followed, his term of office was pleasantly renewed four to five times. His wife Zhu was also twice granted an imperial reward. He was finally promoted to be a deputy minister and took charge of the administration of the Prefecture of Qizhou. Lord Man’s living quarters in Qizhou were spacious, providing the whole family with pleasant housing. Three days after their arrival in Qizhou, the family was well settled and his wife wanted to go out into the backyard for a stroll. So Lord Man, leaving the rest of his retinue behind, accompanied his wife, with a few family relatives and close servant-girls, about ten of them in total, to take a walk around the backyard. They walked at a leisurely pace.

As they walked, a small door to a small yard on the right came into Lord Man’s view. He pushed the door open and his trespass startled a servant-girl in a black dress in this small yard. The girl dashed off and he chased after her, but she vanished instantly behind a ragged door curtain. As Lord Man drew near to the place, a woman emerged from behind the door curtain. A close look at her assured him that it was none other than Wenji from Fengxiang. Lord Man had long loathed the idea of meeting her because of his guilty conscience. The sudden encounter put him in a panic.

Wenji grabbed him and said, sobbing, “You devil! You’ve been away for ten years and you forgot our mutual love. What a hard-hearted person you are! Lord Man was so frightened that the idea never crossed his mind that he should ask her where she had come from. He simply muttered an explanation, “I didn’t forget you. When I got back home, my uncle forced me into marrying a woman he had arranged for me. I tried to reject him, but in vain. I had to yield to his will. I’m sorry I didn’t have an opportunity to come to see you.” Wenji said, “I knew what happened to you. Don’t speak of it any more. But my father has died and our real estate is gone, leaving me and Qing Xiang with nothing and nobody to turn to. We could not keep body and soul together so we traveled thousands of *li* to come here and see you. We arrived here a few days ago and the gatekeeper would not let us in. We pleaded time and again until, finally, we were



空房之内，驻足一驻足，幸而相见。今一身孤单，茫无栖泊，你既有佳偶，我情愿做你侧室，奉事你与夫人，完我余生。前日之事，我也不计较短长，付之一叹罢了！”说一句，哭一句。说罢，又倒在少卿怀里，发声大恸。连青箱也走出来见了，哭做一堆。少卿见他哭得哀切，不由得眼泪也落下来，又恐怕外边有人知觉，连忙止他道：“多是我的不是。你而今不必啼哭，管还你好处。且喜夫人贤慧，你既肯认做一分小，就不难处了。你且消停在此，等我与夫人说去。”

少卿此时也是身不由己的走来对朱氏道：“昔年所言凤翔焦氏之女，间隔了多年，只道他嫁人去了，不想他父亲死了，带了个丫鬟直寻到这里。今若不收留，他没个着落，叫他没处去了。却怎么好？”朱氏道：“我当初原说接了他来家，你自不肯，直误他到此地位，还好不留得他？快请来与我相见。”少卿道：“我说道夫人贤慧。”就走到西边去，把朱氏的说话说与文姬。文姬回头对青箱道：“若得如此，我每且喜有安身之处了。”两人随了少卿，步到后堂，见了朱氏，相叙礼毕。文姬道：“多蒙夫人不弃，情愿与夫人铺床叠被。”朱氏道：“那有此理？只是姐妹相处便了。”就相邀了一同进入衙中。朱氏着人替他收拾起一间好卧房，就着青箱与他同住，随房伏侍。文姬低头伏气，且是小心。朱氏见他如此，甚加怜爱，且是过的和睦。

住在衙中几日了，少卿终是有些羞惭，不过意，缩缩胸脯，



allowed to stay in this empty room in the yard. I'm glad we have met here. Now I'm poor and have nowhere to go. Since you've gotten a perfect match, I would like to serve you and your wife as your concubine so I will be able to live with you for the rest of my life. I won't care the rights and wrongs of the past. I will drop it." As she said this, her sobbing was incessant. Then she tossed herself into his arms and broke into a bitter wail. Qing Xiang came out and joined her in her grief.

Man was quite touched and also shed tears. For fear that they might be seen by others, he quickly comforted her, saying, "It is my fault. Please stop crying. I won't forget that I owe you. Fortunately my wife is kind and virtuous. There won't be any problem if you don't mind being a concubine. Please wait here and let me talk to her."

Having no other alternative, Lord Man had to go to his wife Zhu and say to her, "I told you about the woman from the family of Jiao in Fengxiang. I thought she had probably married somebody else, for I had heard nothing about her for years. However, after her father's death, she has managed to track me down here, along with a servant-girl. If I don't take them, they won't have any place to go. What should I do about them?" Zhu replied, "I told you before that you should bring her here and let her stay with us. But you wouldn't listen to me, and thus put them in this miserable state. How can you send them away? Please bring them here. I want to see them right now."

Lord Man said, "I know you're virtuous." He then went back through the door in the yard and told Wenji what she had said. Turning to Qing Xiang, Wenji said, "I'm so glad we've finally got a place to stay." They followed him into the main yard to meet his wife. After an exchange of greetings, Wenji said, "I very much appreciate your kindness in allowing us to stay, Madam. I would like to serve you, by doing things like making the beds." The wife replied, "What are you talking about! We should treat each other as sisters." Then she led the two of them into the house, had a nice bedroom cleaned up for them, and had Qing Xiang live in the same room to attend Wenji. Wenji swallowed her pride and acted without complaint, while Man's wife Zhu treated her with great compassion and tenderness. Thus the days went by in peace and harmony.



未敢到他房中歇宿去。一日，外厢去吃了酒归来，有些微醺了。望去文姬房中，灯火微明，不觉心中念旧起来。醉后却胆壮了，踉踉跄跄，竟来到文姬面前。文姬与青箱慌忙接着，喜喜欢欢簇拥他去睡了。这边朱氏闻知，笑道：“来这几时，也该到他房里去了。”当夜朱氏收拾了自睡。

到第二日，日色高了，合家多起了身，只有少卿未起。合家人指指点点，笑的话的，道是：“十年不相见了，不知怎地舞弄，这时节还自睡哩！青箱丫头在傍边听得不耐烦，想也倦了，连他也不起来。”有老成的道：“十年的说话，讲也讲他大半夜，怪道天明多睡了去。”众人议论了一日，只不见动静。朱氏梳洗已过，也有些不惬意道：“这时节也该起身了，难道忘了外边坐堂？”同了一个丫鬟走到文姬房前听一听，不听得里面一些声响，推推门看，又是里面关着的。家人每道：“日日此时出外理事去久了，今日迟得不像样，我每不妨催一催。”一个就去敲那房门，初时低声，逐渐声高，直到得乱敲乱叫，莫想里头答应一声。尽来对朱氏道：“有些奇怪了，等他开出来



Altering a certain time in office, Lord Man's guilty conscience still gripped his mind, keeping him from spending a night in Wenji's room with her. One evening, however, he returned home a little intoxicated. Dim candlelight shone light from Wenji's room. This brought back to his mind those intimate days in the past that he had spent with her. He seemed encouraged and heedless under the effects of alcohol as he reeled inside and stood in front of Wenji. Both Wenji and Qing Xiang were delighted and helped him into bed. When his wife Zhu learned about this, a smile sprang to her face and she said, "It's been some time since they came here. He should spend a few nights with her." She turned in alone that night.

The following morning the whole family arose except Lord Man. There was no sound in Wenji's room, though it was well into the day. Remarks spread among the amused household, "See, they haven't seen each other for ten years. Who knows how they are going to cuddle with one another in bed! They're not up yet at this time of the day! Even Qing Xiang must have been bored listening to them. But it's weird that she has not woken up, either." An experienced person said, "They haven't seen each other for ten years. They must have talked to each other about their lives during the past ten years until well into midnight. They probably went to sleep at dawn." The flurry of speculation lasted for a while, but the room still remained silent.

Lord Man's wife Zhu had finished her washing-up. The quietness of Wenji's room puzzled her as well, and so she said, "At this late hour of the morning, he should rise. Should he forget about his duties of observing the morning court office?" She went to Wenji's room with a servant-girl and heard nothing from inside. A push on the door failed to open it, since it was bolted from inside. Others said, "He usually wakes up early in the morning and attends to his official routine. But today, it's strange that he sleeps so late. We may as well remind him of the time." Someone gently knocked on the door and called out. There was no answer. The force of his knocking and calls gradually increased until he was smashing at the door and yelling out. But the room remained dead silent. He then said to Zhu, "This is really unusual! We can't wait until he wakes up. If Your



不得。夫人做主，我们掘开一壁，进去看看。停会相公嗔怪，全要夫人担待。”朱氏道：“这个在我，不妨。”众人尽皆动手，须臾之间，已掇开了一垛壁。众人走进里面一看，开了口合不拢来。正是：

宣子慢传无鬼论，良宵自昔有冤偿。

若还死者全无觉，落得生人不善良。

众人走进去看时，只见满少卿直挺挺倘在地下，口鼻皆流鲜血。近前用手一摸，四肢冰冷，已气绝多时了。房内并无一人，那里有什么焦氏？连青箱也不见了，刚留得些被卧在那里。众人忙请夫人进来。朱氏一见，惊得目瞪口呆，大哭起来。哭罢道：“不信有这样的异事！难道他两个人摆布死了相公，连夜走了？”众人道：“衙门封锁，插翅也飞不出去；况且房里兀自关门闭户的，打从那里走得出来？”朱氏道：“这等，难道青天白日相处这几时，这两个却是鬼不成？”似信不信。一面传出去，说少卿夜来暴死，着地方停当后事。

朱氏悲悲切切，到晚来步进卧房，正要上床睡去，只见文姬打从床背后走将出来，对朱氏道：“夫人休要烦恼！满生当时受我家厚恩，后来负心，一去不来。吾举家悬望，受尽苦楚，抱恨而死。我父见我死无聊，老人家悲哀过甚，与青箱丫头相





Ladyship will give us permission, we will knock down one side of the wall and go inside for a look. Later, when His Lordship gets angry about the mess, we will depend on Your Ladyship to take the responsibility.”

Zhu said, “Alright, go ahead. I’ll take the blame.” At once a group of servants started forcing a way through the wall. In a moment a big piece of the wall tumbled down and they swarmed inside. What they saw in the room struck them dumb.

Ruan Xiu,<sup>1</sup> advocate no more about atheism.

From time immemorial, injustice between husband

and wife will get redressed. If the dead are reduced to nothingness,

The living will learn to be unkind.

People saw Lord Man lying on his back on the floor, his mouth and nose bleeding. They drew close and touched him. His body warmth was gone, revealing he had died hours before. No one else was in the room. Wenji and Qing Xiang were not there either. The bedding was the only thing left there. They hurried out and led the wife in. The scene frightened her out of her wits and she burst into tears. A moment later, she stopped crying and said, “This is really incredible! Could it be possible that the two of them killed my husband and fled in the night?” The servants said, “No. All the gates were locked tight and none could have gone out. Moreover, this room was locked from inside. How could it be possible they have made their way out?” Zhu said, “You’re right. I wonder if the two women who stayed here with us for many days were just two ghosts?” She couldn’t make head or tail of what had happened. Word started to spread about Lord Man’s sudden and violent death, and arrangements were made for his funeral.

That evening, Zhu withdrew in grief to her bedroom. As she was about to go to bed, Wenji appeared from behind the bed. She came forward and said, “Don’t be sad, Madam. Your husband received generous treatment from my family, but he betrayed our trust later on. He left and never came back to us. Our whole family suffered greatly as we awaited his return. Later I died of grief and then deep grief also took my father’s life, which was followed by Qing Xiang’s death. We went to the underworld and reported the wrong done to us. With permission granted to us, we came

继沦亡。今在冥府诉准，许自来索命。十年之怨，方得申报。我而今与他冥府对证去。蒙夫人相待好意，不敢相侵，特来告别。”朱氏正要问个备细，一阵冷风遍体，飒然惊觉，乃是南柯一梦。才晓得文姬、青箱两个真是鬼，少卿之死，被他活捉了去阴府对理。

朱氏前日原知文姬这事，也道少卿没理的，今日死了无可怨怅，只得护丧南还。单苦了朱氏下半世，亦是满生之遗孽也。世人看了如此榜样，难道男子又该负得女子的？

痴心女子负心汉，谁道阴中有判断？

虽然自古皆有死，这回死得不好看。





and took his life in order to avenge the ten-year injustice we had received. I'm going to the underworld now to reason with him to his face. I appreciate your kindness, Madam, and won't disturb you. I'm here to say goodbye to you." Before the wife Zhu had a chance to say anything to her, a blast of cold air filled the room and she awoke from the dream, shuddering. She realized Wenji and Qing Xiang were indeed two ghosts who had taken Man's life to the underworld to judge about the rights and wrongs of the matter.

The wife had long known about Man's unfaithfulness toward Wenji. After his death, she held no grudge, but escorted his casket to his native town. Unquestionably, the rest of her life was devoid of all the comforts she would have enjoyed otherwise, due to Man's sinfulness.

Reflecting upon Man's deeds, the readers should be clear about whether it is acceptable for a man to betray his wife.

When an innocent girl is deeply in love with a heartless man  
Undoubtedly justice will be done in the underworld.  
All men are mortal, though,  
Shame on those whose death is caused by unfaithfulness in love.

## 卷 十 二

硬勘案大儒争闲气 甘受刑侠女著芳名

诗云：

世事莫有成心，成心专会认错。

任是大圣大贤，也要当着不着。

看官听说：从来说的书不过谈些风月，述些异闻，图个好听。最有益的，论些世情，说些因果，等听了的触着心里，把平日邪路念头化将转来。这个就是说书的一片道学心肠，却从不曾讲着道学。而今为甚么说个不可有成心？只为人心最灵，专是那空虚的才有公道。一点成心入在肚里，把好歹多错认了，就是圣贤也要偏执起来，自以为是，却不知事体竟不是这样的了。道学的正派，莫如朱文公晦翁，读书的人那一个不尊奉他，岂不是个大贤？只为成心上边，也曾错断了事。



## *Tale 12*

### **Out of Anger Over Trifles a Renowned Scholar Metes Out Reckless Punishment Ready to Accept a Heavy Penalty a Chivalrous Sing-song Girl Leaves a Good Name**

A poem reads thus:

Remove preconceptions in handling worldly affairs,  
For prejudices will always make people err.  
Be they sages or men of virtue,  
They can never be free from errors.

Readers, you must be wondering that most storytellers love to tell love stories or bizarre events to draw the attention of the readers. There are also some storytellers who love to be instructive in telling stories. So in their stories, they talk about the ways of the world, preordained fate and retribution for evildoings. The readers who have read these stories might receive quite a shake-up and thus rid of their evil ideas that have been gnawing at their hearts. This is what the storytellers are up to in telling the stories, instructing people to observe the moral codes of Confucian school of philosophy. But they're never preaching. Why am I preaching that people should not have prejudices? The answer lies in that human mind is the most quick-witted and most flexible, and therefore justice can only be found in an empty mind. Even the slightest prejudice in a person might cause him to fail to distinguish the good from evil. Even sages and men of virtue may not be able to see the facts in their true colors if they're stubborn and opinionated.

The founder of the Confucian school of philosophy in the Song Dynasty is Zhu Xi, style name being Hui'an. All men of letters revered him greatly and regarded him as a man of great virtue. In spite of this, Zhu Xi also misjudged some cases because of his prejudices.

当日在福建崇安县知县事，有一小民告一状道：“有祖先坟茔，县中大姓夺占做了自己的坟墓，公然安葬了。”晦翁精于风水，况且福建又极重此事，豪门富户见有好风水吉地，专要夺了小民的，以致兴讼，这样事日日有的。晦翁准了他状，提那大姓到官。大姓说：“是自家做的坟墓，与别人毫不相干的，怎么说起夺来？”小民道：“原是我家祖上的墓，是他富豪倚势占了。”两家争个不歇。叫中证问时，各人为着一边，也没个的据。晦翁道：“此皆口说无凭，待我亲去踏看明白。”当下带了一千人犯及随从人等，亲到坟头。看见山明水秀，凤舞龙飞，果然是一个好去处。晦翁心里道：“如此吉地，怪道有人争夺。”心里先有些疑心，必是小民先世葬着，大姓看得好，起心要他的了。

大姓先禀道：“这是小人家里新造的坟，泥土工程，一应皆是新的，如何说是他家旧坟？相公龙目一看，便了然明白。”小民道：“上面新工程是他家的，底下须有老土，这原是家里的，他夺了才装新起来。”晦翁叫取锄头铁锹，在坟前挖开来看。挖到松泥将尽之处，铛的一声响，把个挖泥的人振得手疼。



Once, while Zhu Hui'an was in office as the Magistrate of Chong'an County of Fujian, a commoner brought an action against a rich man, saying, "My ancestor's graveyard was illegally occupied by a rich man from our county and he made it the graveyard of his family." Hui'an was well versed in geomancy. In addition, people of Fujian valued geomancy very much. It was common practice that rich and powerful families would often illegally take the possession of the places of good geomantic omen from commoners once they set their mind to it. Then both parties would go to court for a settlement. So, such cases were very common.

Having accepted the commoner's complaint, Hui'an delivered an order to bring the rich man to court. At the court, the rich man said, "This graveyard is mine and it has nothing to do with others. How could he say I grabbed it from him?" The commoner said, "It used to be my ancestor's graveyard. He took advantage of his power and position and seized it from me." Equally self-opinionated, they two stood their own grounds firmly. Witnesses for both parties were brought to court, and each was in favor of their own party. No other evidences were available. At this point, Hui'an said, "Words alone are no proof. I'll go there and take a look at it in person." Immediately he went to the graveyard with some followers, along with the rich man and the commoner. Green hills and clear waters came into his sight. It was really a beautiful place. Hui'an thought to himself, "What a place of good geomantic omen! No wonder people fight for the possession of it." Suspicion awoke in him first, thinking that it must be the commoner's ancestor's graveyard in the beginning, but when the rich man noticed it, he harbored evil designs on taking the possession of the place.

The rich man said, "This is my family's new grave. You see, this earth is newly dug. How could he say this graveyard belonged to his family? You'll see I'm telling the truth if you, sir, take a look at it." The commoner said, "The new grave is his family's. But the part beneath this surface earth belongs to my family. He seized it from me and made a new grave upon it." Hui'an asked his followers to bring spades and unearth the part in front of the new grave. When the loose earth was almost excavated, one of the diggers hit something hard with his spade. Removing earth

拨开浮泥看去，乃是一块青石头，上面依稀有些字，晦翁叫取起来看。从人拂去泥沙，将水洗净，字文见将出来，却是“某氏之墓”四个大字；傍边刻着细行，多是小民家里祖先名字。大姓吃惊道：“这东西那里来的？”晦翁喝道：“分明是他家旧坟，你倚强夺了他的！石刻见在，有何可说？”小民只是叩头道：“青天在上，小人再不必多口了。”晦翁道是见得已真，起身竟回县中，把坟断归小民，把大姓问了个强占田土之罪。小民口口“青天”，拜谢而去。

晦翁断了此事，自家道：“此等锄强扶弱的事，不是我，谁人肯做？”深为得意，岂知反落了奸民之计！元来小民诡诈，晓得晦翁有此执性，专怪富豪大户欺侮百姓，此本是一片好心，却被他们看破的拿定了。因贪大姓所做坟地风水好，造下一计，把青石刻成字，偷埋在他墓前了多时，忽然告此一状。大姓睡梦之中，说是自家新做的坟，一看就明白的。谁知地下





from the hard object, they found a tombstone, on which were inscribed some vague characters.

Hui'an asked his followers to take it over to him. The followers removed the dirt from the tombstone and washed it clean. Several big characters could be seen clearly on it, reading "Tomb of So and So." Beside these several big characters were some smaller ones, most of which being the names of the commoner's ancestors. Amazed, the rich man said, "How could it be possible?" Hui'an said sternly to the rich man, "It's doubtless this is his family's old grave. You used your power and position and occupied it illegally. The tombstone is the evidence. What else do you have to say about it?" The commoner kowtowed and said, "Heaven is just-minded. I don't need to say more." Seeing that the truth is out, Hui'an left for the county seat. At court, he settled the dispute by making a judgment that the graveyard belonged to the commoner and that the rich man was guilty of seizing other's land. The commoner kowtowed with thanks and left.

With the lawsuit being settled thus, Hui'an thought to himself, "No one but me will love to commit himself to undertake such things like eliminating the bullies and helping the down-trodden!" He felt very pleased with what he had done. However, he had never expected that he would fall into the treacherous commoner's trap. It happened that the commoner had been an extremely crafty man. He knew that Hui'an was self-willed in disposition and always took it for granted that the rich would bully the poor and common people. Though good was Hui'an's intention, crafty commoners saw through it and took advantage of Hui'an's preconceived ideas.

Being desirous of the rich man's graveyard of good geomantic omen, this commoner set up a trap. He inscribed some names on the stone and buried it secretly in front of the rich family's grave some time ago. Then he suddenly brought a lawsuit against the rich man. Knowing nothing about the trap, the rich man told Hui'an at the court that it was his family's new grave and thought everything would be crystal clear if the Magistrate went to the grave and took a look in person. It had never occurred to him that someone had set up a trap by burying a tombstone in advance. So the



先做成此等圈套，当官发将出来。晦翁见此明验，岂得不信？况且从来只有大家占小人的，那曾见有小人谋大家的？所以执法而断。

那大姓委实受冤，心里不伏，到上边监司处再告将下来，仍发崇安县问理。晦翁越加嗔恼，道是大姓刁悍抗拒。一发狠，着地方勒令大姓迁出棺柩，把地给与小民安厝祖先，了完事件。争奈外边多晓得是小民欺诈，晦翁错问了事，公议不平，沸腾喧嚷，也有风闻到晦翁耳朵内。晦翁认是大姓力量大，致得人言如此，慨然叹息道：“看此世界，直道终不可行！”遂弃官不做，隐居本处武夷山中。

后来有事经过其地，见林木蓊然，记得是前日踏勘断还小民之地。再行闲步一看，看得风水真好，葬下该大发人家。因寻其旁居民问道：“此是何等人家，有福分葬此吉地？”居民道：“若说这家坟墓，多是欺心得来的，难道有好风水报应他不成？”晦翁道：“怎生样欺心？”居民把小民当日埋石在墓内，骗了县官，诈了大姓这块坟地，葬了祖先的话，是长是短，备细说了一遍。晦翁听罢，不觉两颊通红，悔之无及，道：“我前日认是奉公执法，怎知反被奸徒所骗！”一点恨心自丹田里直贯到头顶来。想道：“据着如此风水，该有发迹好处；据着



rich man was beaten at court. With the tombstone as the evidence, there was no reason for Hui'an not to believe the commoner. Moreover, it was common practice that the rich bullied the poor. How could a commoner plot against a rich man? With all these in mind, Hui'an thus settled the case.

Feeling deeply wronged, the rich family made an appeal to a higher court. The higher court instructed that the case be reexamined by the court of Chong'an County. Flying into a rage, Hui'an maintained that the rich man was a brazen rowdy and defied law. Thus he became even more infuriated. Then he ordered the local authorities to remove the coffin of the rich man's family and declared that the graveyard belonged to the commoner and permitted the commoner to have his ancestors buried in this place. However, the truth was known to all the villagers, who knew Hui'an had passed a wrong judgment. So everybody voiced their indignation at the wrong judgment. Words also reached Hui'an. But, disapprovingly, he thought the rich man was so powerful that he even influenced public opinion. Heaving a sigh, he said indignantly, "Look at this world! Justice and righteousness can never work." After this event, he quit office and lived in seclusion in the Wuyi Mountains.

Later he happened to pass by the graveyard. At the sight of the luxuriant woods there, he recalled it to be the piece of land he had been to before he decided that it go to the commoner. Moving closer to it, he found it was truly a place of good geomantic omen and the family who took it as their graveyard would definitely become prosperous. He went to a local resident and asked, "Which family is so fortunate to have this graveyard?" The local resident replied, "This family seized this graveyard through deception. Could good fortune befall on them?" Hui'an asked, "What deception?" The local resident recounted in detail how the commoner had buried a tombstone the other day, how he had fooled the County Magistrate and took possession of the rich family's graveyard and buried his ancestors there. Upon hearing this, Hui'an flushed and regretted deeply. He said, "I thought I was just in making the judgment. But the fact is that I was completely fooled by a treacherous man!" Overwhelmed by fury, he said, "In terms of good geomantic omen, this family should become



如此用心贪谋来的，又不该有好处到他了。”遂对天祝下四句道：

此地若发，是有地理；  
此地不发，是有天理。

祝罢而去。是夜大雨如倾，雷电交作，霹雳一声，屋瓦皆响。次日看那坟墓，已毁成一潭，连尸棺多不见了。可见有了成心，虽是晦庵大贤，不能无误。及后来事体明白，才知悔悟，天就显出报应来，此乃天理不泯之处。人若欺心，就骗过了圣贤，占过了便宜，葬过了风水，天地原不容的。

而今为何把这件说这半日？只为朱晦翁还有一件为着成心上边硬断一事，屈了一个下贱妇人，反致得他名闻天子，四海称扬，得了个好结果。有诗为证：

白面秀才落得争，红颜女子落得苦。  
宽仁圣主两分张，反使娼流名万古。

话说天台营中有一上厅行首，姓严名蕊，表字幼芳，乃是个绝色的女子。一应琴棋书画，歌舞管弦之类，无所不通。善能作诗词，多自家新造句子，词人推服。又博晓古今故事，行



prosperous. But in terms of obtaining it through deception, good fortune will not befall on this family.” Then, looking up into the sky, he uttered the following four lines:

If this place becomes prosperous,  
It’s because of its auspicious geographic location.  
If this place is doomed,  
It’s because of the heavenly principles.

Then he left. On the same night there came a storm accompanied by peals of thunder, which even shook the tiles on the roofs of the houses. The following morning found the graveyard reduced into pool of mud. Both the coffins and bodies were gone. So, it’s impossible for people not to err if they hold on to their prejudices, even men of virtue such as Hui’an are of no exceptions. When the truth was out, Hui’an started to repent his error. Then the heavenly principles manifested their power. A crafty man may fool the sages and men of virtue for the time being and get some profits by burying his ancestors in a place of good geomantic omen. But as his conduct is against the heavenly principles, he will inevitably free himself from decline.

Why have I taken so much time to tell you this story? It’s because Zhu Hui’an also wronged a woman of low social status in settling another case because of his innate prejudices against prostitutes. However, this woman of low social status became well known far and wide and won profuse praises from all people. Eventually she returned to the right path of life. The following lines can describe it:

Officials fight over trifles, causing a beautiful woman to suffer from torture.  
The benevolent His Majesty settles the dispute with impartiality, leaving  
the prostitute a good name.

\* \* \*

Once there was an extremely beautiful singsong girl named Yan Rui, style name being Youfang, in the region of Tiantai. She excelled in all artistic accomplishments — painting, calligraphy, music and go. She was also well versed in singing, dancing, and playing wind and stringed instruments. In addition to this, she was good at composing poetry in her own words which could win praises from poets. She was a girl conversant



事最有义气，待人常是真心。所以人见了，没一个不失魂落魄在他身上。四方闻其大名，有少年子弟慕他的，不远千里，直到台州来求一识面。正是：

十年不识君王面，始信婵娟解误人。

此时台州太守乃是唐与正，字仲友，少年高才，风流文采。宋时法度，官府有酒，皆召歌妓承应，只站着歌唱送酒，不许私侍寝席；却是与他谑浪狎昵，也算不得许多清处。仲友见严蕊如此十全可喜，尽有眷顾之意，只为官箴拘束，不敢胡为。但是良辰佳节，或宾客席上，必定召他来侑酒。

一日，红白桃花盛开，仲友置酒赏玩，严蕊少不得来供应。饮酒中间，仲友晓得他善于词咏，就将红白桃花为题，命赋小词。严蕊应声成一阙，词云：

道是梨花不是，道是杏花不是。白白与红红，别是东风情味。曾记，曾记，人在武陵微醉。词寄《如梦令》吟罢，呈上仲友。仲友看毕大喜，赏了他两匹缣帛。

又一日，时逢七夕，府中开宴。仲友有一个朋友谢元卿，极是豪爽之士，是日也在席上。他一向闻得严幼芳之名，今得



with both past and present stories, loyal to friends and kindhearted by nature. So, her good reputation spread far and wide. Because of her good personality, none whoever saw her would not be attracted to her charm and beauty. Out of admiration for her beauty, some young men made light of traveling a thousand *li* to Tiantai of Taizhou Prefecture only to request a meeting with her.

At that time the Prefect of Taizhou was Tang Yuzheng, style named Zhongyou. Young and talented, Zhongyou had an easy and elegant bearing. During the Song Dynasty, it was the current convention that officials would gather singsong girls to the dinner party to entertain them while drinking. But the singsong girls' duty was only to sing songs and serve the guests with wine. They were not permitted to stay there for the night. Also officials were not permitted to get along improperly intimate with the singsong girls. Seeing Yanrui was lovely and charming, Zhongyou became deeply attracted to her. But he dared not to act recklessly because of the restrictions and regulations imposed on officials. Nevertheless, he often asked her to come over and serve wine on each festive occasions or major dinner parties.

One day, white and crimson peach blossoms were in full bloom. Zhongyou fixed dinner and wine to enjoy the beauty of the peach blossoms and, of course, Yanrui was invited to the scene to accompany him. In the middle of his drinking, Zhongyou, knowing she was good at composing *ci* poems, asked her to improvise a *ci* poem on the subject of the white and crimson peach blossoms. Yanrui did so as required. It read thus:

One may wonder they are pear blossoms, but I say no. One may wonder they are apricot blossoms, but I say no. Oh white and crimson, I feel you taste like east wind. What a view! You make me tipsy, as if I am roaming about in the Wuling Mountains. (To the tune of "Rumengling")

She handed it to Zhongyou, who praised it highly and gave her two bolts of silk as reward.

On the occasion of the seventh evening of the seventh moon,<sup>1</sup> Zhongyou gave a banquet at his mansion. Zhongyou invited a friend named Xie Yuanqing to the banquet. Xie Yuanqing was outspoken and straightforward in speech. He had long heard of Yan Youfang's name. So he was very



相见，不胜欣幸。看了他这些行动举止、谈谐歌唱，件件动人，道：“果然名不虚传！”大觥连饮，兴趣愈高。对唐太守道：“久闻此子长于词赋，可当面一试否？”仲友道：“既有佳客，宜赋新词。此子颇能，正可请教。”元卿道：“就把七夕为题，以小生之姓为韵，求赋一词，小生当饮满三大瓯。”严蕊领命，即口吟一词道：

碧梧初坠，桂香才吐，池上水花初谢。穿针人在合欢楼，正月露玉盘高泻。蛛忙鹊懒，耕慵织倦，空做古今佳话。人间刚到隔年期，怕天上方才隔夜。词寄《鹊桥仙》

词已吟成，元卿三瓯酒刚吃得两瓯，不觉跃然而起道：“词既新奇，调文适景，且才思敏捷，真天上人也！我辈何幸，得亲沾芳泽！”亟取大觥相酬，道：“也要幼芳公饮此瓯，略见小生钦慕之意。”严蕊接过吃了。太守看见两人光景，便道：“元卿客边，可到严子家中做一程儿伴去。”元卿大笑，作个揖道：“不





pleased at meeting her in person. Deeply impressed by her beauty and charm, he felt everything in her, her movements and manners, the way she talked and the tunes she sang, was beyond words. So he remarked, “Her reputation is well deserved indeed!” After downing several big cups of wine, he grew more and more excited. He said to Prefect Tang, “I’ve long heard that this girl is good at composing *ci* poems. Can I ask her to compose one now?” Zhongyou replied, “Since you’re our distinguished guest, why not ask her to have a try? She is really a master *ci* poet.” Yuanqing said, “If she improvise a *ci* poem on the subject of the seventh evening of the seventh moon, with the sound of my surname ‘Xie’ as the end rhyme, I will drink three bowls of wine at one gulp” Then Yan Rui did so as requested and chanted her *ci* poem, which read:

The green leaves of the Chinese parasol trees are falling, while the sweet-scented osmanthus flowers are sending forth a delicate fragrance. Lotus in the pond is fading. The full moon hanging high up in the sky, moonbeams are rushing down. Under the bright moonlight, lovers are enjoying a time of bliss together.

Diligent are spiders and indolent are magpies. The Cowherd is tired and the Weaver Maid is drowsy. The much-told-tale of both past and present falls short of its real name. In our human world, we’re all convinced it has been one year since they met this time last year. But I guess, in heaven, they just met each other the previous night according to their calendar.

(To the tune of “Queqiaoxian”)

When Yan Rui finished her *ci* poem, Yuanqing had only drunk two bowls of the three, leaving one untouched. He rose at once and remarked, “This *ci* poem is original and unique. Also it perfectly matches the scene. What an intelligent girl! Absolutely a fairy maid! How lucky I am to have seen you!” So saying he poured some wine into a big cup out of the big bowl he had not taken and offered it to her to express his thanks, saying, “I’d like to ask Youfang to share this bowl of wine with me so as to express my admiration.” Yan Rui accepted it and drank it. Seeing through the mind of the them two, Prefect Tang suggested, “Since Yuanqing is alone in this region, you may go to Yan Rui’s house so that you can share each other’s company.” Cupping one hand in the other, Yuanqing laughed



敢请耳，固所愿也。但未知幼芳心下如何。”仲友笑道：“严子解人，岂不愿事佳客？况为太守做主人，一发该的了。”严蕊不敢推辞得。酒散，竟同谢元卿一路到家，是夜遂留同枕席之欢。元卿意气豪爽，见此佳丽聪明女子，十分趁怀，只恐不得他欢心，在太守处凡有所得，尽情送与他家，留连半年，方才别去。也用掉若干银两，心里还是歉然的，可见严蕊真能令人消魂也。表过不题。

且说婺州永康县有个有名的秀才，姓陈名亮，字同父。赋性慷慨，任侠使气，一时称为豪杰。凡缙绅士大夫有气节的，无不与之交好。淮帅辛稼轩居铅山时，同父曾去访他。将近居傍，遇一小桥，骑的马不肯走。同父将马三跃，马三次退却。同父大怒，拔出所佩之剑，一剑挥去马首，马倒地上。同父面不改容，徐步而去。稼轩适在楼上看见，大以为奇，遂与定交。平日行径如此，所以唐仲友也与他相好。因到台州来看仲友，仲友资给馆谷，留住了他。闲暇之时，往来讲论。仲友喜的是俊爽名流，恼的是道学先生。同父意见亦同，常说道：“而今



and said, "I'm in no position to make such a proposal, but it's exactly what I'm wishing for. I just have no idea if Youfang is willing to or not." Smiling, Zhongyou said, "Yan Rui is a wonderful person. How could she turn you down? She must be willing to entertain you. Moreover, I, the Prefect, have given my word of approval."

Yan Rui was in no position to refuse, so she went back home along with Xie Yuanqing after the banquet was over. The same night, they two slept together. Yuanqing loved this beautiful and intelligent girl pretty much and gave her everything he had obtained from Prefect Tang. He didn't part from her until half a year later. Though he had given her some silver, he still felt he owed her a lot. So, undoubtedly, Yan Rui was indeed charming and attractive. Now I'd like to drop this matter for the time being.

Once there lived a renowned *xiuca* by the name of Chen Liang, whose style name was Tongfu, in Yongkang County, Wuzhou Prefecture. Tongfu was praised by all as a hero of the time because of his generosity and chivalrous acts. All the gentries with official titles loved to make friends with him. Tongfu paid a special visit to the outstanding *ci* poet Xin Jiakuan while the latter was living in seclusion in his later years in Qianshan County. As Tongfu was almost there on his horse, a bridge appeared before them. Tongfu spurred his horse forward three times, but the horse backed up three times. Flying into a rage, Tongfu unsheathed his sword and chopped off the horse's head. The horse fell to the ground, while Tongfu continued his way leisurely without turning a hair.

Meanwhile, Xin Jiakuan, who was at the moment standing on the balcony of his building and watching, was greatly surprised at what he had seen. For this reason, Xin Jiakuan made him a bosom friend. Tongfu's everyday conducts fully displayed his personality. Tang Zhongyou was also on good terms with him. Now Tongfu came to Taizhou to visit Zhongyou. Zhongyou provided him with food and lodging. While they were free, they gathered together and chatted.

Zhongyou highly esteemed and loved to associate with unrestrained and graceful men of talent, but detested Confucian pedants. Tongfu agreed with him on this point. Such words were on the lips of Tongfu, "To be



的世界只管讲那道学，说正心诚意的，多是一班害了风痹病，不知痛痒之人。君父大仇全然不理，方且扬眉袖手，高谈性命。不知性命是甚么东西！”所以与仲友说得来。只一件，同父虽怪道学，却与朱晦庵相好，晦庵也曾荐过同父来。同父道他是实学有用的，不比世儒迂阔。惟有唐仲友平日恃才，极轻薄的是朱晦庵，道他字也不识的。为此，两个议论有些左处。

同父客邸兴高，思游妓馆。此时严蕊之名布满一郡，人多晓得是太守相公作兴的，异样兴头，没有一日闲在家里。同父是个爽利汉子，那里有心情伺候他空闲？闻得有一个赵娟，色艺虽在严蕊之下，却也算得是个上等的衍衍，台州数一数二的。同父就在他家游耍，缱绻多时，两情欢爱。同父挥金如土，毫无吝涩。妓家见他如此，百倍趋承。赵娟就有嫁他之意，同父也有心要娶赵娟，两个商量了几番，彼此乐意。只是是个官身，必须落籍，方可从良嫁人。同父道：“落籍是府间所主，只须与唐仲友一说，易如反掌。”赵娟道：“若得如此最好。”陈



frank, those who talk about Confucianism at present are mostly arthritis patients, unable to distinguish between pain and itch. Totally ignoring avenging their monarch and fathers, they indulge in loud and empty talks about the significance of life with their heads held high and their arms folded. They're completely ignorant of what life is!" Therefore Zhongyou and Tongfu got along pretty well with each other.

However, though Tongfu detested Confucianism, he was actually on good terms with Zhu Hui'an. Hui'an used to recommend Tongfu on different occasions. Tongfu often made some comments on Hui'an, saying, "He is different from those pedantic Confucian scholars. His theories are beneficial and practical." Tang Zhongyou loved to associate with men of talents, but he just belittled Zhu Hui'an most, saying that he was simply illiterate. For this reason, Zhongyou and Tongfu often failed to see eye to eye.

While staying at Zhongyou's place, Tongfu suddenly became enthusiastic about visiting prostitutes. At the moment, Yan Rui's name was a household word throughout Taizhou Prefecture. It was known to everybody that Yan Rui was Prefect Tang's favorite girl and would rarely stay idle at home. Being an impetuous man, how could Tongfu have the patience to wait for her idle hours? He was told that a girl named Zhao Juan was also one of the best singsong girls in Taizhou, though she was a bit below Yan Rui as regards beauty and artistic talent. Soon Tongfu went to her house and they became deeply attached to each other. Tongfu spent money on her like water, while Zhao Juan fawned on him in every possible way in return. Zhao Juan got the idea of marrying him, and at the same time Tongfu was also thinking of taking her as his wife. They spoke their mind to each other and both were very much pleased. However, the problem for them was that Tongfu was a man with an official title. He was not allowed to marry a singsong girl unless she was rid of her singsong girl identity.

Tongfu said to her, "To rid you of your singsong girl identity is very easy. I'll go and talk to Tang Zhongyou about this matter. He is in charge of it." Zhao Juan said, "I appreciate it very much." Tongfu made a special visit to Tang Zhongyou for this matter and told him his intentions in detail.



同父特为此来府里见唐太守，把此意备细说了。唐仲友取笑道：“同父是当今第一流人物，在此不交严蕊而交赵娟，何也？”同父道：“吾辈情之所钟，便是最胜，那见还有出其右者？况严蕊乃守公所属意，即使与交，肯便落了籍放他去否？”仲友也笑将起来道：“非是属意，果然严蕊若去，此邦便觉无人，自然使不得！若赵娟要脱籍，无不依命。但不知他相从仁兄之意已决否？”同父道：“察其词意，似出至诚。还要守公赞襄，作个月老。”仲友道：“相从之事，出于本人情愿，非小弟所可赞襄，小弟只管与他脱籍便了。”同父别去，就把这话回复了赵娟，大家欢喜。

次日，府中有宴，就唤将赵娟来承应。饮酒之间，唐太守问赵娟道：“昨日陈官人替你来说，要脱籍从良，果有此事否？”赵娟叩头道：“贱妾风尘已厌，若得脱离，天地之恩！”太守道：“脱籍不难。脱籍去，就从陈官人否？”赵娟道：“陈官人名流贵客，只怕他嫌弃微贱，未肯相收。今若果有心于妾，妾焉敢自外？一脱籍就从他去了。”太守心里想道：“这妮子不知高低，轻意应承，岂知同父是个杀人不眨眼的汉子？况且手段挥霍，家中空虚，怎能了得这妮子终身？”也是一时间为赵娟的好意，冷笑道：“你果要了从陈官人到他家去，须是会忍



Tang Zhongyou ridiculed him by saying, "You're the most talented person of our time. You associated with Zhao Juan instead of Yan Rui. Why?" Tongfu answered, "I fell in love with her at first sight and I consider this the most important thing. In my mind she is second to none. What's more, Yan Rui was your favorite. Had I associated with Yan Rui and rid her of her singsong girl identity, would you agree to let her go with me?"

Smiling, Zhongyou said, "You're not exactly right to say that Yan Rui is my favorite. But if she leaves me, I'll feel sad and lonely. I would not let her go. If Zhao Juan wants to get rid of her singsong girl identity, I'm ready to help. But I wonder if she has made up her mind to marry you?" Tongfu said, "Judging from her words, I think she is sincere and true to me. In spite of this, I would like you to put in a few more good words for me and act as our matchmaker." Zhongyou said, "It's up to her to decide if she wants to marry you or not. I'm afraid I won't be of any help in this regard. I'll just take care of ridding her of her singsong girl identity." Tongfu left and told Zhao Juan of his talk with Prefect Tang. Feeling relieved, Tongfu and Zhao Juan were very contented.

The following day Prefect Tang held a dinner party. He summoned Zhao Juan to his home to entertain the guests. At the table, Prefect Tang asked Zhao Juan, "Chen Tongfu came to see me yesterday and he asked me to rid you of your singsong girl identity so that he can take you as his wife. Do you have any knowledge about the matter?" Zhao Juan kowtowed and said, "I'm really tired of being a singsong girl. I'll be extremely grateful if you're kind enough to help me out." The Prefect said, "It's not difficult to rid you of your singsong girl identity. When this is done, are you ready to marry Chen Tongfu?" Zhao Juan said, "Tongfu is a celebrity. I'm worried that he would not care to accept me. If he is willing, how can I turn him down? I will marry him once I'm rid of my singsong girl identity."

Hearing this, Prefect Tang thought in his mind, "This girl has no sense of discretion. How rash she is in making this decision! Does she have any idea that Tongfu is a man who would not blink at killing a man? Furthermore, Tongfu spends money like water and has no properties at all. How could he be her lifelong companion?" Out of good intentions for her, Prefect Tang said with a faint sneer on the lips, "If you marry Tongfu,



得饥、受得冻才使得。”赵娟一时变色，想道：“我见他如此撒漫使钱，道他家中必然富饶，故有嫁他之意；若依太守相公的说话，必是个穷汉子，岂能了我终身之事？”好些不快活起来。唐太守一时取笑之言，只道他不以为意。岂知姊妹行中心路最多，一句关心，陡然疑变。唐太守虽然与了他脱籍文书，出去见了陈同父，并不提起嫁他的说话了。连相待之意，比平日也冷淡了许多。同父心里怪道：“难道娼家薄情得这样渗漉，哄我与他脱了籍，他就不作准了？”再把前言问赵娟，赵娟回道：“太守相公说来，到你家要忍冻饿。这着甚么来由？”同父闻得此言，勃然大怒道：“小唐这样惫赖！只许你喜欢严蕊罢了，也须有我的说话处。”他是个直性尚气的人，也就不恋了赵家，也不去别唐太守，一径到朱晦庵处来。

此时朱晦庵提举浙东常平仓，正在婺州。同父进去，相见已毕，问说是台州来，晦庵道：“小唐在台州如何？”同父道：“他只晓得有个严蕊，有甚别勾当？”晦庵道：“曾道及下官否？”同父道：“小唐说公尚不识字，如何做得监司？”晦庵闻之，默然了半日。盖是晦庵早年登朝，茫茫仕宦之中，著书





you must be ready to endure torments of hunger and cold.” Zhao Juan suddenly changed countenance, thinking to herself, “I’ve seen that he spends money freely. He must be very rich. So I made up my mind to marry him. According to what the Prefect said about him, he must be a poor man. If it is true, how could he be my lifelong companion?” Then she showed signs of displeasure.

Prefect Tang thought she would not care his random remarks. But, on the contrary, singsong girls were very smart and alert. Once a couple of words hurt her, she would become suspicious at once. After he had gone through the procedures of ridding her of her singsong girl’s identity, Prefect Tang gave her the testimonial. Then Zhao Juan went to see Chen Tongfu. When they met, she mentioned no more of their marriage. Apart from this, she cold-shouldered him. Being left out in the cold, Tongfu complained in his mind, “Is it really true that singsong girls are all heartless? She coaxed me to help her out and then she changed her mind!” He brought up the subject of their marriage and inquired Zhao Juan of her plan. Zhao Juan replied, “Prefect Tang told me I should be ready to endure the torments of hunger and cold if I marry you. Why so?”

Upon hearing these words, Tongfu flew into a rage, saying, “What a hideous man this Zhongyou is! He may steal a horse while I may not look over the hedge!” Tongfu was a straightforward fellow. He ended his affair with Zhao Juan. Then he left Prefect Tang without bidding him farewell and made his way to Zhu Hui’an’s place.

During this period, Zhu Hui’an was at Wuzhou, holding the post of Inspector General of Zhedong. Tongfu entered Hui’an’s place and they two exchanged greetings. After learning Tongfu had just come from Taizhou, Hui’an asked, “How is Tang Zhongyou doing in Taizhou?” Tongfu answered, “He only has Yan Rui in his heart. What else can he do?” Hui’an asked, “Did he ever mention me?” Tongfu said, “He said you’re illiterate and how could you make a qualified Inspector General?”

Hearing this, Hui’an remained silent for quite some time. Zhu Hui’an had entered officialdom while he was still young. During his years in the official circles, he had produced many scholarly works, which became very popular throughout the country. However, he was still not pleased



立言，流布天下，自己还有些不惬意处。见唐仲友少年高才，心里常疑他要来轻薄的。闻得他说己不识字，岂不愧怒！佛然道：“他是我属吏，敢如此无礼！”然背后之言未卜真伪，遂行一张牌下去，说：“台州刑政有枉，重要巡历。”星夜到台州来。

晦庵是有心寻不是的，来得急促。唐仲友出于不意，一时迎接不及，来得迟了些。晦庵信道是“同父之言不差，果然如此轻薄，不把我放在心上”，这点恼怒再消不得了。当日下马，就追取了唐太守印信，交付与郡丞，说：“知府不职，听参。”连严蕊也拿来收了监，要问他与太守通奸情状。

晦庵道是仲友风流，必然有染；况且妇女柔脆，吃不得刑拷，不论有无，自然招承，便好参奏他罪名了。谁知严蕊苗条般的身躯，却是铁石般的性子。随你朝打暮骂，千捶百拷，只说“循分供唱，吟诗侑酒是有的，曾无一毫他事。”受尽了苦楚，监禁了月馀，到底只是这样话。晦庵也没奈他何，只得糊涂做了“不合蛊惑上官”，狠毒将他痛杖了一顿，发去绍兴，另



with himself in some aspects. When he realized Tang Zhongyou's superb talent, he was often assailed with apprehensions that Tang would belittle him. Wouldn't he feel humiliated when he heard of Tang's unfavorable comments on him?"

Deeply infuriated, Hui'an shouted, "He's my subordinate. How dare he should be so rude to me!" On second thoughts, it was only a remark behind his back. So he felt uncertain if Tang Zhongyou had really said so or not. Then he sent an errand to Taizhou to inform Tang Zhongyou that he would go to Taizhou immediately, because it was reported that some misjudgments were being made by the court of Taizhou yamen and he needed to reexamine them.

Zhu Hui'an was deliberately finding fault with Zhongyou, so he was impatient and got there sooner than expected. Tang Zhongyou knew nothing about the inside story and was a little late to come out and welcome him upon his arrival. Just because of Zhongyou's slighting of him, Hui'an believed Tongfu's words. He thought, "Sure enough, he really looks down upon me!" He could no longer stand with his fury. Immediately after he got off his horse, he took Prefect Tang's official seal and stored it in the Assistant Prefect's place, saying, "Prefect Tang neglected his duty. Wait for further investigations by the imperial court." Even Yan Rui was put behind the bars on the charge of committing adultery with Prefect Tang.

Zhu Hui'an thought in his mind that Zhongyou was a dissolute man and must have had an affair with Yan Rui. Moreover, Yan Rui was a delicate woman and would not be able to stand the torture. She would have to confess it no matter if they had had an affair or not. By then he would be able to bring a charge against Zhongyou in the imperial court. However, he had never expected that Yan Rui, though slender, had a heart of stone and was unyielding to any kind of torments. Yan Rui only replied, "It's true that I sang songs for him, composed poems and served him at the table. But I never carried on an affair with him." Having suffered all kinds of torments in prison for more than one month, she still gave the same answer. Unable to do anything about her, Hui'an had to give her a sound beating and transferred her to Shaoxing for further interrogations on the accusation of telling lies in front of high-ranking officials. After

加勘问。一面先具本参奏，大略道：

唐某不伏讲学，罔知圣贤道理，却诋臣为不识字；居官不存政体，褻昵娼流。鞫得奸情，再行复奏，取进止。等因。

唐仲友有个同乡友人王淮，正在中书省当国。也具一私揭，辨晦庵所奏，要他达知圣听。大略道：

朱某不遵法制，一方再按，突然而来。因失迎候，酷逼娼流，妄污职官。公道难泯，力不能使贱妇诬服。尚辱读奏，明见欺妄。等因。

孝宗皇帝看见晦庵所奏，正拿出来与宰相王淮平章。王淮也出仲友私揭与孝宗看。孝宗见了，问道：“二人是非，卿意如何？”王淮奏道：“据臣看着，此乃秀才争闲气耳。一个道讥了他不识字，一个道不迎候得他。此是真情。其余言语多是增添的，可有一些的正事么？多不要听他就是。”孝宗道：“卿说得是。却是上下司不和，地方不便。可两下平调了他每便了。”王淮奏谢道：“陛下圣见极当，臣当分付所部奉行。”这





this was done, Hui'an wrote a memorial and presented it to the throne. The rough idea of the memorial was as follows:

Tang Zhongyou is ignorant of the instructions of sages and men of virtue and has no desire for progress. Yet he slandered me, saying that I was illiterate. As an official, he did not dedicate himself to administration; on the contrary, he indulged himself in seeking pleasure and making merry with singsong girls. I'll present another memorial about his adulterous affair with a singsong girl after I check and verify this misconduct of his.

Meanwhile, Tang Zhongyou had a fellow townsman by the name of Wang Huai, who was then holding the post of Vice Prime Minister, mainly responsible for administrative affairs of the state. Zhongyou also wrote a memorial to justify himself and asked Wang Huai in private to hand it to the emperor. His memorial was roughly as follows:

Running counter to the norms of law and regulations, Zhu Hui'an emerged in my office suddenly. Because I did not appear in time to welcome his visit, he accused me of ignoring my duty and persecuted a singsong girl. His charge against the singsong girl was absolutely groundless, and the girl refused to yield to him. It is obvious he was deliberately bullying me with false charges.

Having read Hui'an's memorial, Emperor Xiaozong (1163-1189) showed it to Wang Huai and asked his opinion about this issue. Wang Huai also produced Zhongyou's memorial and showed it to the emperor. Emperor Xiaozong asked him, "Who is right and who is wrong? What's your comment?" Wang Huai said, "In my humble opinion, they were squabbling over a trifle. One complained that the other humiliated him by saying he was illiterate, while the other complained that he did not appear on time to welcome his arrival. This was true. As regards the other remarks in their memorials, they are all nonsense. Can you find anything serious in them? Don't bother about it."

Emperor Xiaozong said, "You're right. But I'm worried that it won't be good for local administration when officials at the higher level and those at the lower were at loggerheads. I will transfer them to other posts of the same level to settle this dispute." Wang Huai said gratefully, "A brilliant idea, Your Majesty! I'll take care of their transfers." Thanks to



番京中亏得王丞相帮衬，孝宗有主意，唐仲友官爵安然无事。

只可怜这边严蕊吃过了许多苦楚，还不算帐，出本之后，另要绍兴去听问。绍兴太守也是一个讲学的，严蕊解到时，见他模样标致，太守便道：“从来有色者，必然无德。”就用严刑拷他，讨拶来拶指。严蕊十指纤细，掌背嫩白。太守道：“若是亲操井臼的手，决不是这样，所以可恶！”又要将夹棍夹他。当案孔目禀道：“严蕊双足甚小，恐经折挫不起。”太守道：“你道他足小么？此皆人力矫揉，非天性之自然也。”着实被他腾倒了一番，要他招与唐仲友通奸的事。严蕊照前不招，只得且把来监了，以待再问。

严蕊到了监中，狱官着实可怜他，分付狱中牢卒，不许难为，好言问道：“上司加你刑罚，不过要你招认，你何不早招认了？这罪是有分限的。女人家犯淫，极重不过是杖罪，况且已经杖断过了，罪无重科。何苦舍着身子，熬这等苦楚？”严



Vice Prime Minister Wang Huai's assistance and the emperor's being sensible, Tang Zhongyou's official title remained intact.

Now let's come back to poor Yan Rui. Though Yan Rui had suffered a lot, Hui'an didn't square the accounts with her. He sent her to Shaoxing for further interrogations. The Prefect of Shaoxing was a faithful believer of Confucianism too. At the sight of Yan Rui's good looks, the Prefect of Shaoxing remarked offhandedly, "From time immemorial, all beauties have no virtue." Again Yan Rui was put to tortures. The Prefect of Shaoxing ordered to bring sticks to squeeze her fingers. Seeing that Yan Rui's fingers were long and thin and her palms and the backs of her hands were tender and fair, the Prefect of Shaoxing said, "A working woman's hands are by no means like hers. What a curse!" So saying, he again ordered to put her to clamping rods. Just at this point, a court official reported to the Prefect, "Yan Rui's feet are so small that I'm afraid she won't be able to bear the torment." The Prefect said, "Do you think her feet are small? If so, it's because she is squeamish. They should not be so small by nature."

Yan Rui suffered again the torments of clamping her feet with rods. Under such cruel tortures, she still didn't confess to the false charge of carrying on an adulterous affair with Prefect Tang. Having no other alternative, the Prefect of Shaoxing had to put her into prison to await further interrogations.

While Yan Rui was in prison, the prison warder was very sympathetic with her and ordered the prison guards not to make things difficult for her. Then he asked her in well-intentioned words, "They just wanted you to admit to it, so they put you to such tortures. Why didn't you confess to it at the beginning? There is a limit to the punishment for this offence. When a woman commits adultery, the cruelest punishment for her is flogging. In fact, you've been flogged. Repetitive punishment is banned. Why did you resign to such painful tortures at the cost of your body?"

Yan Rui replied, "I'm a humble singsong girl. If I had had an adulterous affair with Prefect Tang, I guess I would not be sentenced to death. What harm would it bring to me if I confessed to it? But, of all the things in the world, what is true is true and what is false is false. How could I slander



蕊道：“身为贱伎，纵是与太守为好，料然不到得死罪，招认了，有何大害？但天下事，真则是真，假则是假，岂可自惜微躯，信口妄言，以污士大夫！今日宁可置我死地，要我诬人，断然不成的！”狱官见他词色凛然，十分起敬，尽把其言禀知太守。太守道：“既如此，只依上边原断施行罢。可恶这妮子倔强，虽然上边发落已过，这里原要决断。”又把严蕊带出监来，再加痛杖，这也是奉承晦庵的意思。叠成文书，正要回复提举司，看他口气，别行定夺，却得晦庵改调消息，方才放了严蕊出监。严蕊恁地悔气，官人每自争闲气，做他不着，两处监里无端的监了两个月，强坐得他一个不应罪名，到受了两番科断；其余逼招拷打，又是分外的受用。正是：

规圆方竹杖，漆却断纹琴。

好物不动念，方成道学心。

严蕊吃了无限的磨折，放得出来，气息奄奄，几番欲死。将息杖疮，几时见不得客，却是门前车马比前更盛。只因死不肯招唐仲友一事，四方之人重他义气。那些少年尚气节的朋友，一发道是堪比古来义侠之伦，一向认得的要来问他安，不曾认得的要来识他面。所以挨挤不开。一班风月场中人自然与道学不对，但是来看严蕊的，没一个不骂朱晦庵两句。晦庵此番竟不曾奈何得唐仲友，落得动了好些唇舌，外边人言喧沸，严蕊声价腾涌，直传到孝宗耳朵内。孝宗道：“早是前日两平处了。若听了一偏之词，贬谪了唐与正，却不屈了这有义气的





an honest official by making such irresponsible remarks so as to save my humble body? I would rather die than slander others.” Upon hearing these awe-inspiring words, the prison warder was filled with deep respect for her. Then he recounted everything she said to the Prefect of Shaoxing.

The Prefect of Shaoxing said, “In this case, I’ll have to uphold the original verdict. But this girl is really detestable in her stubbornness. I will have to make the final adjudication, though she had suffered so much. Again Yan Rui was taken out of the prison and given a good flogging, which was meant to curry favor with Hui’an. As he was about to set out to report to Hui’an and test his intention with this final adjudication, the Prefect of Shaoxing learned that Hui’an had been transferred to another post. It was not until this time did the Prefect of Shaoxing set Yan Rui free from prison. What a bad luck on Yan Rui! She was made the victim of the officials’ arguing over trifles. She was imprisoned for over two months in two prisons for no reason at all and received two rounds of cruel tortures on the charge of “refusing to confess to it.”

After she was freed from prison, Yan Rui was at her last gasp due to the endless torments, and for several times she almost died. She could not entertain guests for some time, for she needed to recover her health at home. However, the people who came to call upon her at her house were much more than before. Thus Yan Rui’s name spread far and wide with the circulation of her unyieldingness in upholding that she had had no adulterous affair with Tang Zhongyou despite of the savage tortures. People from all walks of life highly revered her personal loyalty. The youths who set store by personal loyalty even associated her with the men of chivalry and justice ever revered since ancient times. Those who had known her wanted to come and visit her and those who did not know her wanted to make friends with her. So her house was thronged with visitors. All those who had come to pay their respects for Yan Rui let loose a stream of abuse towards Zhu Hui’an.

Zhu Hui’an failed to do anything about Tang Zhongyou except a waste of breath. The extensive circulation of Yan Rui’s story made her reputation redoubled. Later it reached Emperor Xiaozong’s ear, who said, “Luckily I appeased their anger. If I had believed Hui’an’s version of the story and

女子没申诉处？”

陈同父知道了，也悔道：“我只向晦庵说得他两句说话，不道认真的大弄起来。今唐仲友只疑是我害他，无可辨处。”因致书与晦庵道：

亮平生不曾会说人是非，唐与正乃见疑相讐，真足当田光之死矣。然困穷之中，又自惜此泼命。一笑。

看来陈同父只为唐仲友破了他赵娟之事，一时心中愤气，故把仲友平日说话对晦庵讲了出来。原不料晦庵狠毒，就要摆布仲友起来。至于连累严蕊，受此苦拷，皆非同父之意也。这也是晦庵成心不化，偏执之过。以后改调去了。

交代的是岳商卿，名霖。到任之时，妓女拜贺。商卿问：“那个是严蕊？”严蕊上前答应。商卿抬眼一看，见他举止异人，在一班妓女之中，却像鸡群内野鹤独立，却是容颜憔悴。商卿晓得前事，他受过折挫，甚觉可怜。因对他道：“闻你长于词翰，你把自家心事，做成一词诉我，我自有主意。”严蕊领命，略不构思，应声口占《卜算子》道：





demoted Tang Zhongyou, wouldn't I have put this loyal girl in a position that she would never be able to appeal for justice?"

When Chen Tongfu later learned about what had happened between Zhu Hui'an and Tang Zhongyou, he said with regret, "I just made a few casual remarks about Tang Zhongyou in front of Hui'an. I had never expected that Hui'an would take it so seriously. Now Tang Zhongyou must suspect that I was doing harm to him." Realizing it difficult to justify himself, Tongfu wrote a letter to Hui'an. It read thus:

Throughout my whole life, I've never spoken ill of others behind their backs. Since Tang Zhongyou spoke ill of you and now he is casting doubts on me, I should commit suicide so as to prove my good name. Though I'm reduced to penury, I still cherish my life very much. Dismiss this letter with a laugh.

Chen Tongfu passed on to Hui'an what Zhongyou said about him behind his back when Tongfu got furious at Zhongyou's wicked deeds of ruining his marriage with Zhao Juan. But Tongfu had never expected that Hui'an would be so vicious as to maltreat Zhongyou. It was not at all Chen Tongfu's original intention as regards Yan Rui's being involved in the matter and the subsequent cruel tortures inflicted upon her. Actually it was Hui'an's prejudices and stubbornness that had caused Yan Rui's sufferings. So it served him right that he was later transferred to another post.

The man who succeeded Tang Zhongyou's post was called Yue Lin, with the style name of Shangqing. Many singsong girls arrived to congratulate him on the day he took office. Shangqing asked, "Which one is Yan Rui?" Yan Rui moved forward with an answer. Raising his eyes, Shangqing noticed that she had an extraordinary bearing which was completely different from the other singsong girls. Among the group of the singsong girls, she was like a crane standing among chickens. But she looked extremely haggard. Knowing she had suffered from cruel torments, Shangqing was filled with compassion for her. He said to her, "It is said you're good at composing *ci* poems. Tell me your story in the form of *ci* poem and then I will see to it what I can do for you." Yan Rui consented and at once improvised a *ci* poem to the tune of "Busuanzi":



不是爱风尘，似被前缘误。花落花开自有时，总赖东  
君主。 去也终须去，住也如何住。若得山花插满头，  
莫问奴归处！

商卿听罢，大加称赏道：“你从良之意决矣。此是好事，我当  
为你做主。”立刻取伎籍来，与他除了名字，判与从良。严蕊  
叩头谢了，出得门去。有人得知此说的，千金币聘，争来求讨，  
严蕊多不从他。有一宗室近属子弟，丧了正配，悲哀过切，百  
事俱废。宾客们恐其伤性，拉他到伎馆散心。说着别处多不肯  
去，直等说到严蕊家里，才肯回来。严蕊见此人满面戚容，问  
知为着丧耦之故，晓得是个有情之人，关在心里。那宗室也慕  
严蕊大名，饮酒中间，彼此喜乐，因而留住。倾心来往了多时，  
毕竟纳了严蕊为妾。严蕊也一意随他，遂成了终身结果。虽然  
不到得夫人、县君，却是宗室自取严蕊之后，深为得意，竟不  
续婚。一根一蒂，立了妇名，享用到底，也是严蕊立心正直之  
报也。



Driven to the profession of a singsong girl, it seems to me I've been led astray by predestined bond. The time is fixed that flowers bloom and flowers wither, dependent of the will of the Goddess of Flowers. Sooner or later, I'll try to get out of here. But how to I know not. By the time when my hairs have turned gray, ask no more where my home is and to where I'll retire.

Shangqing highly praised Yan Rui's *ci* poem and said, "It sounds you've made up your mind to marry a decent man. This is indeed a good thing to do. I will do everything possible to help you achieve your aim." At once he took out the singsong girls registration book, cut out her name and got rid of her identity, telling her that she could now legally marry a decent man. Yan Rui kowtowed to express her thanks and then took her leave. Some people learned about it and contended to court her with a huge sum of money. Yan Rui declined their offers of marriage.

Meanwhile there was a close relation of the imperial family who had lost his wife. This man was so grieved that he became disinterested in everything. Fearing that his sorrows might impair his health, his attendants asked him to go and visit some singsong girls to relieve his boredom. His attendants suggested many singsong girls, but his answer was always no. However, when he heard the mention of Yan Rui, he agreed readily. Seeing that the man was in low spirits, Yan Rui inquired him about his worries. Then the man told her it was because his wife had died. From this Yan Rui knew that this man was true and loyal, and so she kept him in her heart.

The close relation of the imperial family adored Yan Rui for her good reputation too. While they were drinking, they both developed a favorable impression for each other. During the period of time that followed they saw each other a lot and fell in love. Finally the man took Yan Rui as his concubine. Yan Rui loved this man wholeheartedly too, and she lived to a ripe old age with him in conjugal bliss. Though Yan Rui was not conferred with the title of a lady and the man never achieved an official post such as a county magistrate, the man was very contented and never remarried after he took Yan Rui as his concubine. Later he made Yan Rui his wife and they two lived in happiness for the rest of their life. Also, Yan Rui was rewarded for her fair-mindedness.

后人评论这个严蕊，乃是真正讲得道学的。有七言古风一篇，单说他的好处：

天台有女真奇绝，挥毫能赋谢庭雪。  
搽粉虞候太守筵，酒酣未必呼烛灭。  
忽尔监司飞檄至，桁杨横掠头抢地。  
章台不犯士师条，肺石会疏刺史事。  
贱质何妨轻一死，岂承浪语污君子？  
罪不重科两得答，狱吏之威止是耳。  
君侯能讲毋自欺，乃遣女子诬人为！  
虽在縲继非其罪，尼父之语胡忘之？  
君不见，贯高当时白赵王，身无完肤犹自强，  
今日蛾眉亦能尔，千载同闻侠骨香。  
含颦带笑出狴犴，寄声合眼闭眉汉。  
山花满头归去来，天潢自有梁鸿案。

According to the comments made by later generations, Yan Rui was the very person who had attained the cream of Confucianism.



## 卷 十 三

鹿胎庵客人作寺主 剡溪里旧鬼借新尸

诗曰：

昔日眉山翁，无事强说鬼。  
何取诞怪言，阴阳等一理。  
惟令死可生，不教生愧死。  
晋人颇通玄，我怪阮宣子。

晋时有个阮修，表字宣子。他一生不信有鬼，特做一篇《无鬼论》。他说道：“今人见鬼者，多说他着活时节衣服。这等说起来，人死有鬼，衣服也有鬼了。”一日，有个书生来拜他，极论鬼神之事。一个说无，一个说有，两下辩论多时。宣子口才便捷，书生看看说不过了，立起身来道：“君家不信，难以置辨。只眼前有一件大证见，身即是鬼，岂可说无耶？”言毕，忽然不见。宣子惊得木呆，嘿然而惭。这也是他见不到处。从来圣贤多说人死为鬼，岂有没有的道理？不止是有，还有许多放生前心事不下，出来显灵的。所以古人说：“当令死者复生，





## *Tale 13*

### **Incidentally a Guest Acts as the Host in Doe Fetus Temple The Spirit of a Deceased Finds Reincarnation in a New Corpse in Shanxili Village**

During the Jin Dynasty (265-420) there lived a man called Ruan Xiu, with the style name of Xuanzi. Throughout all his life he didn't believe in ghosts. So he specially wrote an article entitled *On the Nonexistence of Ghosts* to expound his views. In this article he thus argued, "Most people who have seen ghosts are likely to say that the ghosts wear the clothes they used to wear when they were still humans. Provided this saying holds water, humans become ghosts after death, their clothes also die and become ghosts."

One day a young scholar called on him and they two had a heated argument over the issue of ghosts and spirits. Both being self-opinionated, one had profound faith in ghosts, while the other firmly disagreed. The debate lasted for quite some time. Since Xuanzi had a talent for speaking, the young scholar realized that he was in no position to beat him in the argument. Then the scholar rose and said, "You do not believe in ghosts. I can't bring you round. But right before your eyes is a sound evidence that a human body is exactly a ghost. How could you simply make an arbitrary assertion that there are no ghosts?" Finishing these words, the young scholar suddenly vanished into thin air. Totally stupefied, Xuanzi felt very much ashamed of himself. He was limited in his horizons in this respect.

Ever since time immemorial, all sages and men of virtue have acknowledged that humans turn to ghosts after death. How could it be the other way round? Ghosts not only do exist, but there are also quite a lot of them, feeling uneasy with the loads on their minds left unsettled in their



生者可以不愧，方是忠臣义士。”而今世上的人，可以见得死者的能有几个？只为欺死鬼无知，若是见了显灵的，可也害怕哩！

宋时福州黄间人刘监税的儿子四九秀才，取郑司业明仲的女儿为妻。后来死了。三个月，将去葬于刘家先陇之傍。既掩圻，刘秀才邀请送葬来的亲朋在坟庵饮酒。忽然一个大蝶飞来，可有三寸多长，在刘秀才左右盘旋飞舞，赶逐不去。刘秀才道是怪异，戏言道：“莫非我妻之灵乎？倘阴间有知，当集我掌上。”刚说得罢，那蝶应声而下，竟飞在刘秀才右手内。将有一刻光景，然后飞去。细看手内，已生下二卵。坐客多来观看。刘秀才恐失掉了，将纸包着，叫房里一个养娘，交付与他藏了。刘秀才念着郑氏，叹息不已，不觉泪下。

正在凄惶间，忽见这个养娘走进来，道：“不必悲伤，我自来了！”看着行动举止，声音笑貌，宛然与郑氏一般无二。



lifetimes, who even make their power felt. That's why the old saying goes thus, "The living people who feel no qualms when confronting those who have returned to life after death can be regarded as faithful, honest and noble-minded gentlemen." At present, how many living people have the courage to face the dead? Most people consider that the deceased have lost consciousness and sunk into total ignorance of everything. At this point they are completely wrong. They will also be terribly scared if they run into ghosts who make their presence and power felt.

During the Song Dynasty, there lived a Tax Superintendent Liu in Huanglü, Fuzhou Prefecture. He had a son named Sjiu who was a *xiucaï*. Liu Xiucái married the daughter of the Associate Directorate of the Imperial Academy Zheng Mingzhong. Later Liu Xiucái's wife died. Three months after her death, Liu Xiucái's wife was carried to the Zhengs' ancestors' graveyard to be buried. After her coffin was well buried, Liu Xiucái gathered all the relatives and friends who had come for the funeral and treated them with wine at the side of her wife's grave mound. All of a sudden a large butterfly of over ten centimeters long flew over and circled around Liu Xiucái. Though Liu Xiucái tried to drive it away, it was to no avail. Finding it strange, he said jokingly, "Could it be the spirit of my wife? If the nether world is knowledgeable about what I'm thinking, it should come over to me and land on my palm."

As soon as he finished these words, the butterfly dropped onto his right palm. It stayed there for a moment and then flew away. Looking at his right palm, Liu Xiucái saw two butterfly eggs. People around all thronged over to have a look. Fearing that he might lose them, Liu Xiucái wrapped them up in a piece of paper. Then he called over his servant maid and handed it to her, telling her to take good care of the eggs. Feeling deeply obsessed with the memories of his deceased wife Zheng, Liu Xiucái felt grieved and tears rolled down his face without his realizing it. While Liu Xiucái was still in a daze, the servant maid suddenly rushed over to him and said, "Don't be so sad. I'm back." Judging from her manners, voice and looks, the servant maid looked as if she was exactly the same with his wife Zheng. All the people present thought that the servant maid must have been out of her mind. When she was back home

众人多道是这养娘风发了。到晚回家，竟走到郑氏房中，开了箱匣，把冠裳钗钏服饰之类，尽多拿出来，悉照郑氏平日打扮起来。家人正皆惊骇，他竟走出来，对刘秀才说道：“我去得三月，你在家中做的事，那件不是，那件不是，某妾说甚么话，某仆做甚勾当。”一一数来，件件不虚。刘秀才晓得是郑氏附身，把这养娘认做是郑氏，与他说话，全然无异。也只道附几时要去的，不想自此声音不改了，到夜深竟登郑氏之床，拉了刘秀才同睡，云雨欢爱，竟与郑氏生时一般。明日早起来，区处家事，简较庄租簿书，分毫不爽。亲眷家闻知，多来看他。他与人寒温款待，一如平日。人多叫他鬼小娘。养娘的父亲就是刘家庄仆，见说此事，急来看看女儿。女儿见了，不认是父亲，叫他的名字骂道：“你去年还欠谷若干斛，何为不还？”叫当直的拿住了要打，讨饶才住。

如此者五年。直到后来刘秀才死了，养娘大叫一声，蓦然倒地，醒来仍旧如常，问他五年间事，分毫不知。看了身上衣服，不胜惭愧，急脱卸了，原做养娘本等去。



in the evening, the servant maid, to everyone's surprise, entered Zheng's room. Then she opened the boxes and suitcases and took out all of Zheng's dresses, hairpins and other accessories. After this, she dressed herself up exactly as Zheng had done when alive. Everybody in the house was dumbfounded. She walked out of the room and said to Liu Xiucan, "During the three months while I was not here, you did this and you did that wrong. This concubine said so and so, and that servant did so and so." Surprisingly, everything she said was true.

Knowing that the servant maid was possessed by Zheng's spirit, Liu Xiucan intentionally took her as his wife Zheng and talked to her. He found out that it was exactly as if he was talking with his wife Zheng. He anticipated that his wife's spirit would leave the servant maid very soon. But the fact was that the servant maid's voice remained unchanged. At night the servant maid got onto the late Zheng's bed and slept with Liu Xiucan. She made love with Liu in the same way as Zheng had done when alive. After getting up the next morning, she started to handle the household affairs and look into and check the family land tax book. As relatives and clansmen of the Lius learned about it, they all came to see her. She greeted them nicely and treated them as Zheng had done. So all the members of the Liu family called her Ghost Wife.

The servant maid's father was a farmhand on the Lius' land. Upon hearing this matter, he hurriedly ran to the Liu family to visit his daughter. When she saw her father, the servant maid denied their father and daughter relationship. On the contrary, she shouted her father's name and scolded him, saying, "You still owed us certain *dous* of grain last year. Why haven't you handed them in?" So saying, she ordered a housekeeper to give him a beating. She didn't take back her order until all the people present pleaded her to spare him.

This situation lasted for five years till Liu Xiucan's death. The moment Liu Xiucan died, the servant maid let out a scream and fell to the ground, falling into a coma. She returned to normal when she came to. When asked about what she had done in the past five years, she was completely in the dark. As she noticed her dresses, she felt deeply ashamed of herself and took them off immediately. Then she resumed her original status of

可见世间鬼附生人的事极多，然只不过一时间事，没有几年价竟做了生人与人相处的。也是他阴中撇刘秀才不下，又要照管家事，故此现出这般奇异来。怎说得个没鬼？这个是借生人的了，还有个借死人的。说来时：

直叫小胆惊欲死，任是英雄也汗流。  
只为满腔冤抑事，一宵鬼话报心仇。

话说会稽嵊县有一座山，叫做鹿胎山。为何叫得鹿胎山？当时有一个陈惠度，专以射猎营生。到此山中，见一带胎鹿，在面前走过。惠度腰袋内取出箭来，搭上了磨一箭射去，叫声“着”，不偏不侧，正中了鹿的头上。那只鹿带了箭，急急跑到林中，跳上两跳，早把个小鹿生了出来。老鹿既产，便把小鹿身上血舐个干净了，然后倒地身死。陈惠度见了，好生不忍，深悔前业，抛弓弃矢，投寺为僧。后来鹿死之后，生出一样草来，就名“鹿胎草”。这个山原叫得剡山，为此就改做鹿胎山。

山上有个小庵，人只叫做鹿胎庵。这个庵，苦不甚大。宋





the servant maid.

This can prove that in our world there are indeed many happenings that the living people are possessed by ghosts or spirits. However, each of such happenings is usually very brief. Very few living people possessed by ghosts can live together with another person for so long as the servant maid and Liu Xiucan had done. It must be that Zheng could not rest at ease in the nether world after she died, leaving Liu Xiucan alone, and that she was worried about the household affairs. Therefore she found reincarnation in the servant maid and made her presence felt. How can we say ghosts do not exist? The story I've just told you is one in which the ghost finds reincarnation in a living person. I also have another story in which the ghost finds reincarnation in a deceased. It's so thrilling that:

Cowards will be frightened to death,

Heroes will be scared to cold sweat.

Filled with indignation at injustice,

A ghost talks about revenge at night.

\* \* \*

In Shengxian County, Huiji Prefecture, there was a mountain called Doe Fetus Hill. Why is it called Doe Foetus Hill? At that time, there was a man named Chen Huidu, who lived on hunting. One day he went up into the hill and found a doe strolling in front of him. This doe was actually expecting. Huidu took an arrow out of his arrow bag on the waist and fixed it on the bow. With a shout of "go", he shot the doe on the head precisely. Carrying the arrow on the head, the doe raced into the woods. After a couple of jumps, it gave birth to a baby doe. Then it licked up the blood on the baby doe and fell to the ground, dead. Chen Huidu felt extremely sorry for what he had done. Seized with deep regret for his sinful deed, he threw away his arrows and bow and became a monk in a temple. Some time later after the doe's death, a special kind of grass grew out just around the region where the doe was killed. This grass was thus called doe fetus grass. This hill was originally called Shanshan Hill. But later it was renamed Doe Fetus Hill to commemorate this event.

There was a small temple on this hill and people called it Doe Foetus Temple. During the Chunxi reign (1174-1189) of emperor Song Xiaozong

淳熙年间，有一僧号竹林，同一行者在里头居住。山下村里，名剡溪里，就是王子猷雪夜访戴安道的所在。里中有个张姓的人家，家长新死，将入殓，来请庵僧竹林去做入棺功德——是夜里的事。竹林叫行僮挑了法事经箱，随着就去。

时已日暮，走到半山中，只见前面一个人叫道：“天色晚了，师父下山到甚处去？”抬头看时，却是平日与他相好的一个秀才，姓直名谅，字公言。两人相揖已毕，竹林道：“官人从何处来？小僧要山下人家去，怎么好？”直生道：“小生从县间到此，见天色已晚，特来投宿庵中，与师父清话。师父不下山去罢。”竹林道：“山下张家主翁入殓，特请去做佛事。事在今夜。多年檀越人家，怎好不去得？只是官人已来到此，又没有不留在庵中宿歇的。事出两难，如何是好？”直生道：“我不宿此，别无去处。”竹林道：“只不知官人有胆气独住否？”直生道：“我辈大丈夫，气吞湖海，鬼物所畏，有甚没胆气处！你每自去，我竟到庵中自宿罢。”竹林道：“如此却好，只是小





of the Song Dynasty, a monk with the style name of Zhulin and an unshaven monk lived in this small temple. At the foot of the Doe Foetus Hill was a village called Shanxili, the very place where Wang Huizhi once paid a visit to Dai Kui on a snowy night.<sup>1</sup> There lived a family with the sir name of Zhang in this village. The head of the Zhang family died not long ago and now his body was about to be coffined. The Zhangs went to the temple to ask the monk Zhulin to go and hold a Buddhist service in the Zhang family while the dead was being coffined. The Buddhist service was to be held at night. Zhulin told the unshaven monk to carry on a pole the boxes containing the Buddhist sutras and other things needed for the service. Then they set off for the Zhang family at once.

Dusk found Zhulin halfway down the hill. Suddenly a man came into his sight and shouted at him, "It's late. Where are you heading for, Master?" Looking up, Zhulin found the man was a friend of his, a *xiuca* named Zhi Liang, with the style name of Gongyan. Folding their hands and making deep bows, they two greeted each other. Then Zhulin asked, "Where have you been, young scholar? I'm going down the hill to a certain family. What are you up to?" Scholar Zhi replied, "I've been to the county seat. Since it's late now, I've specially come here to seek temporary lodging in your temple. I'd also like to have a chat with you. Don't go down the hill, please."

Zhulin said, "The master of the Zhang family is going to be encoffined and they requested me to go there to hold a Buddhist service this very night. The Zhangs have been our alms givers for years. How can I turn down their request and not go? But now that you're here, there is no reason for me not to accommodate you in the temple. It's really a difficult choice for me. What should I do?" Scholar Zhi said, "I have got no other places to turn to except this temple." Zhulin asked, "I'm wondering if you're audacious enough to pass the night in the temple alone. Scholar Zhi replied, "I'm a man and I'm daring. Ghosts will be afraid of me. Why do you doubt my guts of staying the night here by myself? You may go ahead with your journey and I'll go to the temple for the night." Zhulin said, "That would be fine with me. But I still feel sorry to have you stay

僧心上过意不去。明日归来，罚做一个东道请罪罢。”直生道：“快去，快去，省得为我少得了衬钱。明日就将衬钱来破除也好。”竹林就在腰间解下钥匙来付与直生，道：“官人，你可自去开了门歇宿去。肚中饥饿时，厨中有糕饼，灶下有见成米饭，食物多有，随你权宜食用。将就过了今夜，明日绝早，小僧就回。托在相知，敢如此大胆，幸勿见责。”直生取笑道：“不要开进门去，撞着了什么避忌的人在里头，你放心不下。”竹林也笑道：“山庵浅陋，料没有妇女藏得。不妨，不妨。”直生道：“若有在里头，正好我受用他一夜。”竹林道：“但凭受用，小僧再不吃醋。”大笑而别，竹林自下山去了。

直生接了钥匙，一径躐上山来。端的好夜景：

栖鸦争树，宿鸟归林。隐隐钟声，知是禅关清梵；纷纷烟色，看他比屋晚炊。径僻少人行，惟有樵夫肩担下；山深无客至，并稀稚子候门迎。微茫几点疏星，户前相引；灿烂一钩新月，木末来邀。室内知音，只是满堂木偶；庭



in the temple all by yourself. I'll act as the host and treat you to dinner as a fine on me when I come back tomorrow morning." The young scholar said, "Just hurry up and go ahead now. I hope you won't miss any of your alms because of me. You may just treat me tomorrow with the alms you get."

Then Zhulin undid the key from his waist and handed it to Scholar Zhi, saying, "Young scholar, you may go open the door yourself and take a rest. When you're hungry, get some rice and cakes in the kitchen for yourself. There is plenty of food and you may eat anything you like. Just help yourself for one night and I'll be back early tomorrow morning. Since we've been old friends and known each other quite well, I really find it difficult to decline your request. But don't lay the blame on me if your audacity brings you into trouble." Scholar Zhi teased him by saying, "I hope I won't run into anyone who is not supposed to be there once I open the door. Is this what's been keeping you in suspense?"

Zhulin answered with a smile, "This is a small shabby temple. I don't suppose you'll find women hidden in it. Just go ahead." Scholar Zhi said, "If I find one, I'll seize the chance to have a good time with her for the night." Zhulin said, "Do as you please. I won't be jealous." Laughingly, Zhulin said goodbye to the young scholar and went down the hill.

Holding the key in his hand, Scholar Zhi went up the mountain. The night scene of the hill was wonderful.

The crows and birds were all returning to the trees. The distant ringing of the bell suggested there was a Buddhist temple in the hill. The spiraling cooking smoke indicated that supper was ready. Apart from a woodman shouldering a pole of wood going down the mountain, no souls could be seen on the out-of-the-way mountain paths. In this remote mountain one could hardly encounter visitors, so no children could be found standing at the entrances of their houses to greet guests.

A few stars twinkled dimly high up in the sky while the crescent moon shone brightly. Within the rooms of the temple were all carved figures and the only companions in the temple yard were Buddha's four great warrior attendants, with two on either side, facing each other. The one most highly revered by ghosts and spirits for his superb moral integrity might also shudder



前好伴，无非对座金刚。若非德重鬼神钦，也要心疑魑魅至。直生走进庵门，竟趋禅室。此时明月如昼，将钥匙开了房门，在佛前长明灯内点个火起来，点在房中了。到灶下看时，钵头内有炊下的饭，将来锅内热一热。又去倾瓶倒罐，寻出些笋干木耳之类好些物事来。笑道：“只可惜没处得几杯酒吃吃。”把饭吃饱了，又去烧些汤，点些茶起来吃了。走入房中，掩上了门，展一展被卧停当，息了灯，倒头便睡。

一时间睡不去，还在翻覆之际，忽听得扣门响。直生自念庵僧此时正未归来，邻旁别无人迹，有何人到此？必是山魑木魅，不去理他。那门外扣得转急。直生本有胆气，毫无怖畏，大声道：“汝是何物，敢来作怪？”门外道：“小弟是山下刘念嗣，不是甚么怪。”直生见说出话来，侧耳去听，果然是刘念嗣声音，原是他相好的旧朋友。恍忽之中，要起开门。想一想道：“刘念嗣已死过几时，这分明是鬼了。”不走起来。门外道：“你不肯起来放我，我自家会走进来。”说罢，只听得房门砣砣有声，一直走进房来。月亮里边看去，果然是一个人，踞在禅椅之上，肆然坐下。大呼道：“公言！公言！故人到此，怎不起来相揖？”直生道：“你死了，为何到此？”鬼道：“与足下



with fear of being attacked by man-eating spirits in the mountain.

Scholar Zhi entered the temple and made his way straight into the Buddhist abode. In the brilliant moonlight, the temple looked as bright as it was in the daytime. He opened the door of the Buddhist abode with the key. He lit a light from within the altar lamp which burned day and night in front of the figure of Buddha and carried it into the kitchen. There he found some boiled rice. He took some rice into a pan and warmed it. After this he got some other delicacies from bottles and jars such as dried bamboo shoots and fungus. Smiling, he said to himself, "It's a pity I can't get some wine." After he ate his fill, he made a bowl of soup and some tea, and drank them all. He then returned to the abode and bolted the door. After he made the bed, he blew out the light and went to bed.

Scholar Zhi didn't fall asleep at once. While he was tossing over on the bed, he suddenly heard someone knocking at the door. He wondered, "The monk should not be coming back so soon, and there isn't a single soul around here. Who could it be? It must be man-eating spirits in the mountain. Forget it!" The knocking became hurried and pressing. Scholar Zhi was really an audacious man and showed no fear at all. He shouted, "What a creature are you? How dare you come to disturb me!" The one outside the door answered, "I'm Liu Niansi from the foot of the mountain. I'm not a monster." Judging from his voice, Scholar Zhi knew it was indeed Liu Niansi, one of his old friends. In a trance, he got out of bed and was about to open the door. But on second thoughts, he remembered something and said, "Liu Niansi died some time ago. This one is obviously a ghost."

As he thought so, he changed his mind. He did not open the door. The one outside the door said, "If you do not open the door for me, I will enter your room by myself." Then the door creaked and in came a figure. In the moonlight, Scholar Zhi found out that it was indeed a man. The man crouched on the chair willfully and remarked in a loud voice, "Gongyan, Gongyan, your old friend is here to see you. Why don't you get up and greet me?" Scholar Zhi asked, "You're dead. What are you here for?" The ghost replied, "We've been getting along quite well for a long time. I'm not dead. You see, I'm right before your eyes. How can you make fun

往来甚久，我元不曾死，今身子见在，怎么把死来戏我？”直生道：“我而今想起来，你是某年某月某日死的，我于某日到你家送葬，葬过了才回家的。你如今却来这里作怪，你敢道我怕鬼，故戏我么？我是铁汉子，胆气极壮，随你甚么千妖百怪，我决不怕的！”鬼笑道：“不必多言！实对足下说，小弟果然死久了。所以不避幽明，昏夜到此寻足下者，有一腔心事，要诉与足下，求足下出一臂之力。足下许我，方才敢说。”直生道：“有何心事？快对我说。我念平日相与之情，倘可用力，必然尽心。”鬼叹息了一会，方说道：“小弟不幸去世，不上一年，山妻房氏即便改嫁。嫁也罢了，凡我所有箱匣货财、田屋文券，席卷而去。我止一九岁儿子，家财分毫没分。又不照管他一些，使他饥寒伶仃，在外边乞丐度日。”说到此处，岂不伤心！便哽哽咽咽哭将起来。直生好生不忍，便道：“你今来见我之意，想是要我收拾你令郎么？”鬼道：“幽冥悠悠，徒见悲伤，无处告诉。今特来见足下，要足下念平生之好，替我当官一说，申此冤恨。追出家财，付与吾子，使此子得以存活，我瞑目九泉之下，当效结草衔环之报。”

直生听罢，义气愤愤，便道：“既承相托，此乃我身上事



of me by saying I'm dead?" Scholar Zhi said, "I got it. You died on a certain day, certain month, and certain year. On a certain day I went to your home and attended your funeral. I didn't come back home until the funeral was over. Now you've come here to make trouble. You think I'm afraid of ghost, so you've come to play tricks on me. I'm a true man and I'm extremely audacious. Whatever trouble you can stir up will not scare me."

Smiling, the ghost said, "No more beating about the bush. To be frank, I am dead. The reason why I've ventured to come all the way and got here to see you tonight is that I need to disclose to you a load on my mind and I hope you will lend me a hand. I will not speak it out unless you make a promise to help me."

Scholar Zhi asked, "Tell me your worries right now. In terms of our friendship I will do my utmost to help you if I can." Heaving a sigh, the ghost said, "It's true I'm dead. But my wife Fang remarried in less than a year after my death. It was all right that she got remarried, but she took away with her all of my wealth and belongings in the suitcases and trunks as well as the title deeds for my house and land. Nothing was given to my only nine-year-old son. Worst of all, she did not take care of him, thus causing him to suffer from cold and hunger. Now my son has to live on begging." How couldn't one feel sad at the mention of this? The ghost was then choked with sobs. Filled with compassion, Scholar Zhi asked, "Do you mean you want me to look after your son?"

The ghost said, "In the world of the dead, I've got nowhere to turn to to air my grievances. So I have to weep with grief in vain. Now I've specially come to see you and I hope you will lodge a complaint against her with the authorities so as to redress the injustice done to me. After my family properties are recovered, please give them to my son so that he can make a living. If you're kind enough to do me this favor, I'll be extremely grateful in the world of the dead and I'll repay you for your kindness."

Upon hearing the ghost's words, Scholar Zhi was filled with fury and righteous indignation. He said, "Since you've entrusted this business with me, I'll do everything I can to help you. I'll go and see the County

了。明日即当往见县官，为兄申理此事。但兄既死无对证，只我口说，有何凭据？”鬼道：“我一一说来，足下须记得明白。我有钱若干，粟若干，布帛若干。在我妻身边有一细帐，在彼减妆匣内，匙钥紧系身上；田若干亩，在某乡；屋若干间，在某里；俱有文契在彼房内紫漆箱中，时常放在床顶上。又有白银五百两，寄在彼亲赖某家。闻得往取几番，彼家不肯认帐。若得官力，也可追出。此皆件件有据，足下肯为我留心，不怕他少了。只是儿子幼小无能，不是足下帮扶，到底成不得事。”直生一一牢记，恐怕忘了，又叫他说了再说，说了两三遍，把许多数目款项，俱明明白白了。直生道：“我多已记得，此事在我，不必多言。只是你一向在那里？今日又何处来？”鬼道：“我死去无罪，不入冥司。各处游荡，看见家中如此情态。既不到阴司，没处告理；阳间官府处，又不是鬼魂可告的，所以含忍至今。今日偶在山下人家赴斋，知足下在此山上，故特地







Magistrate tomorrow and pour out your sorrows. But you're dead, and you've got no evidences for these charges. My words alone won't be able to serve as proof. Can you show me some evidences?"

The ghost replied, "Let me tell you my evidences one by one and you need to keep them in mind. I had a certain sum of money, a certain amount of grain and certain bolts of cloth and silk, and all these were well recorded in detail in an account book. My wife now keeps the account book in her dressing box and she has the key to the dressing box. I had a certain *mu* of land in a certain place and a certain number of rooms in a certain village. The title deeds of my land and my house are now kept in the purple lacquered trunk in her room which is usually placed at the head of the bed. I also had five hundred taels of silver which had been deposited in her relative Lai's home. I heard that my wife had been there several times to take the money, but the Lai family denied it. If the County Magistrate is willing to help, this sum of money can also be recovered. Everything I said is based on facts. If you're to help me wholeheartedly and take care this matter, you won't miss anything I mentioned. I'm deeply worried that my son is too young to take care of himself. If you can't do me this favor and help me recover my wealth and properties, I'm afraid my son won't be able to grow up to manhood and accomplish anything."

Scholar Zhi asked the ghost to give an account of the details for a couple of more times so as to make sure he had got all the facts concerning the amount of money and other properties. Then he said, "I've kept them in mind. Just leave this business to me. But I have one more thing to ask you. Where do you usually stay and where have you come from?"

The ghost replied, "I didn't go to the under world after my death, because I had committed no sins when alive. Now I roam about everywhere and have no definite dwellings. So I saw by chance what had happened to my family. Since I was denied of the admittance of the nether world, I couldn't bring a charge against her in the nether world. The authorities in this human world are no place for ghosts and spirits to redress an injustice. That's why I've been putting up with my sorrows till today. This evening I happened to go to a family at the foot of the mountain to seek some food. While I was there, I learned that you are in the mountain. So I made



上来表此心事，求恳出力，万祈留神。”

直生与他言来语去，觉得更深了，心里动念道：“他是个鬼，我与他说话已久，不要为鬼气所侵，被他迷了。趁心里清时，打发他去罢。”因对他道：“刘兄所托既完，可以去了。我身子已倦，不要妨了我睡觉。”说罢，就不听见声响了，叫两声“刘兄”、“刘念嗣”，并不答应了。直生想道已去，揭帐看时，月光朦胧，禅椅之上依然有个人坐着不动。直生道：“可又作怪，鬼既已去，此又何物？”大声咳嗽，禅椅之物也依样咳嗽。直生不理他，假意鼾呼，椅上之物也依样鼾呼。及至仍前叫刘兄，他却不答应。

直生初时胆大，与刘鬼相问答之时，竟把生人待他一般，毫不为异。此时精神既已少倦，又不见说话了，却只如此作影响，心里就怕将起来，道：“万一走上床来，却不利害？”急急走了下床，往外便跑，椅上之物，从背后一路赶来。直生走到佛堂中，听得背后脚步响，想道：“曾闻得人说，鬼物行步，但会直前，不能曲折。我今环绕而走，必然赶不着。”遂在堂柱边绕了一转。那鬼物踉跄，走不迭了，扑在柱上，就抱住不动。直生见他抱了柱，叫声“惭愧”，一道烟望门外溜了，两三步并作一步，一口气奔到山脚下。



a special trip up the mountain to tell you my worries. I sincerely hope you may give me a hand concerning this matter.”

Having talked with the ghost for quite some time, Scholar Zhi realized it was already deep night. An idea suddenly dawned upon him. He thought, “He is a ghost and I’ve been talking with him for quite some time. Better not be enchanted by his ghostly spirit. Better let him go while I am still somber-minded. So, he said to the ghost, “Now that you’ve entrusted the business to me, I think you may leave now. I’m tired. Hope you don’t stand in my way while I’m going to sleep.” Finishing these words, Scholar Zhi found out the ghost had become dead still. He called “Brother Liu! Liu Niansi!” But no answer came.

He thought the ghost must have gone. So he unveiled the bed curtain to take a look. To his surprise, he saw in the moonlight that a person was still sitting on the chair, motionless. Scholar Zhi wondered, “How strange! Since the ghost has gone, who could this be?” He coughed loudly. The person on the chair coughed too in return. Neglecting the presence of the person, Scholar Zhi pretended to snore. The person on the chair snored too. Scholar Zhi moved over to him and called “Brother Liu!” But the person gave no answer.

While Scholar Zhi and the ghost talked with each other at the beginning, Scholar Zhi was very audacious and treated the ghost as a living person. At that time he had no fear at all. However, at this moment he felt a little exhausted. Seeing that the person on the chair acted so oddly, uttering no words, he became very anxious. He thought, “How terrible it will be if he gets onto my bed!” Jumping out of his bed, he rushed out of the room.

The person on the chair ran after him in full chase. After he reached the Buddha’s hall, Scholar Zhi could still hear the sound of footsteps behind him. He thought to himself, “It is said that ghosts can only walk in a straightforward way and they are incapable of making turns while walking. Now if I walk and turn around, the ghost will definitely fail to catch me.” So, he turned around the pillar in the hall. The ghost tumbled over the pillar and held it in his arms. Then the ghost remained there still. Seizing this opportunity, Scholar Zhi raced out of the Buddha’s hall swiftly, saying “Horrible,” and made his way directly down the mountain.



天色已明，只见山下两个人，前后走来，正是竹林与行童。见了直生道：“官人起得这等早！为甚恁地喘气？”直生喘息略定，道：“险些吓死了人！”竹林道：“为何呢？”直生把夜来的事，从头说了一遍。道：“你们撇了我在檀越家快活，岂知我在山上受如此惊怕？今我下了山，正不知此物怎么样了。”竹林道：“好教官人得知，我每撞着的事，比你的还希奇哩。”直生道：“难道还有奇似我的？”竹林道：“我们做了大半夜佛事，正要下棺，摇动灵柩，念过真言，抛个颂子，揭开海被一看，正不知死人尸骸在那里去了。合家惊慌了，前后找寻，并无影响。送敛的诸亲多吓得走了，孝子无头可奔，满堂鼎沸，连我们做佛事的没些意智，只得散了回来。你道作怪么？”直生摇着头道：“奇！奇！奇！世间人事改常，变怪不一，真个是天翻地覆的事。若不眼见，说着也不信。”竹林道：“官人你而今往那里去？”直生道：“要寻刘家的儿子，与他说去。”竹林道：“且从容，昨夜不曾相陪得，又吃了这样惊恐，而今且到小庵里坐坐，吃些早饭再处。”直生道：“我而今青天白日，便再去寻寻昨夜光景，看是怎的。”就同了竹林，一行三个，一头说，一头笑，踱上山来。



It was dawn. Scholar Zhi saw two people at the foot of the mountain walking towards him. They were monk Zhulin and the unshaven monk. At the sight of Scholar Zhi, Zhulin said, "You're up so early! Why are you breathing so hard?" Calming himself down a little, Scholar Zhi said, "I was scared stiff." Zhulin asked, "Why?" Scholar Zhi recounted in great detail what had happened to him the previous night. Then he said, "You had a good time in your benefactor's home, but I had a terrible shock in your temple. Though I'm now down at the foot of the mountain and I'm still wondering how that one is doing."

Zhulin said, "To tell you the truth, what we experienced last night is much more strange than yours!" Scholar Zhi asked, "Could it be more strange than my horrible experience?" Zhulin said, "When most of the Buddhist service was over, we prepared to get the dead coffined. After we shook the coffin, we chanted incantation and expressed our good wishes. But the moment we picked up the blanket covering the dead, we were shocked to find that the body of the deceased was gone. The whole family ran wild with panic. They searched for it everywhere, but all their effort proved fruitless. Most of the relatives who had come to see the deceased encoffined were so frightened that they simply left. The son of the deceased master of the family also became very much confused at the unexpected event, and the whole room turned into a boiling cauldron. Unable to figure out the ins and outs of the incident, we two left Zhang's home. Don't you think it strange?"

Scholar Zhi shook his head and said, "Strange indeed! The world has become completely abnormal. It's really an earth-shaking event! No one would believe it if he had not seen it with his own eyes." Zhulin asked, "Where are going now?" Scholar Zhi answered, "I'm going to look for Liu Niansi's son. I've got something to talk to him." Zhulin said, "Take your time. Sorry I didn't keep you company last night and moreover you were scared so much. Now please come to my temple and have your breakfast." Scholar Zhi said, "It's daytime now. I might as well go and get a clearer view of what happened to me last night." So saying, Scholar Zhi and Zhulin, together with the unshaven monk, went up the hill as they talked and laughed.



一宵两地作怪，闻说也须惊坏。

禅师不见不闻，未必心无挂碍。

三人同到庵前，一齐抬起头来。直生道：“元来还在此。”竹林看时，只见一个死人，抱住在堂柱上。行童大叫一声，把经箱扑的攢在地上了，连声喊道：“不好！不好！”竹林啐了一口道：“有我两人在此，怕怎的？且仔细看看着。”竹林把庵门大开，向亮处一看，叫声奇怪！把个舌头伸了出来，缩不进去。直生道：“昨夜与我讲了半夜话、后来赶我的，正是这个。依他说，只该是刘念嗣的尸首今却不认得。”竹林道：“我仔细看，分明像是张家主翁的模样。敢就是昨夜失去的，却如何走在这里？”直生道：“这等是刘念嗣借附了尸首，来与我讲话的了。怪道他说到山下人家赴斋来的，可也奇怪得紧！我而今且把他分付我的说话，一一写了出来，省得过会忘记了些。”竹林道：“你自做你的事。而今这个尸首在此，不稳便，我且知会张家人来认一认看。若认来不是，又作计较。”连忙叫行童做些早饭，大家吃了，打发他下山张家去报信。说：“山上有个死尸，抱在柱上，有些像老檀越，特来邀请亲人去看。”张家儿子见说，急约亲戚几人，飞也似到山上来认。邻里间闻得



Before long they three reached the temple and looked around. Scholar Zhi said, "He is still at this place!" Zhulin saw it was a dead person with his arms holding the pillar of the hall. The unshaven monk let out a scream and dropped the trunk containing Buddhist sutras, shouting, "Awful! Awful!" Zhulin spat at him and said, "We have three of us here. What are you scared of? Take a closer look first!" Zhulin opened the gate of the temple wide and examined the dead person carefully. He exclaimed, "How strange!" As he said so, he put out his tongue, and it remained outside his mouth for quite a long time. Scholar Zhi said, "This man talked with me for most of last night and then he started to run after me. According to what he said last night, this man should be the body of Liu Niansi. But now this body is strange to me."

Zhulin said, "This one is very much like the master of the Zhang family. Could it be possible that this one is the body that had disappeared last night? But why has it come to this place?" Scholar Zhi said, "In this case, it must be that the deceased Liu Niansi had found reincarnation in this dead man and had come to talk with me. No wonder he told he had just been to a family to seek food at the foot of the mountain. What a strange event this is! Now I'd better put down everything he had told me in case I might forget any of them in future." Zhulin said, "Just do it as you please. But it's rather inappropriate for this body to stay here. I'll inform the Zhang family about this matter and ask them to come for a look. If this body is not the deceased master of the Zhangs, I'll think over what to do with it."

So saying, Zhulin told the unshaven monk to prepare some breakfast. After breakfast, Zhulin sent the unshaven monk to go down the hill and tell the Zhangs about the matter. On seeing the Zhangs, the unshaven monk said, "There is a deceased body up on the mountain with his arms holding a pillar. It looks like our old benefactor. So I've made a special trip here to ask you to go there and have a look for yourselves." On hearing this news, the son of the Zhang family immediately gathered several relatives and went to the temple without the slightest delay. When the neighbors of the Zhangs heard about this event, they all marveled at its peculiarity. As if by prior arrangement, many local inhabitants followed



此说，尽道希奇，不约而同，无数的随着来看。但见：

一会子闹动了剡溪里，险些儿踹平了鹿胎庵。

且说张家儿子走到庵中一看，柱上的果然是他父亲尸首。号天拍地，哭了一场。哭罢，拜道：“父亲，何不好好入殓，怎的走到这个所在，如此作怪？便请到家里去罢！”叫众人帮了，动手解他下来。怎当得双手紧抱，牢不可脱。欲用力拆开，又恐怕折坏了些肢体，心中不忍。舞弄了多时，再不得计较。此时山下来看的人越多了。内中有的道：“新尸强魂必不可脱，除非连柱子弄了家去。”张家是有力之家，便依着说话，叫些匠人把几枝木头，将屋梁支架起来，截断半柱，然后连柱连尸，倒了下来，挺在木板上了，才偷得柱子出来。一面将木板扎缚了绳索，正要扛抬他下山去，内中走出一个里正来道：“列位不可造次！听小人一句说话。此事大奇，关系地方怪异，须得报知县相公，眼同验看方可。”众人齐住了手，道：“恁地时你自报去。”里正道：“报时须说此尸在本家怎么样不见了，几时走到这庵里，怎么样抱在这柱子上。说得备细，方可对付知县相公。”张家人道：“我们只知下棺时，揭开被来，不见了尸首。





the son of the Zhang family up the hill to have a look. At the moment, the whole village of Shanxili was startled by this strange event and Doe Fetus Temple was jam-packed with people.

Arriving at the temple, the son of the Zhangs saw clearly that the body at the pillar was really the corpse of his father. The son wailed for some time and said, "Father, why didn't you want to go into the coffin? Why were you here making such a mischief? Let's go back home." As he said so, he asked some people to help him undo his father's corpse from the pillar. Strange enough, the corpse held the pillar so tightly that they found it impossible to take it off. They thought of using their strength, but they didn't have the heart to do so for fear that they might break the limbs of the old man. They worked at it for quite a long time, but all their efforts proved useless.

At this time, more and more villagers from the foot of the hill had arrived at the temple. One villager suggested, "The spirit of the newly dead is extremely powerful. The only way is to take the corpse and the pillar home together." The Zhang family was a large one. They gathered some craftsmen and asked them to prop up the roof beam with several pieces of wood. Then the craftsmen sawed the pillar, placed it together with the corpse on a plank and carried them out of the temple in the quiet. Then they tied the corpse to the plank with a rope. As they were about to carry it down the hill, the village head walked over out of the group of villagers and said, "Please don't be rash. You need to listen to me. This is rather bizarre and it has a direct bearing on the local strange phenomena. You need to report it to the County Magistrate and let him see the corpse personally." On hearing this, everybody stopped and said, "In this case, you may go and report it."

The village head said, "It must be a detailed report. You must tell the County Magistrate how it was found missing, when it got to the temple and how it ran to the pillar." People from the Zhang family said, "As we were about to encoffin the corpse, we just found it missing the moment we uplifted the blanket. Later a monk from the temple came to our family and told us there was a corpse in the temple. Then we came here and found it. What had happened to the corpse in the temple was unknown to

已后却是庵里师父来报，才寻得着。这里的事，我们不知。”竹林道：“小僧也因做佛事，同在张家，不知这里的事。今早回庵，方才知。这庵里自有个秀才官人，晚间在此歇宿，见他尸首来的。”此时直生已写完了帐，走将出来，道：“晚间的事，多在小生肚里。”里正道：“这等，也要烦官人见一见知县相公，做个证见。”直生道：“我正要去见知县相公，有话说。”里正就齐了一班地方人，张家孝子扶从了扛尸的，直秀才自带了写的帐，一拥下山，同到县里来。此时看的何止人山人海？嚷满了县堂。

知县出堂，问道：“何事喧嚷？”里正同两处地方一齐跪下，道：“地方怪异，将来告明。”知县道：“有何怪异？”里正道：“剡溪里民家张某，新死入殓，尸首忽然不见。第二日却在鹿胎山上庵中，抱住佛堂柱子。见有个直秀才在山中歇宿，见得来时明白。今本家连柱取下，将要归家。小人们见此怪异，关系地方，不敢不报。故连作怪之尸，并一千人等，多送到相公台前，凭相公发落。”知县道：“我曾读过野史，死人能起，唤名尸蹶，也是人世所有之事。今日偶然在此，不足为异。只是





us.” Zhulin also added, “I was holding the Buddhist service in the Zhang family last night. I didn’t know what had happened in the temple either. I learned something about the matter after I got back to the temple this morning. A young scholar was in the temple last night. He saw the corpse.”

At this moment, Scholar Zhi, having finished putting down the note, came over and said, “I know everything about what happened in this temple last night.” The village head then said to Scholar Zhi, “In this case, I’d like to bother you to go and see the County Magistrate too to appear as the witness.” Scholar Zhi said, “I’m thinking of going to see the County Magistrate too. I need to talk to him about something else.” Thus the village head as well as some villagers, the son of the Zhang family, along with the group carrying the corpse, and Scholar Zhi taking the note he had written, all went down the hill and made their way to the county seat. Soon the county yamen became crowded with a sea of noisy people.

At the court, the County Magistrate asked, “What’s your commotion about?” The village head, the son of the Zhangs’ and Scholar Zhi all threw themselves on their knees and answered, “We’re here to report a bizarre phenomenon happened in our place.” The County Magistrate asked, “What is it?” The village head said, “While the deceased head of the Zhang family at Shanxili Village was about to be encoffined, suddenly they found the corpse was no longer there. The next day the corpse was discovered in the temple on Doe Fetus hill, tightly holding the pillar of the hall housing the image of Buddha. On that night a young scholar surnamed Zhi stayed at the temple and witnessed the movements of the corpse. While the Zhangs took the pillar together with the corpse and were about to leave for home, I stopped them and brought them here to see you, because I think it was a strange phenomenon and it must have a lot to do with our local customs. So here are the strange corpse and the people concerned with this matter. Now everything is at your disposal.”

The County Magistrate said, “I’ve read some unofficial stories, in which corpses can get to their feet and fall when their names are called. Such things are common in the world. It’s not strange at all that you ran into such a thing today. But what is Scholar Zhi’s version of the story?” Scholar

直秀才所见来的光景，是怎么样的？”直生道：“大人所言尸蹶固是，但其间还有好些缘故。此尸非能作怪，乃一不平之鬼，借此尸来托小生求申理的。今见大人，当以备陈。只是此言未可走泄，望大人主张，发落去了这一千人，小生别有下情实告。”

知县见他说得有些因由，便叫该房与地方取词立案，打发张家亲属领尸归殓，各自散去。单留着直生问说备细。直生道：“小生有个旧友刘念嗣，家事尽也温饱，身死不多时，其妻房氏席卷家资，改嫁后夫，致九岁一子流离道路。昨夜鬼扣山庵，与小生诉苦，备言其妻所掩没之数及寄顿之家，朗朗明白，要小生出身代告大人台下，求理此项。小生义气所激，一力应承，此鬼安心而去。不想他是借张家新尸附了来的，鬼去尸存。小生觉得有异，离了房门走出，那尸就来赶逐小生，遇柱而抱。幸已天明，小生得脱。故地方见此异事，其实乃友人这一点不平之怨气所致。今小生记其所言，满录一纸，大人台鉴，照此单款为小生一追，使此子成立。不枉此鬼苦苦见托之意，亦是



Zhi answered, “What you said is true, sir, as regards the corpse falls when the name of the deceased is called. But I have something more to say about this corpse. This corpse was very capable of making mischief. Actually the spirit of a wronged man found reincarnation in this corpse and entrusted me to redress his grievances. Now I’m at the court. Please allow me to tell you about it in detail. But what I’m going to say should not be divulged. Could you, sir, ask the crowd to leave here? I have something important to tell you.”

Seeing what Scholar Zhi said sounded plausible, the County Magistrate ordered that the Zhangs and the village head put their records on file. Then he told the Zhang’s family members to take the corpse home and have it encoffined. All the people were dismissed except Scholar Zhi.

Scholar Zhi said, “I had a friend named Liu Niansi. He used to be pretty well off. Not long after his death, his wife, née Fang, got remarried and carried away with her all the wealth and property of the family, making their nine-year-old son homeless. And this son had to live a life of a vagrant. Last night, the ghost knocked at the door of the temple and aired his grievances to me. The ghost also told me in detail the exact amount of money and properties his wife had carried away with her and another sum of money she had deposited in the home of one of her relatives. The ghost asked me to come and see you in person and ask you to handle the case. On hearing his grievances, I became furious with righteous indignation and promised to help him. Then the ghost set his mind at rest and left. But the fact should be that the ghost had found reincarnation in the newly deceased Zhang and came to see me. Though the ghost had left, the corpse just remained where it was. I realized something had gone wrong, so I got out of the room. The corpse ran after me and finally caught hold of the pillar. Fortunately it was dawn then, so I fled. The village head and the villagers thought it extremely unusual, but this strange event was caused by my old friend’s grievances. I took down everything the ghost had told me and now I’d like to present it to you. If you’re kind enough to recover the money and properties listed in my note and return them to the ghost’s nine-year-old son, the son will be able to grow to manhood. If it comes true, the ghost wouldn’t have entrusted me with the



大人申冤理枉、救困存孤之大德也。”知县听罢，道：“世间有此薄行之妇，官府不知，乃使鬼来求申，有愧民牧矣！今有烦先生做个证明，待下官尽数追取出来。”直生道：“待小生去寻着其子，才有主脑。”知县道：“追明了家财，然后寻其子来给还，未为迟也，不可先漏机关。”直生道：“大人主张极当。”知县叫直生出外边伺候。密地金个小票，竟拿刘念嗣元妻房氏到官。

元来这个房氏，小名恩娘，体态风流，情性淫荡。初嫁刘家，虽则家道殷厚，争奈刘生禀赋羸弱，遇敌先败，尽力奉承，终不惬意。所以得了虚怯之病，三年而死。刘家并无翁姑伯叔之亲，只凭房氏作主。守孝终七，就有些耐不得。未满一年，就嫁了本处一个姓幸的，叫做幸德，到比房氏年小三五岁。少年美貌，精力强壮，更善抽添之法，房氏才知有人道之乐，只恨丈夫死得迟了几年。所以一家所有，尽情拿去奉承了晚夫，连儿子多不顾了。儿子有时去看他，他一来怕晚夫嫌忌，二来



matter in vain, and also your lordship will do good deeds to your credits in the next world by redressing an injustice and helping the weak.”

On hearing Scholar Zhi’s account, the County Magistrate said indignantly, “What a heartless woman! I’m unaware of this woman’s wicked conduct. How can I help feeling ashamed when the injustice had to reach me by way of ghost? Now I’d like you to serve as a witness and I’ll manage to recover all the money and other properties.” Scholar Zhi said, “I’ll go and find the son. He should be the plaintiff.” The County Magistrate said, “It won’t be too late to find the son if we first recover Liu’s family properties. By then we can return them to the son. We should not divulge the secret before Liu’s family properties are regained.” Scholar Zhi responded, “An excellent idea, your lordship!” The County Magistrate then told Scholar Zhi to leave for the time being and stand by to await his orders. After this, the County Magistrate issued a secret order to bring Liu Niansi’s former wife Fang to court.

Liu Niansi’s former wife was called Fang Enniang. She was a pretty and lascivious woman. At the time when she got married with Liu Niansi, the Liu’s family was pretty rich. However, Liu Niansi was physically thin and weak by nature and turned out to be sort of incompetent. Though Liu tried his utmost, Fang Enniang still found it unsatisfactory. Liu became weaker and weaker and eventually died three year after marriage. The Liu’s family had no close relations, so the entire household fell into the hands of Fang Enniang. Even during the early period when she served mourning for her deceased husband, she felt it difficult to put up with her loneliness. In less than one year, she remarried a man named Xing De who lived in the same place with her.

Xing De was three to five years younger than Fang. Young and handsome, Xing De was physically energetic. Fang Enniang very much enjoyed being together with him and regretted that her husband had not died a couple of years earlier. This was why she had carried everything from Liu’s house with her to her second husband. She even went so far as to leave her son behind, caring nothing about him. Her son occasionally went to see her, but she would drive him out, fearing that, on the one hand, her second husband might dislike him; on the other hand, her son’s



儿子渐长，这些与晚夫恣意取乐光景，终是碍眼，只是赶了出来。“刘家”二字已怕人提起了。不料青天一个霹雳，县间竟来拿起刘家元妻房氏来。惊得个不知头脑，与晚夫商量道：“我身上无事，如何县间来拿我？他票上有‘刘家’二字，莫非有人唆哄小业种告了状么？”及问差人讨票看，竟不知原告是那个。却是没处躲闪，只得随着差人到衙门里来。幸德虽然跟着同去，票上无名，不好见官，只带得房氏当面。

知县见了房氏，问道：“你是刘念嗣的元妻么？”房氏道：“当先在刘家，而今的丈夫叫做幸德。”知县道：“谁问你后夫！你只说前夫刘念嗣身死，他的家事怎么样了？”房氏道：“原没什么大家事，死后儿子小，养小妇人不活，只得改嫁了。”知县道：“你丈夫托梦于我，说你卷携家私，嫁了后夫。他有许多东西在你手里，我一一记得的，你可实招来。”房氏心中不信，赖道：“委实一些没有。”知县叫把拶来拶了拶，房氏忍着痛还说没有。知县道：“我且逐件问你：你丈夫说，有钱若干、粟若干、布若干在你家，可有么？”房氏道：“没有。”知县道：





presence might cause inconvenience for her to make merry with her second husband, because her son was gradually growing up. She even felt panic-stricken when others happened to mention the Liu family.

Like a bolt from the blue, she never expected the County Magistrate would bring her to court because she used to be Liu Niansi's wife. She was scared out of her wits. Consulting her second husband, she said, "I didn't commit any offences. Why do they want me to go to court? Could it be possible that someone had abetted that son-of-bitch of mine to sue me, since the characters of the 'Liu's family' were on the official paper?" Though she asked the runners to show her the official paper, she couldn't find out from the paper who the plaintiff was. Unable to hedge, she had to follow the runners to the *yamen*. Xing De went there with her too, but the County Magistrate refused to see him, because his name was not on the paper. Thus Fang Enniang alone was brought to the *yamen* to see County Magistrate.

The County Magistrate asked Fang, "You're Liu Niansi's first wife, aren't you?" Fang replied, "I was first married into the Liu family. My present husband is called Xing De." The County Magistrate shouted sternly, "I didn't ask your second husband's name! Now tell me what you did with your first husband's family properties after his death." Fang replied, "He didn't have any properties. After he died, I couldn't even scrape a living and bring up my son. So I had to get remarried."

The County Magistrate said, "Your husband appeared in my dream and made a revelation to me that you had carried away all his family properties with you after you got remarried. All of your first husband's properties fell into your hands and I'm quite clear about it. You must confess." Not believing his words, Fang disavowed, "No, I didn't have any of them." Then the County Magistrate ordered to squeeze her fingers between sticks. Though the sticks hurt her so much, Fang still denied it. The County Magistrate said, "Now I'll ask you one item after another. Your first husband told me you have a certain amount of silver, a certain amount of grain and a certain bolts of cloth and silk in your home. Is this true?" Fang replied, "No." The County Magistrate questioned further, "Your land is in a certain place and your house is in a certain village. Is



“田在某乡，屋在某里，可有么？”房氏道：“没有。”知县道：“你丈夫说，钱物细帐在减妆匣内，匙钥在你身边；田房文契在紫漆箱中，放于床顶上。如此明白的，你还要赖？”房氏起初见说着数目，已自心慌，还勉强只说没有，今见如此说出海底眼来，心中惊骇道：“是丈夫梦中告诉明白的！”便就遮饰不出了，只得叩头道：“谁想老爷知得如此备细，委实件件真有的。”

知县就唤松了拶，登时押去，取了那减妆与紫漆箱来，当堂开看，与直生所写的无一不对。又问道：“还有白银五百两，寄在亲眷赖某家，可有的么？”房氏道：“也是有的。只为赖家欺小妇人是偷寄的东西，已后去取，推三阻四，不肯拿出来还了。”知县道：“这个我自有处。”当下点一个差役，押了那妇人去寻他刘家儿子同来回话。又分付请直秀才进来。知县对直生道：“多被下官问将出来了，与先生所写一一皆同，可见鬼之有灵矣。今已押此妇寻他儿子去了。先生也去，大家一寻，若见了，同到此间，当面追给家财与他，也完先生一场为友的事。”直生谢道：“此乃小生分内事，就当出去找寻他来。”直生去了。

知县叫牢内取出一名盗犯来，密密分付道：“我带你到一



this true?" Fang denied it again. The County Magistrate continued his questions, "Your first husband told me that the money and the account book are in the dressing box and you keep the key. The title deeds of the land and the house are kept in the purple lacquered trunk which is usually placed at the head of the bed. Are you going to deny them all?"

In the beginning, when Fang heard the magistrate mention the exact figures of the family properties, she became flustered, but she still forced herself to say "no." However, as she heard them all, she was extremely frightened. She murmured, "It's true my husband has told him everything!" Knowing she could no longer conceal anything, she kowtowed and said, "I never thought your lordship had known it so clearly. I confess it's true."

The County Magistrate freed Fang's fingers from between the sticks and took her home under escort to fetch the dressing box and purple lacquered trunk. As the dressing box and purple lacquered trunk were brought to the court and opened, the County Magistrate found out that the contents in them fitted in perfectly with what Scholar Zhi had listed on the note. Then the County Magistrate inquired, "Is it true you deposited five hundred taels of silver in the Lai's family?" Fang replied, "Yes, it is. But the Lais took advantage of my depositing the money in secret and they refused to return it to me when I wanted to get it back later."

The County Magistrate said, "I know how to deal with the Lai's family." So saying, he dispatched an errand to escort Fang and go fetch Liu Niansi's son. This being done, he gave an order to bring in Scholar Zhi. When Scholar Zhi was in, the County Magistrate said, "That woman confessed everything and her confession perfectly conformed to what you had listed on the note. It is thus evident that ghosts have miraculous powers. Now I've sent the woman to go and search for her son. You may also go and look for him. Once the son is located and brought to the court, I'll return all of Liu Niansi's family properties to him. Till then you'll accomplish the mission your old friend had entrusted to you. Scholar Zhi said gratefully, "I will go and hunt for him at once." Then Scholar Zhi left.

The County Magistrate brought over a burglar to him from the prison and said to him in the quiet, "Now I'll take you to a certain family. When



家去，你只说劫来银两，多寄在这家里的。只这等说，我宽你几夜锁押，赏你一顿点心。”贼犯道：“这家姓甚么？”知县道：“姓赖。”贼犯道：“姓得好！好歹赖他家娘罢了。”知县立时带了许多缉捕员役，押锁了这盗犯，一径抬到这赖家来。

赖家是个民户，忽然知县相公抬进门来，先已慌做一团。只见众人役簇拥知县中间坐了，叫赖某过来。赖某战兢兢的跪倒。知县道：“你良民不要做，却窝顿盗赃么？”赖某道：“小人颇知书礼，极守本分的，怎敢干此非为之事？”知县指着盗犯道：“见有这贼招出姓名，说有现银千两，寄在你家，怎么赖得？”赖某正要认看何人如此诬他，那盗犯受过分付，口里便喊道：“是有许多银两藏在他家的。”赖某慌了道：“小人不曾认得这个人的，怎么诬得小人？”知县道：“口说无凭，左右动手前后搜着！赖某也自去做眼，不许乘机抢匿物事！”那一干如狼似虎的人，得了口气，打进房来。只除地皮不翻转，把箱笼多搬到官面前来。内中一箱沉重，知县叫打开来看。赖某晓得有银子在里头的，着了急，就喊道：“此是亲眷所寄。”知县道：“也要开看。”打将开来，果然满箱白物，约有四五百两。知县道：“这个明是盗赃了。”盗犯也趁口喊道：“这正是



we get there, you just say that you've deposited the silver you had stolen in this family. If you do so as required, I'll give you a free time of a couple of nights and reward you with some delicacies." The burglar asked, "Which family it is?" The County Magistrate said, "The Lai's." "What a surname!" said the burglar. "The Lai's must be experts at telling lies." The County Magistrate then gathered many arrest runners and took the burglar to the Lai's house.

The Lai family lived on farming. On seeing that the County Magistrate had arrived at his home in a sedan chair, the whole family was thrown into utter confusion. After the County Magistrate was well seated in the middle of the arrest runners, he ordered to bring Lai to him. Panic-stricken, Lai fell down on his knees in front of the County Magistrate. The County Magistrate questioned, "Why did you harbor stolen goods instead of being a law-abiding person?" Lai replied, "I'm a law-abiding man and never went beyond what is improper." Pointing at the burglar, the County Magistrate said, "This burglar confessed he had deposited a thousand taels of silver in your home. How dare you deny it?" As the head of the family was about to see who was framing a case against him, the burglar shouted as required, "I did deposit lots of silver in his home." Lai became flustered, saying, "I've never seen this man. How could he make a story against me?" The County Magistrate said, "Words alone are no proof. Arrest runners, come on and rummage his house for stolen goods!"

The group of runners, savage as wolves and tigers, forced their way into Lai's house. Except that they didn't unearth the ground, they took all the boxes and trunks to the County Magistrate. Seeing that one of the trunks looked heavier, the County Magistrate ordered that trunk be opened for examination. Knowing that there was silver in this trunk, Lai got worried and shouted, "This trunk belongs to one of my relatives and was entrusted to my care." The County Magistrate said, "Whoever it belongs to, it must be opened for examination!" After it was opened, they found a lot of white silver in it, totaling up to four or five hundred taels. Pointing at the silver, the County Magistrate said, "This is clearly stolen silver." Seizing this opportunity, the burglar also chipped in, "It's the very silver I had stolen!"



我劫来的东西。”赖某道：“此非小人所有，乃是亲眷人家寡妇房氏之物，他起身再醮，权寄在此，岂是盗赃？”知县道：“信你不得。你写个口词到县验看！”赖某当下写了个某人寄顿银两数目明白，押了个字，随着到县间来。

却好房氏押出来，寻着了儿子，直生也撞见了，一同进县里回话。知县叫赖某过来，道：“你方才说银两不是盗赃，是房氏寄的么？”赖某道：“是。”知县道：“寄主今在此，可还了他，果然盗情与你无干，赶出去罢。”赖某见了房氏，对口无言，只好直看。用了许多欺心，却被赚了出来，又吃了一个虚惊，没兴自去了。知县唤过刘家儿子来看了，对直生道：“如此孩子，正好提携。而今帐目文券俱已见在，只须去交点明白，追出银两也给与他去，这已后多是先生之事了。”直生道：“大人神明，奸欺莫遁，亡友有知，九泉衔感。此子成立之事，是亡友幽冥见托，既仗大人申理，若小生有始无终，不但人非，难堪鬼责。”知县道：“先生诚感幽冥，故贵友犹相托。今鬼语



Lai argued, "This is not my money. It belongs to my relative widow Fang. Before she got remarried, she had entrusted it to my care. How could you say it's stolen silver?" The County Magistrate said, "How can you make me believe you? You'd better put down a testimony for it and then go to court with me." With this, Lai wrote down a note reading a certain person entrusted a certain amount of silver to his care. Then he signed his name on the note and followed the County Magistrate to the *yamen*.

Fang found her son. Scholar Zhi met Fang and her son as they were all heading for the *yamen* to see the County Magistrate. At court, the County Magistrate said Lai, "You told me that the silver was not stolen. Was it entrusted to your care by Fang?" Lai replied, "Yes." The County Magistrate said, "The owner of this silver is right before your eyes. Return the money to her. It's true the burglar case has nothing to do with you. Now get out of here!" Tongue-tied at the sight of Fang, Lai could do nothing but stare at her blankly. Though he had attempted to grab the money by resorting to tricks, he eventually failed. Moreover, he got a false alarm. Feeling deeply disappointed, Lai left the court.

Calling Liu Niansi's son over in front of him, the County Magistrate looked at him from head to toe. Then he turned to Scholar Zhi and said, "This boy truly needs help. Here are the account book, the title deeds and the silver we've recovered. You may give them all to the boy. From now on you'll have to take care of this boy." Scholar Zhi said, "Thank you for your kindness. If the soul of my deceased friend is knowledgeable about what you have done, he must be enormously grateful to you. My deceased friend had appeared in front of me in the form of a ghost and entrusted me with the boy's growing up to manhood. I wouldn't be able to live up to my old friend's wishes had you not upheld justice. If I fail to carry through what I've started, I'll not only be reproached by humans, but also I'll be unable to put up with the ghost's denouncement."

The County Magistrate said, "Your old friend picked up you to look after his son because you're such a nice and honest man that you can feel what the dead are thinking about. Now it has proved what the ghost said is absolutely true. The soul of the dead and the loyalty of the living are

无一不真，亡者之灵与生者之谊，可畏可敬。岂知此一场鬼怪之事，却勘出此一案来，真奇闻也！”当下就押房氏与儿子出来，照帐目交收了物事，将文契查了田房，一一踏实金管了，多是直生与他经理。一个乞丐小厮，遂成富室之子，固是直生不负所托，也全亏得这一夜鬼话。

彼时，晚夫幸德见房氏说是前夫托梦与知县相公，故知得这等明白，心中先有些害怕，夫妻二人怎敢违拗一些？后来晓得鬼来活现了一夜，托与直秀才的，一发打了好些寒噤。略略有些头疼脑热，就生疑惑。后来破费了些钱钞，荐度了几番，方得放心。可见人虽已死之鬼，不可轻负也。有诗为证：

何缘世上多神鬼？只为人心有不平。  
若使光明如白日，纵然有鬼也无灵。





indeed worthy of awe and esteem. It's also surprising that this ghost led to an legal case!"

After Fang and her son were taken out of the court, Scholar Zhi helped the boy check all the family properties and the land against the account book and the title deeds. When all was settled, the boy received all the family properties. Scholar Zhi assisted the boy in the management of the land and family wealth. Later the boy, though once a street beggar, became a rich man. No doubt it was true that the later success in the boy's life was greatly indebted to Scholar Zhi's carrying out his promise, but it also owed much to what the ghost had done the other night.

Upon hearing Fang's words that her first husband had appeared in the County Magistrate's dream and that was why the County Magistrate knew everything about the matter, Fang's second husband Xing De was overcome with fear. How could the couple dare to act against the County Magistrate's orders? As he later learned the fact that the ghost had actually talked with Scholar Zhi and entrusted him with the care of the boy the other night, Xing De shivered. From then on he was often assailed by misgivings once he felt a slight illness. For this reason he spent some money and bought some joss sticks and burned them. He didn't set his mind at rest until after he had done so for several times. It is thus clear that the spirit of a person, or the ghost, should not be taken lightly, though he or she is dead. The following lines may serve as the ending of this tale:

Why are there so many ghosts in this world of ours?

It is because there are many injustices.

If our world is ruled by justice and honesty,

Ghosts will never make their powers felt even though they exist.



## 卷 十 四

赵县君乔送黄柑 吴宣教干偿白镪

诗云：

睹色相悦人之情，个中原有真缘分。  
只因无假不成真，就里藏机不可问。  
少年卤莽浪贪淫，等闲踹入风流阵。  
馒头不吃惹身膻，世俗传名扎火囤。

听说世上男贪女爱，谓之风情。只这两个字，害的人也不浅，送的人也不少。其间又有奸诈之徒，就在这些贪爱上面，想出个奇巧题目来。做自家妻子不着，装成圈套，引诱良家子弟，诈他一个小富贵，谓之“扎火囤”。若不是识破机关，硬浪的郎君，十个着了九个道儿。

记得有个京师人，靠着老婆吃饭的，其妻涂脂抹粉，惯卖风情，挑逗那富家郎君。到得上了手的，约会其夫，只做撞着，要杀要剐，直等出财买命，履足方休。被他弄得也不止一个了。



## *Tale 14*

### **Lady Zhao Feigns Respectability and Offers Mandarin Oranges Civil Official Wu Is Taken in by Tricks and Pays with Silver**

As a saying goes:

It is human for a man to be crazy about a beautiful woman. Fate has it that a few men are able to fulfill their wishes. Never ask what the hidden secret is, for what was made-believe will often become reality. Lecherous and rash young men are liable to fall into love traps and then be duped in such affairs. People usually name the conducts of these young men “plunging into flames.”

It is said that mutual affection between men and women will naturally develop into sexual urges. And these two words — sexual urges — have made countless men pay dearly. At the same time, a group of tricksters emerge and work out an unusual way to fool the womanizers by taking advantage of their fondness for women. At the cost of their own wives, the tricksters often set up traps to seduce young men from good families. By doing so, they can always make a fortune by swindling the young men out of their money. Nine out of ten young men will fall victims if they are inexperienced and fail to see the trap.

Once there was man in the capital city who lived on his wife. Applying powder and paint on her face and playing the coquette, his wife seized every opportunity to seduce young men from rich families. Each time she was about to go to bed with the young man, her husband would abruptly appear before them, pretending that he just happened to bump into them while they were together. Then he would make a scene, shouting about killing and the like. He usually did not call it quits until the young man had offered him quite enough money to spare his life. More than one



有一个泼皮子弟深知他行径，佯为不晓，故意来缠。其妻与了他些甜头，勾引他上手，正在床里作乐，其夫打将进来。别个着了忙的，定是跳下床来，寻躲避去处。怎知这个人慌不慌，且把他妻子搂抱得紧紧的，不放一些宽松。伏在肚皮上大言道：“不要嚷乱！等我完了事再讲。”其妻杀猪也似喊起来，乱颠乱推，只是不下来。其夫进了门，揎起帐子，喊道：“干得好事！要杀！要杀！”将着刀背放在颈子上，挨了一挨，却不下手。泼皮道：“不必作腔，要杀就请杀。小子固然不当，也是令正约了来的。死便死做一处，做鬼也风流，终不然独杀我一个不成？”其夫果然不敢动手，放下刀子，拿起一个大杆杖来，喝道：“权寄颗驴头在颈上，我且痛打一回。”一下子打来，那泼皮溜撒，急把其妻番过来，早在臀脊上受了一杖。其妻又喊道：“是我，是我！不要错打了！”泼皮道：“打也不错，也该受一杖儿。”其夫假势头已过，早已发作不出了。泼皮道：“老兄放下性子，小子是个中人，我与你熟商量。你要两人齐杀，你嫂子是摇钱树，料不舍得。若抛得到官，只是和奸。这番打破机关，你那营生弄不成了。不如你舍着嫂子与我往来，我公



young man thus fell into his trap.

A local scoundrel saw through the husband's trick. Then the scoundrel, pretending that he was unaware of their tricks, came to dally with his wife. Throwing him a few sops, the wife pulled the scoundrel onto her bed. While they were making merry on the bed, the husband rushed in. Had he been like other rash young men, he would surely have got off the bed and sought shelters. But he appeared extremely calm and unworried. He didn't let go of the wife. On the contrary, he kept on lying prone on her belly and held her more tightly in his arms, saying shamelessly, "Shut up! Don't talk to me until I've finished my business." The wife screamed at the top of her voice too as she tried to push him off her. But the scoundrel just paid no heed to her request.

After entering the bedroom, the husband raised the bed curtain and shouted, "What good deeds you're doing! I want to kill you! Kill you!" So saying, the husband put the back of a knife blade on the man's neck and moved it a bit. However, the husband did not really do it. The scoundrel said, "Don't strike a pose! Kill us if you want to. Improper my act is, your wife pulled me into her bed. We two will die together if you want to kill us. Then we'll be ghost lovers. You are not going to kill me alone, are you?" It turned out that the husband didn't dare to kill him. Putting aside the knife, he grabbed a big rolling pin and shouted, "I'll leave your donkey head on your neck for the time being. But I'll give you a sound beating first!" The scoundrel was very agile in his movements. As the rolling pin was about to fall on him, he turned the wife over upon him and the rolling pin struck on her bottom. The wife let out a scream and shouted, "It's me! It's me! Don't get it wrong!" The scoundrel remarked, "Not wrong at all. You deserve a beating."

The husband could no longer carry on the show after his fake momentum had subsided. The scoundrel said, "Old chap, don't be impatient. I know your trick. I'd like to talk it over with you. Your wife is your money tree, so I don't think you would hope to kill us two. If you take us to court, our offence will be nothing but adultery. If you make this matter known to the public, your business will be ruined for sure. Why don't you permit me to carry on the affair with your wife so that I can



道使些钱钞，帮你买煤买米。若要扎火囤，别寻个主儿弄弄，须靠我不着的。”其夫见说出海底眼，无计可奈，没些收场，只得住了手，倒缩了出去。泼皮起来，从容穿了衣服，对着妇人叫声“聒噪”，摇摇摆摆竟自去了。正是：

强中更有强中手，得便宜处失便宜。

却是富家子弟郎君，多是娇嫩出身，谁有此泼皮胆气、泼皮手段！所以着了道儿。

宋时向大理的衙内向士肃，出外拜客，唤两个院长相随。到军将桥，遇个妇人，鬓发蓬松，涕泣而来。一个武夫，着青纁丝袍，状如将官，带剑牵驴，执着皮鞭，一头走一头骂那妇人，或时将鞭打去，怒色不可犯。随后就有健卒十来人，抬着几杠箱笼，且是沉重，跟着同走。街上人多立驻看他，也有说的，也有笑的。士肃不知其故，方在疑讶，两个院长笑道：“这番经纪做着了。”士肃问道：“怎么解？”院长道：“男女们也



give you a reasonable amount of money? You may use the money to buy coal and rice. Though I know your trick, I won't ruin your business if you want to make some others "plunge into flames."

Seeing that the scoundrel had hit the nail on the head, the husband found himself at his wits' end. Unable to figure out what to do with him, the husband stopped and left, totally disappointed. The scoundrel rose out of the bed and put on his clothes with ease. Turning to the wife, he said, "Sorry to bother you." Then he swaggered out of her room. Indeed, however strong one may be, there is always someone stronger than him in the crowd and, wherever one may get gains, he may also suffer heavy losses in its train.

However, the fact is that most of the young men from rich families are often inexperienced in this trade. How can they compare with this scoundrel in audacity and artifice? This is why most of them have played into this husband's hands.

\* \* \*

Once upon a time during the Song Dynasty, the president of the Supreme Court Xiang Shisu asked two runners to follow him as companions while he made a trip to call on a friend. As they reached the Junjiang Bridge, they came across a woman, her hair disheveled, who was weeping as she walked over toward them from the opposite direction. An official-like military man wearing a blue silk garment was scolding the woman as he walked beside her. Holding a leather-thronged whip with one hand and leading a donkey along with the other, and also carrying a sword at his waist, the military man whipped the woman angrily from time to time. Following behind the military man were about ten of his followers carrying several large and heavily loaded suitcases. Crowds of people on the road stopped to have a look at the scene, some laughing, some making a few comments.

Shisu had no idea what was going on. While he was gripped with doubts and suspicions, the two runners remarked smilingly, "They've made a fortune this time!" Shisu questioned, "What do you mean by saying that?" The runners replied, "We were just making guesses. We're not clear of what really happened. If you want to know the whole story, we'll



试猜，未知端的。衙内要知备细，容打听的实来回话。”去了一会，院长来了，回说详细：

元来浙西一个后生官人，到临安赴铨试，在三桥黄家客店楼上住着。每下楼出入，见小房青帘下有个妇人行走，姿态甚美。撞着了多次，心里未免欣动。问那送茶的小童道：“帘下的是店中何人？”小童攒着眉头道：“一店中被这妇人累了三年了。”官人惊道：“却是为何？”小童道：“前岁一个将官带着这个妇人，说是他妻子，要住个洁净房子。住了十来日，就要到那里近府去，留这妻子守着房卧行李，说道去半个月就好回来。自这一去，杳无信息。起初妇人自己盘缠，后来用得没有了，苦央主人家说：‘除了吃时，只等家主回来算还。’主人辞不得，一日供他两番，而今多时了，也供不起了。只得替他募化着同寓这些客人，轮次供他。也不是常法，不知几时才了得这业债。”官人听得满心欢喜，问道：“我要见他一见，使得么？”小童道：“是好人家妻子，丈夫又不在，怎肯见人？”官人道：“既缺饮食，我寻些吃口物事送他，使得么？”小童道：“这个使得。”官人急走到街上茶食大店里，买了一包蒸酥饼、





go and find it out and then report it to you.” Before long the runners were back. They thus recounted to Shisu what had happened:

A young man from the west of Zhejiang put himself up on the second floor of the Huang’s tavern at Sanqiao while he was on his way to Lin’an to take part in the examinations. Each time he went downstairs, he would notice a beautiful woman strolling about under the sign hung in front of the tavern. Having encountered the woman for several times, the young man became rather attracted to her. Turning to the boy who served tea at the tavern, he asked, “Who is that woman over there under the sign?”

Frowning, the boy replied, “That woman has been a burden to our tavern for three years.” Surprised, the young man asked, “Why so?” The boy answered, “The year before last year, a military official came to our tavern with this woman. He told us she was his wife and they needed to have a nice clean room to put themselves up for some time. After about ten days, the military man left for the *yamen* nearby on business, leaving his wife alone in the tavern to look after their luggage. He said he would be back in half a month. But she has never heard of him since his departure. At the beginning, the woman lived on her own money. Later as her money ran out, she entreated piteously with the owner of the tavern, ‘Please give me some food on credit. I’ll settle the accounts with you when my husband returns.’ Finding it difficult to deny her, the owner of the tavern provided her with food twice a day. After quite a long time, the owner of the tavern found himself in no position to afford her food any longer. So he had to collect food for her from every lodger in turns. But this is not going to be a long-term solution. I have no idea when this situation will come to an end.”

Upon hearing the woman’s story, the young man was overjoyed. He asked, “Can I have a meeting with her?” The boy answered, “She is a wife from a good family and her husband is not in. How could it be possible for her to meet with a stranger?” The young man asked, “Can I give her some food, since she has nothing to feed herself now?” The boy replied, “Sure! You can do this.”

The young man immediately ran out of the tavern and went to a large food store on the street, where he bought a pack of crispy steamed cake



一包果馅饼，在店家讨了两个盒儿装好了，叫小童送去。说道：“楼上官人闻知娘子不方便，特意送此点心。”妇人受了，千恩万谢。明日妇人买了一壶酒，妆着四个菜碟，叫小童来答谢，官人也受了。自此一发注意不舍。隔两日又买些物事相送，妇人也如前买酒来答。官人即烫其酒来吃，筐内取出金杯一只，满斟着一杯，叫茶童送下去，道：“楼上官人奉劝大娘子。”妇人不推，吃干了。茶童复命，官人又斟一杯下去，说：“官人多致意娘子，出外之人不要吃单杯。”妇人又吃了。官人又叫茶童下去，致意道：“官人多谢娘子不弃，吃了他两杯酒。官人不好下来自劝，意欲奉邀娘子上楼，亲献一杯如何？”往返两三次，妇人不肯来。官人只得把些钱来买嘱茶童道：“是必要你设法他上来见见。”茶童见了钱，欢喜起来，又去说风说水道：“娘子受了两杯，也该去回敬一杯。”被他一把拖了上来，



and a pack of fruit pie. After placing the food in two separate boxes, the young man asked the boy to take them to the woman. Arriving at the woman's place, the boy said to the woman, "A young man living upstairs learned that you're in trouble, so he specially sent me here to give you some food." The woman accepted the food with thousands of thanks.

On the following day, the woman bought a pot of wine as well as four dishes and asked the boy to go and give it to the young man to express her appreciation for his kindness. The young man accepted it too. Ever since then, he started to miss the woman a great deal. A couple of days later, he again bought some food and gave it to her. Meanwhile the woman gave him some wine in return to express her thanks, as she had done before.

While he was drinking the wine, the young man took out a cup from a small suitcase and filled it with wine. Then he told the boy to take it to the woman downstairs, asking him to tell her thus, "The man upstairs hopes your ladyship to have a drink." The woman drank it without the slightest hesitation. When the boy was back, the young man again poured a cup of wine and asked him to go downstairs and tell her thus, "This is another toast from the man downstairs. A person staying away from home should have two cups of wine to make them a pair." The woman drank it again. After the boy was back, the young man again asked him to go downstairs to pass his words to the woman. The boy went downstairs and said to the woman, "The man upstairs truly felt it an honor that your ladyship drank two cups of his wine. He thought it improper and unfitting for him to come downstairs personally to urge you to wine. He would appreciate it very much if your ladyship goes to his place upstairs. He would like to offer you a toast in person. What do you think of his suggestion?" The woman declined.

The young man then gave the boy some money and said, "You must think of a way to bring her to me." The boy was overwhelmed with joy at the sight of the money. He went downstairs again and pleaded with the woman, saying, "You've taken two cups of his wine. You should go upstairs and give him a toast in return. Come on, please!"

So saying, the boy pulled the woman upstairs. "Here she comes!" the boy shouted. The young man sized her up as the woman entered and



道：“娘子来了。”官人没眼得看。妇人道了个万福。官人急把酒斟了，唱个肥喏，亲手递一杯过来，道：“承蒙娘子见爱，满饮此杯。”妇人接过来，一饮而干，把杯放在桌上。官人看见杯内还有余沥，拿过来吮嚼个不歇。妇人看见，嘻的一笑，急急走了下去。官人看见情态可动，厚赠小童，叫他做着牵头，时常弄他上楼来饮酒。以后便留同坐，渐不推辞，不像前日走避光景了。眉来眼去，彼此动情，勾搭上了手。然只是日里偷做一二，晚间隔开，不能同宿。如此两月馀，妇人道：“我日日自下而升，人人看见，毕竟免不得起疑。官人何不把房迁了下来？与奴相近，晚间便好相机同宿了。”官人大喜过望，立时把楼上囊橐搬下来，放在妇人间壁一间房里，推说道：“楼上有风，睡不得，所以搬了。”晚间虚闭着房门，竟自在妇人房里同宿。自道是此乐即并头之莲、比翼之鸟无以过也。才得两晚，一日早起，尚未梳洗，两人正自促膝而坐，只见外边店里一个长大汉子，大踏步踹将进来，大声道：“娘子那里？”惊得妇人手脚忙乱，面如土色，慌道：“坏了！坏了！吾夫来了！”



greeted him with a curtsy. The young man returned her greetings with a deep bow and poured a cup of wine for her in haste. Then he handed her the cup of wine and said, "I'm deeply appreciative of your kind loving to me. Please drink this cup of wine." Receiving the cup of wine, the woman downed it and then placed the cup on the table. The young man, seeing that there was still some leftover wine in the cup, took up the cup and sucked at it on end. The woman giggled at him and left in a hurry. The young man was deeply impressed by the woman's charming and attractive manners. So, he gave the boy a handsome reward for his assistance. The boy acted as a pimp and from time to time brought the woman upstairs to have a drink with the young man. Gradually the woman became flexible and agreed with the young man's request of asking her to stay a little longer, which was totally different from their first meeting. Making eyes with each other, they fell in love and started to carry on an affair. However, they could only have a brief moment together at daytime and were unable to sleep together in one room at night.

After a period of more than two months, the woman said to the young man, "I come upstairs to your room everyday and it will definitely arouse suspicions in everyone who sees me doing so. Why don't you move downstairs and be my immediate neighbor? By then we'll be able to have the chance to sleep in one room." The young man was carried away with delight at this suggestion and moved all his belongings right away to the room near the woman's on the first floor. When asked why he wanted to move place, he made up an excuse by saying, "It's too windy upstairs to sleep. So I moved downstairs." At night, he left the door of his room unlatched and spent the night at the woman's room. He thought that husbands and wives couldn't be much happier than them. Thus he spent two nights in the woman's room.

On the morning of the third day, they got up. Before they washed and dressed themselves, they sat knee to knee and chatted. Suddenly they noticed that a large tall man was coming in the direction of their room in big strides from outside the tavern. The tall man shouted, "Where is my wife?" The woman had a shock and was thrown into utter confusion. Turning pale in terror, the woman uttered, "Too bad! Too bad! My husband

那官人急闪了出来，已与大汉打了照面。大汉见个男子在房里走出，不问好歹，一手揪住妇人头发，喊道：“干得好事！干得好事！”提起醋钵大的拳头只是打。那官人慌了，脱得身子，顾不得甚么七长八短，急从后门逃了出去。剩了行李囊资，尽被大汉打开房来，席卷而去。适才十来个健卒扛着的箱篋，多是那官人房里的了。他恐怕有人识破，所以还妆着丈夫打骂妻子模样走路。其实妇人、男子、店主、小童，总是一伙人也。

士肃听罢道：“那里这样不赌事的少年，遭如此圈套？可恨！可恨！”后来常对亲友们说此目见之事，以为笑话。虽然如此，这还是到了手的，便扎了东西去，也还得了些甜头儿。更有那不识气的小二哥，不曾沾得半点滋味，也被别人弄了一番手脚，折了偌多本钱，还悔气哩！正是：

美色他人自有缘，从傍何用苦垂涎？

请君只守家常饭，不害相思不损钱。

话说宣教郎吴约，字叔惠，道州人，两任广右官。自韶州





is coming!” The young man hastily rushed out of the room, but it so happened that he came face to face with the tall man. Seeing that a man came out of the room, the tall man rushed into the room and, making no discriminations at all, grabbed the woman’s hairs and shouted, “What good deeds were you doing! What good deeds were you doing!” As he shouted, he raised his big fist and started to beat her. The young man was terribly frightened by all this and escaped secretly from the back door, giving no thought to anything else.

Then the tall man opened the door of the young man’s room and made off with all the young man’s money and belongings. The suitcases and chests the ten odds followers were carrying with them just a moment ago are the very belongings of that young man. The tall man just pretended he was beating and scolding his wife as they walked forward. He did so because he feared they might be seen through by passers-by. The fact is that the woman, the tall man, the owner of the tavern and the boy are partners.

Having heard the runners’ account of the story, Shisu exclaimed, “What a poor inexperienced young man! Fallen into such a trap! What a shame!” Later he often told his relatives and friends of this incident he had witnessed as a laughing stock. Anyway, the young man had had some good time with that woman. Though he lost his money and belongings, he had after all taken a cut of the benefit. There were still some inexperienced young men who were not so lucky as this young man. They turned out to be snared by some tricksters and lost lots of money without even taking the slightest cut of the benefit. What lousy luck! Indeed:

Beauties always belong to somebody else by fate.

Why bother your head and be crazy for beautiful women?

It is advisable to follow your homely food,

For it will never waste your money nor make you lovesick.

\* \* \*

There was once a civil official, a Court Gentleman of Manifest Virtue, by the name of Wu Yue, alias Shuhui, whose native place was Daozhou Prefecture. He had been in charge of civil affairs in Shaozhou Prefecture while held office for two terms. Now he was on his way to the Ministry



录曹赴吏部磨勘。宣教家本饶裕，又兼久在南方，珠翠香象，蓄积奇货颇多，尽带在身边随行，作寓在清河坊客店。因吏部引见留滞，时时出游伎馆，衣服鲜丽，动人眼目。

客店相对有一小宅院，门首挂着青帘，帘内常有个妇人立着，看街上人做买卖。宣教终日在对门，未免留意体察。时时听得他娇声媚语，在里头说话。又有时露出双足在帘外来，一湾新笋，着实可观。只不曾见他面貌如何。心下惶惑不定，恨不得走过去，揜开帘子一看，再无机会。那帘内或时巧啭莺喉，唱一两句词儿。仔细听那两句，却是：

柳丝只解风前舞，谩系惹那人不住。

虽是也间或唱着别的，只是这两句为多，想是喜欢此二语，又想是他有甚么心事。宣教但听得了，便跌足叹赏道：“是在行得紧，世间无此妙人。想来必定标致，可惜未能勾一见！”怀揣着个提心吊胆，魂灵多不知飞在那里去了。一日正在门首坐





of Civil Personnel to receive appraisal of his office work.

Civil Official Wu was born into a wealthy family. Moreover, because he had been holding office in the South for quite a considerable period of time, he accumulated a huge quantity of rare jewelry like pearls, jade and other rare commodities. He was now traveling with all his treasures. He stopped for accommodation at a tavern at a place called Qinghefang. Because the Ministry of Civil Personnel had not summoned him to enter for appraisal of his official career at the moment, he had to stay in the tavern. During this time, he often went whoring. His gorgeous dresses drew the attention of everyone who set their eyes on him.

There was a small courtyard right opposite Civil Official Wu's tavern. On the door of the courtyard hung a curtain, behind which always stood a woman, watching people making deals on the street. While he stayed in the tavern, which was not very far from the courtyard, Official Wu kept his eyes open and watched the woman. He could often hear her silky and coquettish voice. Occasionally the woman would show her feet below the door curtain. Resembling a pair of new bamboo shoots, the woman's feet carried Official Wu away with fantasies. Official Wu felt rather perplexed and uneasy, for he had not seen how she looked like. He wished he could get close to her, raise the curtain and have a look at her. Unfortunately he didn't have such a chance. Sometimes he could hear a sweet singing voice coming out from behind the door curtain. Listening carefully, he picked up the words of the tune:

Willows love to dance in the pleasant wind.

What a pity the man does not stop to enjoy its beauty!

Occasionally she also sang a few other lines, but these two lines came out of her lips more often than others. It might be that she especially loved these two lines. On second thoughts, it also might be possible that she had some worries on her mind. Each time he heard the tune, Official Wu would stamp his feet and praise her singing in admiration, "What a wonderful song! The singer must be an unrivaled beauty! It's too bad I can't see her." Her songs always put Official Wu on tenterhooks and made him lose his head.

One day while he was sitting at the entrance of the tavern and staring



地，呆呆的看着对门帘内。忽有个经纪，挑着一篮永嘉黄柑子过门。宣教叫住，问道：“这柑子可要博的？”经纪道：“小人正待要博两文钱使使，官人作成则个。”宣教接将头钱过来，往下就扑。那经纪墩在柑子篮边，一头拾钱，一头数数。怎当得宣教一边扑，一心牵挂着帘内那人在里头看见，没心没想的抛下去，何止千扑，再扑不成一个浑成来。算一算输了一万钱。宣教还是做官人心性，不觉两脸通红，眼的一声道：“坏了我十千钱，一个柑不得到口，可恨！可恨！”欲待再扑，恐怕扑不出来，又要贴钱；欲待住手，输得多了，又不甘伏。正在叹恨间，忽见个青衣童子，捧一个小盒，在街上走进店内来。你道那童子生得如何：

短发齐肩，长衣拂地。滴溜溜一双俊眼，也会撩人；黑洞洞一个深坑，尽能害客。痴心偏好，反言胜似妖饶；拗性酷贪，还是图他撇脱。身上一团孩子气，独耸孤阳；腰间一道木樨香，合成众唾。

向宣教道：“官人借一步说话。”宣教引到僻处，小童出盒道：“赵县君奉献官人的。”宣教不知是那里说起，疑心是错了，且揭开盒子来看一看，元来正是永嘉黄柑子十数个。宣教道：“你县君是那个？与我素不相识，为何忽地送此？”小童用手指着对门道：“我县君即是街南赵大夫的妻室。适在帘间看见官人扑柑子，折了本钱，不曾尝得他一个，有些不快活。县君



blankly at door curtain, there suddenly came a street peddler with a basket of oranges. Official Wu stopped him and asked, "Can I gamble at your oranges?" The peddler replied, "Sure, would you like to have a try?" Official Wu took the six coins used for gambling and threw them on the ground. Then the peddler squatted by the basket and counted the fronts and backs of the coins as he collected them. Because Official Wu was fully occupied by the thoughts of that woman behind the door curtain and very much worried that she might see him gambling with the coins, he played the game so offhandedly that he failed to win the game. Thus he lost ten thousand strings of cash. Out of an official's temperament, he flushed before he knew it. He muttered to himself, "I lost ten thousand strings of cash without even tasting one orange. It's really detestable!"

He thought of having one more try, but he was worried that he might lose more money if he would lose the game again. He also thought of quitting, but he was not willing to admit defeat, because he had lost so much. While he was in a dilemma, he saw a boy in plain informal dress come to the tavern from the street with a small box in his hands. You know how the boy looks like?

His hair is bobbed and his long dress reaches the ground. His pretty eyes, rolling round and round, are fascinating. His mouth, like a dark hole, can do nothing but bring harm to people. Seemingly innocent, he boasts of his charming personality. Avaricious by nature though, he claims himself a man of candor. With his childish appearance he looks like he is free and above worldly affairs. The satchet worn in the waist becomes the spittoon of the general public.

The boy said to Official Wu, "May I have a word with you, sir?" Official Wu led him to a quiet place. The boy showed the basket and said, "This is for you from Lady Zhao." Unable to make head or tail of it, Official Wu suspected that the boy had made a mistake. But opening the box, he found it contained about ten oranges. Confused, he asked, "Who is Lady Zhao? I do not know her. Why did she give me these oranges for no reason at all?" Pointing at the house across the street, the boy said, "Lady Zhao is the wife of Official Zhao living across the street. A moment ago, she noticed through the curtain that you lost money at gambling for oranges.



老大不忍，偶然藏得此数个，故将来送与官人见意。县君道：‘可惜止有得这几个，不能勾多，官人不要见笑。’宣教道：“多感县君美意。你家赵大夫何在？”小童道：“大夫到建康探亲去了，两个月还未回来，正不知几时到家。”宣教听得此话，心里想道：“他有此美情，况且大夫不在，必有可图。煞是好机会！”连忙走到卧房内，开了篋取出色彩二端来，对小童道：“多谢县君送柑，客中无可奉答，小小生活二匹，伏祈笑留。”小童接了，走过对门去。须臾，又将这二端来还，上复道：“县君多多致意，区区几个柑子，打甚么不紧的事，要官人如此重酬？决不敢受。”宣教道：“若是县君不收，是羞杀小生了，连小生黄柑也不敢领。你依我这样说去，县君必收。”小童领着言语对县君说去。此番果然不辞了。

明日，又见小童拿了几瓶精致小菜走过来道：“县君昨日蒙惠过重，今见官人在客边，恐怕店家小菜不中吃，手制此数瓶送来奉用。”宣教见这般知趣着人，必然有心于他了，好不侥幸。想道：“这童子传来传去，想必在他身旁讲得话做得事的，好歹要在他身上图成这事，不可怠慢了他。”急叫家人去



Lady Zhao felt very much displeased when she saw you didn't even get one orange from the peddler. Lady Zhao was very sorry for you. It happened that she had these oranges with her. So she asked me to give them to you. Lady Zhao said, 'It's a pity I only have these few oranges. Hope he won't mind.'"

Official Wu said, "I deeply appreciate her kindness. Is Official Zhao at home?" The boy answered, "He's gone to Jiankang (present-day Nanjing) to visit his family. He's been away for two months and we don't have any knowledge when he'll be back." Upon hearing these words, Official Wu thought to himself, "She is so kind to me and her husband is not in. Sure I will get a cut of the benefit from her. This is indeed a good chance for me!" He hurried into his room and opened his suitcase. Taking out two bolts of silk, he said to the boy, "I deeply appreciate Lady Zhao's kindness for giving me these oranges. Since I'm now staying here temporarily, I do not have proper gifts for her in return. These are two bolts of silk and I hope she will keep them."

The boy took them and went back. Before long the boy came back with these two bolts and said to Official Wu, "Lady Zhao was very grateful to you for your gifts, but she said a few oranges were really nothing and she didn't dare to accept such a huge reward." Official Wu said, "If Lady Zhao refuses to accept them, I would feel greatly embarrassed and I would not dare to accept her oranges either. Tell her what I said and she'll surely accept my silk." The boy left and told Lady Zhao what Official Wu had said. It turned out that Lady Zhao really accepted them.

On the next day, the boy came to Official Wu again with a couple of fine dishes, saying, "Lady Zhao thought the gift you gave her yesterday was more than she could deserve. Since you're now away from home and living in this small tavern alone, she was afraid that you might not like the food in the tavern. So she personally made these dishes for you." Seeing that Lady Zhao was so nice to him, Official Wu thought she must be attracted to him. So he was very happy. He thought, "This boy has been passing on messages for me. I'm certain he can give me more help. I'll treat him nicely so that he will do his utmost to help me achieve my aim." Then he asked his servant to go and buy some fish and fruit and the



买些鱼肉果品之类，烫了酒来与小童对酌。小童道：“小人是赵家小厮，怎敢同官人坐地？”宣教道：“好兄弟，你是县君心腹人儿，我怎敢把你等闲厮觑！放心饮酒。”小童告过无礼，吃了几杯，早已脸红，道：“吃不得了。若醉了，县君须要见怪，打发我去罢。”宣教又取些珠翠花朵之类，答了来意，付与小童去了。

隔了两日，小童自家走过来玩耍，宣教又买酒请他。酒间与他说得入港，宣教便道：“好兄弟，我有句话问你，你家县君多少年纪了？”小童道：“过新年才廿三岁，是我家主人的继室。”宣教道：“模样生得如何？”小童摇头道：“没正经！早是没人听见，怎把这样说话来问？生得如何，便待怎么？”宣教道：“总是没人在此，说话何妨？我既与他送东送西，往来了两番，也须等我晓得他是长是短的。”小童道：“说着我县君容貌，真个是世间少比，想是天仙里头摘下来的。除了画图上仙女，再没见这样第二个。”宣教道：“好兄弟，怎生得见他一见？”小童道：“这不难。等我先把帘子上的系带解松了，你明日只在对门，等他到帘子下来看的时节，我把帘子揷将出来，揷得重些，系带散了，帘子落了下来，他一时回避不及，可不就看见了？”宣教道：“我不要这样见。”小童道：“要怎的见？”宣教道：“我要好好到宅子里拜见一拜见，谢他平日



like so that he could give the boy a treat. He got some wine ready and then invited the boy to his room for a drink.

The boy said, "I'm only a servant boy of the Zhao family. How dare I am to sit side by side with you?" Official Wu said, "My friend, you're the trusted person of the Lady. How could I belittle you? Just relax yourself and have a drink." The boy asked Official Wu to excuse him for his rudeness before he took a seat. Having drunk several cups of wine, the boy's face reddened. He said, "I've had enough. If I become drunk, Lady Zhao will reproach me. I'm afraid I must go now." Official Wu took some small-sized jewelries and jade in flower designs and gave them to the boy for his coming. The boy accepted them and left.

A couple of days later, the boy came to Official Wu's room again. Official Wu treated him with wine. During their drinking they went deep in conversation. Official Wu said, "My friend, I've got something to ask you. How old is Lady Zhao?" The boy answered, "Twenty-three. She is the second wife of my master." Official Wu asked, "How does she look like?" Shaking his head, the boy said, "You're not talking good! How could you ask this question? Fortunately nobody is around us. What then if you know how she looks like?" Official Wu said, "Nobody is around us, what harm will it bring us if we talk about her? Since she and I have exchanged gifts a couple of times, I don't think I've gone too far in inquiring about how she looks like."

The boy said, "Lady Zhao is really a beauty that could be rarely seen among humans. She is like a fairy down from Heaven! Apart from the fairy maidens on the paintings, I've never seen another woman who is so beautiful as she is." Official Wu asked, "My friend, how can I have a view of her?" The boy replied, "It's not difficult. First I'll unfasten the suspenders of the door curtain. You just stand here opposite her house waiting. When she comes to the curtain and watches the street, I'll exert a bit more force as I raise the curtain for her. The suspenders will go loose and the curtain will fall to the ground. At that point she'll have no time to dodge. Then you can see her." Official Wu said, "I don't want to see her this way." The boy asked, "Which way do you prefer?" Official Wu said, "I wish I can go to her house and see her closely so that I can express my



往来之意，方称我愿。”小童道：“这个知他肯不肯？我不好自专得。官人有此意，待我回去禀白一声，好歹讨个回音来复官人。”宣教又将银一两送与小童，叮嘱道：“是必要讨个回音。”

去了两日，小童复来说：“县君闻得要见之意，说道：‘既然官人立意倦切，就相见一面也无妨。只是非亲非戚，不过因对门在此，礼物往来得两番，没个名色，遽然相见，恐怕惹人议论。’是这等说。”宣教道：“也是，也是。怎生得个名色？”想了一想道：“我在广里来，带了许多珠宝在此，最是女人用得着的。我只做当面送物事来与县君看，把此做名色，相见一面如何？”小童道：“好倒好，也要去对县君说过，许下方可。”小童又去了一会，来回言道：“县君说：‘使便使得，只是在厅上见一见就要出去的。’”宣教道：“这个自然，难道我就挨住在宅里不成？”小童笑道：“休得胡说！快随我来。”宣教大喜过望。整一整衣冠，随着小童三脚两步走过赵家前厅来。

小童进去禀知了，门响处，宣教望见县君打从里面从从容容走将出来。但见：

衣裳楚楚，佩带飘飘。大人家举止端详，没有轻狂半点；小年纪面庞娇嫩，并无肥重一分。清风引出来，道不得云是无心之物；好光挨上去，真所谓容是海淫之端。犬儿虽已到篱边，天鹅未必来沟里。





appreciation of her kindness to me.” The boy said, “I have no idea if she is willing or not. I’m not sure of it. If you really hope to see her, I’ll go and talk to her about it. I’ll come back and let you know her answer, no matter it is positive or negative.” Official Wu gave the boy a tael of silver and exhorted him by saying, “Do remember to give me an answer!”

Two days later the boy came to Official Wu and said, “Lady Zhao learned you wanted to see her. She said, ‘Since he’s earnest in wishing to see me, I have no reason not to see him. But we’re no relations except that we live opposite each other across the street and have exchanged some gifts several times. So there is not a suitable name for our meeting with each other. I’m afraid it will give rise to other people’s comments on us if we meet offhandedly.’” Official Wu said, “She is right. She is right. How can I invent a name?”

He thought for a moment and then said, “I come from Guangdong and have plenty of jewelries with me. These things are especially useful for women. I’ll pose as the man who has brought these things to Lady Zhao for her inspection. How about we meet with each other with this name?” The boy answered, “It is a good name, but I’ll have to go and talk it over with Lady Zhao. It won’t work if she doesn’t give her consent.” The boy was gone again. Soon the boy came back and said, “Lady Zhao has agreed. But she said you’re only permitted to meet with her in the sitting room and then leave her house after the meeting.” Official Wu said, “That’s for sure! How will I hang on there and refuse to leave her house?” Laughing, the boy said, “Stop that nonsense! Come with me now.” Overwhelmed with joy, Official Wu adjusted his hat and clothes and made his way to the Zhaos’ sitting room by leaps and bounds.

The boy went into Lady Zhao’s room first to report the arrival of Official Wu. Soon Lady Zhao walked out of her room unhurriedly.

Immaculately dressed, she behaves gracefully and has no frivolities at all. She is young and her complexion is tender, neither fat nor thin. As free as a cloud, her presence is like a fresh breeze. Brimming with enchanting charm, her beauty is the cause of base passions. A baby dog has come to the root of the fence though; the swan will not necessarily land in the ditch.

Official Wu was stunned to see that she was a truly ravishingly beauty.



宣教看见县君走出来，真个如花似玉，不觉的满身酥麻起来，急急趋上前去唱个肥喏，口里谢道：“屡蒙县君厚意，小子无可答谢，惟有心感而已。”县君道：“惶愧，惶愧。”宣教忙在袖里取出一包珠宝来，捧在手中道：“闻得县君要换珠宝，小人随身带得有些，特地过来面奉与县君拣择。”一头说，一眼看，只指望他伸手来接。谁知县君立着不动，呼唤小童接了过来，口里道：“容看过议价。”只说了这句，便抽身往里面走了进去。

宣教虽然见一见，并不曾说得一句倬俏的说话，心里猾猾突突，没些意思走了出来。到下处，想着他模样行动，叹口气道：“不见时犹可，只这一番相见，定害杀了小生也！”以后遇着小童，只央及他设法再到里头去见见，无过把珠宝做因头，前后也曾会过五六次面，只是一揖之外，再无他词。颜色庄严，毫不可犯，等闲不曾笑了一笑，说了一句没正经的话。那宣教没入脚处，越越的心魂撩乱，注恋不舍了。

那宣教有个相处的粉头，叫做丁惜惜，甚是相爱的。只因想着赵县君，把他丢在脑后了，许久不去走动。丁惜惜邀请了两个帮闲的再再来约宣教，请他到家里走走。宣教一似掉了魂的，那里肯去？被两个帮闲的不由分说，强拉了去。丁惜惜相



He couldn't help feeling weak and numb all over his body at the sight of her. He stepped forward in haste and greeted her with a deep bow, saying, "I'm deeply indebted to your loving kindness to me. I did not give you much in return for your favor, but I do feel greatly grateful to you from the bottom of my heart." Lady Zhao answered, "It's very kind of you. And it's my pleasure to meet you." Official Wu took a bundle of jewelries out of his sleeve and said, "It was said that you want to have some jewelries. I've brought some with me. Here you are. You can choose anyone you like." So saying, he fixed his eyes on Lady Zhao. He expected that she would reach out her hands to receive them. But surprisingly, she stood still and asked the boy to receive them, saying, "Take a look at them and then talk about the price." As she finished these words, she left for her room.

Though Official Wu met with Lady Zhao, he didn't have the chance to exchange a couple of witty remarks with her. Feeling left out in the cold, he was uneasy. He then went back to his tavern. At the thought of her good looks and graceful manners, he sighed, "I didn't think of her so much before I met with her. Now this meeting is driving me crazy for her."

Later as Official Wu met the boy, Official Wu would ask the boy to take him into Lady Zhao's house on the pretext of showing jewelries to her. Official Wu met with her five to six times altogether, but each time they met, they didn't get the chance to talk with each other except a formal greeting. Quiet and dignified, Lady Zhao always appeared grave and inviolable. The more Lady Zhao denied him of any chance of getting intimate with her, the more Official Wu felt restless and drawn to her.

Official Wu used to visit a prostitute named Ding Xixi. Because he fell for Lady Zhao recently, he had not seen Ding Xixi for quite some time. Ding Xixi sent two of her friends to go and fetch Official Wu. At this point Official Wu was very much distracted with thought of Lady Zhao. How would he be willing to go with them to Ding Xixi's place? But the two friends of Ding's dragged him all the way to Ding Xixi. Ding was tender and affectionate to Official Wu, while Official Wu cold-shouldered her. Ding Xixi pouted and flounced for a moment and then



见，十分温存，怎当得吴宣教一些不在心上。丁惜惜撒娇撒痴了一会，免不得摆上东道来。宣教只是心不在焉光景，丁惜惜唱个歌儿嘲他道：

俏冤家，你当初缠我怎的？到今日又丢我怎的？丢我时顿忘了缠我意。缠我又丢我，丢我去缠谁？似你这般丢丢人也，少不得也有人来丢了你！

当下吴宣教没情没绪，吃了两杯，一心想着赵县君生得十分妙处，看了丁惜惜，有好些不像意起来。却是身既到此，没及奈何，只得勉强同惜惜上床睡了。虽然少不得干着一点半点儿事，也是想着那个，借这个出火的。云雨已过，身体疲倦。正要睡去，只见赵家小童走来道：“县君特请宣教叙话。”宣教听了这话，急忙披衣起来，随着小童就走。小童领了竟进内室，只见赵县君雪白肌肤，脱得赤条条的眠在床里，专等吴宣教来。小童把吴宣教尽力一推，推进床里。吴宣教喜不自胜，腾的翻上身去，叫一声：“好县君，快活杀我也！”用得力重了，一个失脚，跌进里床，吃了一惊醒来，见惜惜睡在身边，朦胧之中，还认做是赵县君，仍旧跨上身去。丁惜惜也在睡里惊醒，道：“好馋货！怎不好好的，做出这个极模样！”吴宣教直等听得惜惜声音，方记起身在丁家床上，适才是梦里的事，连自己也失笑起来。丁惜惜再四问，问他：“你心上有何人，以致七颠八倒如此？”宣教只把闲话支吾，不肯说破。到了次日，别了出门。自此以后，再不到丁家来了。无昼无夜，一心只痴想着赵县君，思量寻机会挨光。

忽然一日，小童走来道：“一句话对官人说：明日是我家县君生辰，官人既然与县君往来，须办些寿礼去与县君作贺一



started to get dinner ready for him. However, Official Wu was inattentive. Then Ding Xixi sang a song to ridicule him:

My destined love, you used to be crazy for me. But why are you leaving me now? Sweetheart, you've forgotten how much you loved me. Tell me who is your new love. You're so inconsistent in love. You desert me today. Someone will desert you tomorrow!

Official Wu drank two cups of wine in low spirits, his thoughts being fully on the charms of Lady Zhao. Feeling not satisfied with Ding Xixi, he took a look at her disapprovingly. However, he had to go to bed with her grudgingly, since he was now in her room. Though he made love with her, he was thinking of Lady Zhao during his lovemaking. When it was over, he felt exhausted and fell asleep.

The boy of the Zhao family came to Official Wu and said, "Lady Zhao wants to see you." Upon hearing these words, Official Wu got up in a hurry and got dressed and then followed the boy into Lady Zhao's bedroom. Lady Zhao was lying on the bed and waiting for him, naked. The boy shoved Official Wu into her bed. Overjoyed, Official Wu threw himself on Lady Zhao and muttered, "My dearest, I'm dying for you!" He exerted himself so forcefully that he fell off the bed and got a shock. In a trance he realized it was Ding Xixi who was sleeping on the bed. Half awake and half asleep, he mistook Ding as Lady Zhao and got onto her again. Waking up with a start, Ding Xixi said, "You little glutton! Why don't you sleep? Why are you doing it again like this?" Having heard Ding's voice, Official Wu remembered that he was on Ding Xixi's bed. He found what had happened to him was nothing but a dream. He couldn't refrain from laughing. Ding Xixi asked him repeatedly, "Who's that new sweetheart of yours that has driven you out of your senses?" Humming and hawing, Official Wu didn't answer her.

On the next day Official Wu left Ding Xixi, thinking to himself that he would never come back to her again. Day and night he was lost in thought of Lady Zhao, hoping he could have the chance to sleep with her.

Suddenly one day the boy came to Official Wu and said, "Tomorrow is Lady Zhao's birthday. Since you want to establish a relationship with her, you should go and give her some birthday presents as congratulations."

作贺，觉得人情面上愈加好看。”宣教喜道：“好兄弟，亏你来说，你若不说，我怎知道？这个礼节最是要紧，失不得的。”巫将彩帛二端封好，又到街上买了些时鲜果品、鸡鸭熟食各一盘，酒一樽，配成一副盛礼，先令家人一同小童送了去，说：“明日虔诚拜贺。”小童领家人去了。赵县君又叫小童来推辞了两番，然后受了。

明日起来，吴宣教整肃衣冠到赵家来，定要请县君出来拜寿。赵县君也不推辞，盛装出到前厅，比平日更齐整了。吴宣教没眼得看，足恭下拜。赵县君慌忙答礼，口说道：“奴家小小生朝，何足挂齿？却要官人费心，赐此厚礼，受之不当！”宣教导道：“客中乏物为敬，甚愧菲薄。县君如此致谢，反令小子无颜。”县君回顾小童道：“留官人吃了寿酒去。”宣教听得此言，不胜之喜，道：既留下吃酒，必有光景了。谁知县君说罢，竟自进去。宣教此时如热地上蚂蚁，不知是怎的才是。又想那县君如设帐的方士，不知葫芦里卖甚么药出来。呆呆的坐着，一眼望着内里。须臾之间，两个走使的男人，抬了一张桌儿，揩抹干净。小童从里面捧出攒盒酒果来，摆设停当，掇张椅儿请宣教坐。宣教轻轻问小童道：“难道没个人陪我？”小童也轻轻道：“县君就来。”宣教且未就坐，还立着徘徊之际，





Overjoyed, Official Wu said, “My friend, thank you for telling this. How could I know it if you don’t tell me? I mustn’t let slip this opportunity.” So saying, he got ready two bolts of silk in great haste. Then he hurried to the street and bought some fruit as well as two dishes of cooked chicken and duck and a pot of wine to make them a magnificent gift. He told his servant to go with the boy and send the gift to Lady Zhao ahead of time with words, “I’ll come to see you tomorrow to extend my congratulations.” The boy and the servant then left for Lady Zhao’s house. Lady Zhao finally accepted the gift, though she tried several times to decline this gift.

On the next day Official Wu got dressed nicely and arrived at Lady Zhao’s home. He insisted that Lady Zhao come out and receive birthday felicitations. Lady Zhao agreed readily. She appeared in the sitting room in splendid attire, which was more beautiful than her everyday dresses. Before he had time to take a look at Lady Zhao, Official Wu made obeisance to her with a deep bow in a hurry. Lady Zhao returned his salute immediately, saying, “My birthday is not worth mentioning. Thank you for your attention and handsome gift. I really feel embarrassed to receive such a huge gift.” Official Wu said, “The gift is only a token of my esteem for you. Don’t mention it. Otherwise, I would feel more embarrassed.” Turning to the boy, Lady Zhao said, “Treat this man to wine and dinner.”

Official Wu was secretly pleased, thinking, “Since she has asked me to stay for dinner, I will surely achieve my aim this time.” But contrary to his expectations, Lady Zhao disappeared after she finished these words. Official Wu was at his wit’s end, as desperate as an ant on a hot pan. He couldn’t figure out what Lady Zhao had got in her sleeve. Muddle-headed, he sat there and stared vacantly at her bedroom. Soon two servants carried over a table. Then the servants wiped it clean. The boy took some fruit and wine from Lady Zhao’s bedroom and put them on the table. Then he moved a chair to the table and asked Official to take his seat.

Official Wu asked the boy in a low voice, “Is there anyone who is to keep me company?” Also in a low voice the boy replied, “Lady Zhao is coming soon.” Before Official Wu was seated, Lady Zhao emerged,

小童指道：“县君来了。”果然赵县君出来，双手纤纤捧着杯盘，来与宣教安席，道了万福，说道：“拙夫不在，没个主人做主，诚恐有慢贵客，奴家只得冒耻奉陪。”宣教大喜道：“过蒙厚情，何以克当？”在小童手中，也讨个杯盘来与县君回敬。安席了，两下坐定。宣教心下只说此一会必有眉来眼去之事，便好把几句说话撩拨也，希图成事。谁知县君意思虽然浓重，容貌却是端严，除了请酒请饌之外，再不轻说一句闲话。宣教也生煞煞的浪开不得闲口，便宜得饱看一回而已。酒行数过，县君不等宣教告止，自立起身道：“官人慢坐，奴家家无夫主，不便久陪，告罪则个。”吴宣教心里恨不得伸出两臂来，将他一把抱着，却不好强留得他，眼睁睁的看他洋洋走了进去。宣教一场扫兴。里边又传话出来，叫小童送酒。宣教自觉独酌无趣，只得分付小童：多多上复县君，厚扰不当，容日再谢。慢慢地踱过对门下处来。真是一点甜糖抹在鼻头上，只闻得香，却话不着，心里好生不快。有《银绞丝》一首为证：

前世里冤家，美貌也人，挨光已有二三分。好温存，几番相见意殷勤。眼儿落得穿，何曾近得身？鼻凹中糖味，那有唇几分？一个清白的郎君，发了也昏。我的天那，阵魂迷，迷魂阵。

是夜，吴宣教整整想了一夜，踌躇道：“若说是无情，如





carrying a tray and a couple of wine cups. After she placed them on the table, she made a curtsy towards Official Wu and said, "Sorry my husband is not in to keep you company in drinking. For fear that I might slight my guest of honor, I'll have to act as your drinking partner despite it might bring disgrace on me." Official Wu said, "It's so kind of you." As he said so, he took a cup from the boy and took his seat at the table. Lady Zhao took her seat too. Official Wu reflected that this time he would definitely have the opportunity to make eyes towards her and by then he would tease her with sweet remarks so as to fulfill his wishes. However, the fact was that, though she looked as if she was attracted towards him, Lady Zhao retained her dignified and inviolable composure. Except urging him to food and wine, she didn't utter any irrelevant remarks. Meanwhile, feeling tongue-tied, Official Wu could only feast his eyes on her. After taking several rounds of wine, Lady Zhao rose to her feet and said, "Take your time and enjoy your wine. Since my husband is not at home, I'm afraid I can't keep you company any longer at the table. Excuse me."

Official Wu was dying to stretch out his arms and get hold of her. But the fact was that he could do nothing about it. He could only watch her leave the room. Thus Official Wu's enthusiasm was again dampened. In her bedroom Lady Zhao passed on words to the boy to pour more wine for Official Wu, while Official Wu felt it insipid to drink the wine alone. Official Wu said to the boy, "Please tell Lady Zhao I'm sorry to trouble her and I'll come and repay her hospitality some other day." Official Wu went across the street and got back to his dwelling place, totally disappointed. The following ci poem well serves to portray Official Wu's present state of mind:

Oh, my predestined love, what a beauty! I'm becoming crazy for you. How happy I am to be in love with you! My eyes are overstrained expecting to see you. When shall I hold you in my arms? My sweetheart, your scent is assailing to my nostrils. But when can I touch you? A man of stainless reputation as I am, I've lost my head. Good Heavens! Am I falling in love or am I falling in a trap?

That night Official Wu kept awake till dawn, lost in thought: "If she was not attracted to me, why did she time and again agree to see me, treat



何两次三番许我会面，又留酒，又肯相陪？若说是有情，如何眉梢眼角不见些些光景？只是恁等板板地往来，有何了结？思量他每常帘下歌词，毕竟通知文义，且去讨讨口气看，看他如何回我。”算计停当，次日起来，急将西珠十颗，用个沉香盒子盛了，取一幅花笺，写诗一首在上。诗云：

心事绵绵欲诉君，洋珠颗颗寄殷勤。

当时赠我黄柑美，未解相如渴半分。

写毕，将来同放在盒内，用个小记号图书印，封皮封好了。忙去寻那小童过来，交付与他道：“多拜上县君，昨日承蒙厚款，些些小珠奉去添妆，不足为谢。”小童道：“当得拿去。”宣教道：“还有数字在内，须县君手自拆封，万勿漏泄则个。”小童笑道：“我是个有柄儿的红娘，替你传书递简。”宣教道：“好兄弟，是必替我送送，倘有好音，必当重谢。”小童道：“我县君诗词歌赋，最是精通，若有甚话写去，必有回答。”宣教道：“千万在意！”小童说：“不劳分付，自有道理。”

小童去了半日，笑嘻嘻的走将来道：“有回音了。”袖中拿出一个碧甸匣来递与宣教，宣教接上手看时，也是小小花押封记着的。宣教满心欢喜，慌忙拆将开来，中又有小小纸封裹着青丝发二缕，挽着个同心结儿，一幅罗纹笺上，有诗一首。诗云：



me to dinner and keep me company in drinking? If she was attracted to me, why didn't she show it through her eyes? How am I going to fulfill my wishes if she always behaves in such a detached way? Since she often sings songs behind the door curtain, she must be a woman of letters. Why not write her a few words to test her intentions?" Thus he decided.

On the following morning Official Wu put ten pearls imported from foreign countries in an agalloch eaglewood box. Then he took a piece of fancy paper and composed a poem, which read:

To you I'd love to speak my anxious mind.

In each pearl my ardent affection for you has been well placed.

Remember you gave me the oranges the other day?

They tasted good, but they can't quench my present thirst.

He sealed it with a strip of paper used for sealing and put it in the box too. Then he summoned the boy to his room and handed the box to him, saying, "This is for Lady Zhao. I'm deeply appreciative of her yesterday's hospitality. Here in this box are some pearls for her. I hope she will like them." The boy said, "I'll take it to her." Official Wu added, "Also in the box are a few words for Lady Zhao. It is private and must be opened by Lady Zhao herself. This is just between you and me." Smiling, the boy said, "I'm an experienced and kindhearted go-between, very well versed in delivering messages." Official Wu said, "My friend, do me this favor please. When good news comes, I'll surely reward you." The boy said, "Lady Zhao is an expert in writing poems and songs. She'll definitely write you back as a reply." Again Official Wu urged the boy repeatedly to help him, and the boy readily agreed.

After a while the boy returned and said with a smile, "Here is her reply." He took a small green box out of his sleeve and handed it to Official Wu. Taking it in his hand, Official Wu opened it cheerfully. In the box he found a little envelope wrapping two locks of hairs in the shape of "lovers' knot" and a sheet of thin paper. On the paper was a poem, which read:

With great resolution I set my black hairs

to the keenest scissors,

For fear that they will grow grayish and

let slip the outstanding talent.

好将鬓发付并刀，只恐经时失俊髦。

妾恨千丝差可拟，郎心双挽莫空劳！

末又有细字一行云：

原珠奉璧，唐人云“何必珍珠慰寂寥”也。

宣教读罢，跌足大乐，对小童道：“好了！好了！细详诗意，县君深有意于我了。”小童道：“我不懂得，可解与我听？”宣教道：“他剪发寄我，诗里道要挽住我的心，岂非有意？”小童道：“既然有意，为何不受你珠子！”宣教道：“这又有一说，这是一个故事在里头。”小童道：“甚故事？”宣教道：“当时唐明皇宠了杨贵妃，把梅妃江采蘋贬入冷宫。后来思想他，惧怕杨妃不敢去，将珠子一封私下赐与他。梅妃拜辞不受，回诗一首，后二句云：‘长门尽日无梳洗，何必珍珠慰寂寥？’今县君不受我珠子，却写此一句来，分明说你家主不在，他独居寂寥，不是珠子安慰得的，却不是要我来伴他寂寥么？”小童道：“果然如此，官人如何谢我？”宣教道：“惟卿所欲。”小童道：“县君既不受珠子，何不就送与我了？”宣教道：“珠子虽然回来，却还要送去，我另自谢你便是。”宣教箱中去取通





Though these two locks of my hairs are not fully  
expressive of my true sentiments,

I do hope they work together to lock up your heart.

On the lower part of the paper was a line in smaller characters, which read:

Here I return your pearls in perfect condition. A person from the Tang Dynasty once said, "Why send me pearls if you really want to rid me of my loneliness?"

Stamping his feet, Official Wu shouted with joy, "Terrific! Terrific! I've got it between the lines! Lady Zhao has taken a fancy to me." The boy asked, "I didn't quite get it. Can you explain it to me?" Official Wu said, "Look, she sent me some of her hairs. She said in this poem she wanted to lock up my heart with her hairs. Isn't this clear she is attracted to me?" The boy asked further, "Since she is attracted to you, why didn't she accept your pearls?" Official Wu replied, "There is some reason for it. You'll be able to see it if you know the story behind it." The boy asked, "What story?"

Official Wu said, "During the Tang Dynasty, Emperor Xuanzong, also named Tang Minghuang, made Yang Guifei, one of his imperial concubines, his most favorite one and banished Concubine Mei to the Cold Palace. Later Emperor Xuanzong started to miss Concubine Mei. But he didn't dare to go and visit her, fearing that it would give offence to Yang. Therefore he secretly bestowed a string of pearls to Concubine Mei. However, Concubine Mei turned him down and wrote him a poem, the last two lines of which read, 'I never wash and dress myself in the Cold Palace. Why send me pearls if you really want to rid me of my loneliness?' Now Lady Zhao refused to accept my pearls and also wrote me this line. Obviously she was telling me that she was lonely because her husband was not with her at home, and these pearls could not serve to help her get out of her loneliness. Isn't it self-evident that she was inviting me to go and see her so as to divert her from boredom?"

The boy asked, "Then how are you going to thank me?" "Whatever you like," Official Wu's replied. The boy said, "Since Lady Zhao didn't take the pearls, why not give them to me?" Official Wu said, "I'll try again, though she turned me down this time. I'll give you something else



天犀簪一枝，海南香扇坠二个，将出来送与小童道：“权为寸敬，事成重谢。这珠子再烦送一送去，我再附一首诗在内，要他必受。”诗云：

往返珍珠不用疑，还珠垂泪古来痴。

知音但使能欣赏，何必相逢未嫁时？

宣教便将一幅冰鲋帕写了，连珠子付与小童。小童看了笑道：“这诗意，我又不晓得了。”宣教道：“也是用着个故事。唐张籍诗云：‘还君明珠双泪垂，恨不相逢未嫁时。’今我反用其意，说道只要有心，便是嫁了何妨？你县君若有意于我，见了此诗，此珠必受矣。”小童笑道：“元来官人是偷香的老手。”宣教也笑道：“将就看得过。”小童拿了，一径自去，此番不见来推辞，想多应受了。宣教暗自喜欢，只待好音。丁惜惜那里时常叫小二来请他走走，宣教好一似朝门外候旨的官，惟恐不时失误了宣召，那里敢移动半步？

忽然一日傍晚，小童笑嘻嘻的走来道：“县君请官人过来说话。”宣教听罢，忖道：“平日只是我去挨光，才设法得见面，并不是他着人来请我的。这番却是先叫人来相邀，必有光景。”



as a reward.” So saying, he took out a hair clasp made of rhinoceros’ horn and two exquisite fan pendants and gave them to the boy. Then he said to the boy, “These are just a token of my thanks. I’ll give you more after my wishes come true. Now I’d like to bother you again to take these pearls to her. I’ll write another poem for her and I’m sure she will accept them this time.” The poem read thus:

Pearls come and go, but my admiration for you does not change.  
From time immemorial women obsessed with love have been  
buried in tears which are like pearls,  
If you could recognize my intention expressed in these pearls,  
Why must we know each other before you got married?

Official Wu handed both the poem and the pearls to the boy. Looking at the poem, the boy said, smiling, “I can’t understand it.” Official Wu said, “I used an illusion in this poem. The Tang Dynasty poet Zhang Ji thus wrote two lines in one of his poems: ‘Now I return you the pearls you gave me, tears rolling down my face. Oh woe is me, why didn’t we know each other before I got married.’ In my poem I reversed the meaning of these two lines. What I’m driving at is that if she truly loves me, I don’t care she is married. So, if Lady Zhao is attracted to me, she will accept these pearls once she reads this poem of mine.” Smiling, the boy said, “You’re really an expert womanizer. It’s a wonderful poem.” “It’s just passable,” Official Wu replied modestly.

The boy brought them to Lady Zhao and it turned out that she didn’t decline the poem and the pearls this time. She accepted them all. Secretly overjoyed, Official Wu waited for good news.

Occasionally Ding Xixi sent her errand for Official Wu. But he ignored her invitation completely. Like an official waiting for the imperial edict outside the imperial court, how did he dare move a step? He just feared that he might miss Lady Zhao’s call if he moved out.

Suddenly one evening, the boy came over to him smilingly and said, “Lady Zhao needs to talk to you.” Hearing these words, Official Wu thought to himself, “It was me who managed to see her in the past. She never took the initiative in offering to see me. Now that she has sent me an invitation, sure my chances are coming.” Turning to the boy, he asked,



因问小童道：“县君适才在那里？怎生对你说叫你来请我的？”小童道：“适才县君在卧房里，卸了妆饰，重新梳裹过了，叫我进去，问说：‘对门吴官人可在下处否？’我回说‘他这几时只在下处，再不到外边去。’县君道：‘既如此，你可与我悄悄请过来，竟到房里来相见，切不可惊张。’如此分付的。”宣教不觉踊跃道：“依你说来，此番必成好事矣！”小童道：“我也觉得有些异样，决比前几次不同。只是一件，我家人口颇多，耳目难掩。日前只是体面上往来，所以外观不妨。今却要到内室里去，须瞒不得许多人。就是悄着些，是必有几个知觉，露出事端，彼此不便，须要商量。”宣教导道：“你家中事体，我怎生晓得备细？须得你指引我道路，应该怎生才妥？”小童道：“常言道：‘有钱使得鬼推磨’。世上那一个不爱钱的？你只多把些赏赐分送与我家里人，我去调开了他每。他每各人心照，自然躲开去了，任你出入，就有撞见的也不说破了。”宣教导道：“说得甚是有理，真可以筑坛拜将。你前日说我是偷香老手，今日看起来，你也像个老马泊六了。”小童道：“好意替你计较，休得取笑！”当下吴宣教拿出二十两零碎银两，付与小童说道：“我须不认得宅上甚么人，烦你与我分派一分派，是





“Where is Lady Zhao now? What did she say to you when she asked you to bring me over to her?”

The boy answered, “She is now in her bedroom. A moment ago she undid her dresses for daytime and put on her dresses for the night. Then she called me in and asked, ‘Is that Official Wu living across the street now in his dwelling place?’ I answered, ‘He just stays in his dwelling place and never goes out.’ Lady Zhao said, ‘In this case, go tell him in the quiet to come to my bedroom. Remember to keep your mouth shut about the matter.’ This is what she said.” Unable to control his excitement, Official Wu said, “According to what you said, I’ll definitely make it this time!” The boy said, “I also feel it’s a bit odd this time, much different from the previous meetings. But there are many people around in her family and it will be very hard to prevent them from seeing you, since you’re going to meet with her in her bedroom. Some people will surely encounter you in her bedroom, even though you do it covertly. It will put you both into trouble if someone really bumps into you. You need to think of countermeasures.” Official Wu said, “How can I think of any countermeasures? You’re familiar with the surroundings, so I’ll have to rely on you to lead me in. Can you give me some instructions?”

The boy answered, “As an old saying goes, ‘With money you can make the devil turn the millstone.’ Have you seen any people who do not like money? You just need to grant some rewards on them. I’ll distribute the rewards among them and take care of moving them away. They’ll certainly have a tacit understanding on this matter and will get out of your way consciously. By then you can move in and out of her house with ease. They will keep their mouths shut about the matter even though anyone bumps into you.” Official Wu said, “It sounds quite reasonable. I should acknowledge you as my master. You said the other day that I am an expert womanizer. Now it seems to me you’re more experienced than I am.”

The boy retorted, “Don’t make fun at me. I was well-intentioned and was just mulling it over for your sake.” Then Official Wu took out twenty taels of silver and gave it to the boy, saying, “I don’t know anyone in her family. I’d like to bother you to distribute the money among them. I do

必买他们尽皆口静方妙。”小童道：“这个在我，不劳分付。我先行一步，停当了众人，看个动静，即来约你同去。”宣教道：“快着些个。”小童先去了，吴宣教急拣时样济楚衣服，打扮得齐整。真个赛过潘安，强如宋玉。眼巴巴只等小童到来，即去行事。正是：

罗绮层层称体裁，一心指望赴阳台。

巫山神女虽相待，云雨宁知到底谐？

说这宣教坐立不定，只想赴期。须臾，小童已至，回覆道：“众人多有了贿赂，如今一去，径达寝室，毫无阻碍了。”宣教不胜欢喜，整一整巾帻，洒一洒衣裳，随着小童便走过了对门。不由中堂，在旁边一条街里转了一两个湾曲，已到卧房之前。只见赵县君懒梳妆模样，早立在帘儿下等候。见了宣教，满面堆下笑来，全不比日前的庄严了。开口道：“请官人房里坐地。”一个丫鬟掀起门帘，县君先走了进房，宣教随后入来。只见房里摆设得精致，炉中香烟馥郁，案上酒肴齐列。宣教此时荡了三魂，失了六魄，不知该怎么样好，只得低声柔语道：“小子有何德能，过蒙县君青盼如此？”县君道：“一向承蒙厚情，今良宵无事，不揣特请官人清话片晌，别无他说。”宣教道：“小子客居旅邸，县君独守清闺，果然两处寂寥，每遇良宵，不胜怀想。前蒙青丝之惠，小子紧系怀袖，胜如贴肉。今蒙宠召，



hope this money can serve to keep their mouths shut.” The boy said, “Leave it to me and I’ll take care of it. Now I’ll go and distribute the money among them. When it is ready, I’ll come back and take you there.” Official Wu said, “Get on moving and come back soon.” The boy departed. Official Wu chose the best of his outfits and got dressed. Then he eagerly looked forward to the return of the boy.

While Official Wu was being on pins and needles waiting, the boy arrived with the words, “Everybody in her house has got their bribes. Now you can get to her bedroom smoothly.” Overwhelmed with joy, Official Wu adjusted his clothes and, following behind the boy, made his way to Lady Zhao’s house. Instead of passing through the main hall, the boy led Official Wu into a side lane leading to Lady Zhao’s bedroom. After making a couple of detours in the side lane, Official Wu and the boy reached the entrance of Lady Zhao’s bedroom. There Official Wu found Lady Zhao was standing by the door curtain, waiting for him in her informal dresses. At the sight of Official Wu, Lady Zhao was all smiles, her former prudence totally vanished into thin air.

“Come on in, please,” Lady Zhao greeted Official Wu. A servant maid lifted the door curtain, while Lady Zhao and Official Wu entered the bedroom one after another. The bedroom was delicately furnished. Wisps of smoke with a heavy fragrance were curling upward continuously from the incense burner. On the table food and wine were well placed. Becoming muddle-headed, Official Wu found himself at a loss what to do. Then he said to Lady Zhao in whispers, “I’m only an ordinary person. I’m not good enough to make you wait for me so anxiously! I’m deeply appreciative of your kindness.”

“I should be thankful to you for your attention and care for me,” replied Lady Zhao. “This is a pleasant night and I am free, so I took the liberty of inviting you in to my place to have a chat.” Official Wu said, “I now live alone in the tavern and I am far away from home, while you are a grass widow. We’re both loners, and so it is natural that we think of each other on such pleasant nights. I’m extremely happy and honored to receive the gift of your hairs you presented to me. I cherish it so much that I carry them on me wherever I go. I’ve been looking forward to your invitation



小子所望，岂在酒食之类哉？”县君微笑道：“休说闲话，且自饮酒。”宣教只得坐了，县君命丫鬟一面斟下热酒，自己举杯奉陪。

宣教三杯酒落肚，这点热团团兴儿直从脚跟下冒出天庭来，那里按纳得住？面孔红了又白，白了又红。箸子也倒拿了，酒盏也泼翻了，手脚都忙乱起来。觑个丫鬟走了去，连忙走过县君这边来，跪下道：“县君可怜见，急救小子性命则个！”县君一把扶起道：“且休性急！妾亦非无心者，自前日博柑之日，便觉钟情于子。但礼法所拘，不敢自逞。今日久情深，清夜思动，愈难禁制。冒礼忘嫌，愿得亲近。既到此地，决不教你空回去了。略等人静后，从容同就枕席便了。”宣教道：“我的亲亲的娘！既有这等好意，早赐一刻之欢，也是好的。叫小子如何忍耐得住？”县君笑道：“怎恁地馋得紧？”即唤丫鬟们快来收拾。

未及一半，只听得外面喧嚷，似有人喊马嘶之声，渐渐近前堂来了。宣教方在神魂荡飏之际，恰像身子不是自己的，虽然听得有些诧异，没工夫得疑虑别的，还只一味痴想。忽然一



for quite some time. I'm also extremely overwhelmed by your favor of asking me to come and see you. How should I have any interest in food and wine?" Lady Zhao said with a smile, "Stop talking nonsense. Get to the table and drink some wine."

Accordingly Official Wu took his seat at the table. Then Lady Zhao ordered a servant maid to fill their cups with warm wine and accompanied Official Wu in drinking. Having drunk three cups of wine, Official Wu could no longer restrain his excitement, the color of his face changing swiftly from crimson to pale and then from pale to crimson. Thrown into an utter confusion, he held his chopsticks upside down and knocked the wine cups over. Seizing the chance when the servant maid was out of the room, he got closer to Lady Zhao and threw himself on his knees, saying, "Have mercy on me, please. I'm dying for you!"

Helping him onto his feet, Lady Zhao said, "Don't be impatient. I've been thinking of you for a long time too. I fell for you the first time I saw you gambling for the oranges, but dared not go beyond the limits of the rules of etiquette. With the passage of time, I came to realize that I am deep in love with you, and my love for you especially grows so deep in the quiet of the night that I can hardly control myself. This is why I acted against the moral codes and have invited you to my room. Now that you are here, I will not send you away empty-handed. I'll go to bed with you with ease when everybody around here becomes quiet." Official Wu said eagerly, "My dearest sweetie! Since you're so well-intentioned, let us have fun as early as possible. How can I put up with such a waiting!"

Lady Zhao said, smiling, "You little glutton!" So saying, she ordered her servant maids to clear up the table quickly. While the servant maids were busying themselves with clearing up the table, there suddenly came a commotion from outside the house, like an uproar of people's shouting and horses' neighing. Soon the din and bustle outside were approaching the main hall of the house.

Losing his head over Lady Zhao, Official Wu was at the moment so deeply infatuated that he had no time to care about what was happening outside, though the noise made him feel there was something amiss and gave him a shock. All of a sudden, a servant maid raced into the bedroom



个丫鬟慌慌忙忙撞进房来，气喘喘的道：“官人回来了！官人回来了！”县君大惊失色道：“如何是好？快快收拾过了桌上的！”即忙自己帮着搬得桌上罄净。宣教此时任是奢遮胆大的，不由得不慌张起来，道：“我却躲在那里去？”县君也着了忙道：“外边是去不及了。”引着宣教的手，指着床底下道：“权躲在这里面去，勿得做声！”宣教思量走了出去便好，又恐不认得门路，撞着了人。左右看着房中，却别无躲处。一时慌促，没计奈何，只得依着县君说话，望着床底一钻，顾不得甚么尘灰齟齬。且喜床底宽阔，战陡陡的蹲在里头，不敢喘气。一眼偷觑着外边，那暗处望明处，却见得备细。

看那赵大夫大踏步走进房来，口里道：“这一去不觉好久，家里没事么？”县君着了忙的，口里牙齿捉对儿厮打着，回言道：“家……家……家里没事。你……你……你如何今日才来？”大夫道：“家里莫非有甚事故么？如何见了你举动慌张，语言失措，做这等一个模样？”县君道：“没……没……没甚事故。”大夫对着丫鬟问道：“县君却是怎的？”丫鬟道：“果……果……果然没有甚么怎……怎……怎的。”宣教在床下着急，恨不得替了县君、丫鬟的说话，只是不敢爬出来。大夫迟疑了一回道：“好诧异！好诧异！”县君按定了性，才说得话儿囫囵，重复问道：“今日在那里起身？怎夜间到此？”大



and said incoherently as she panted for breath, “The master is back!” Dumbfounded, Lady Zhao shouted, “What should we do? Get on moving and clear up the table!” As she said this, she too started to move the things off the table, and soon the table was cleared. However bold Official Wu might be, he couldn’t help feeling panic-stricken. “Where can I hide myself?” asked Official Wu. “It’s too late to go out of the room,” Lady Zhao answered anxiously. Pointing at the place under the bed, she continued, “Hide yourself here and keep quiet.”

Official Wu considered it better to get out of the room, but unfortunately he was not familiar with the way out, and also he was afraid that he might run into some people. Looking around him throughout the room, he found there was no other place for him to go into hiding except the one under the bed. Anxious and flurried, he had to sneak into the place under the bed as Lady Zhao had instructed him, totally disregarding the dirt under the bed. Luckily the space under the bed was large enough for him to crouch there. He held his breath and stayed there, stealthily keeping close watch on the movements outside.

Since he was hidden in the dark, it was easier for Official Wu to have a better view of the outside. Then he saw Official Zhao get into the room in big strides. Official Zhao said, “I’ve been away from home for a long time. Is everything all right in our family?” Terrified out of her wits, Lady Zhao answered with her teeth chattering, “Every — thing — is all — all right. Why — why are you — you so late to come back?” Official Zhao asked, “Was there anything wrong in our family? Why are you in such a flurry at the sight of me? Why do you stammer and act like this?” Lady Zhao replied, “Nothing — nothing wrong.” Turning to a servant maid, Official Zhao asked, “What’s amiss with Lady Zhao?” “It’s true — true — there is nothing amiss with — with Lady Zhao.”

Meanwhile Official Wu stayed under the bed, getting enormously worried. How he wished he could replace Lady Zhao and the servant maid in answering Official Zhao’s suspicions, but he dared not to get out from under the bed. After a moment of hesitation, Official Zhao said, “How strange! How strange!” Calming herself down, Lady Zhao finally uttered a complete sentence and asked again, “From where did you set



夫道：“我离家多日，放心不下。今因有事在婺州，在此便道暂归来一看，明日五更就要起身过江的。”宣教听得此言，惊中有喜，恨不得天也许下了半边，道：“原来还要出去，却是我的造化也！”县君又问道：“可曾用过晚饭？”大夫道：“晚饭已在船上吃过，只要取些热水来洗脚。”县君即命丫鬟安好了足盆，厨下去取热水来倾在里头了。大夫便脱了外衣，坐在盆间，大肆浇洗。浇洗了多时，泼得水流满地，一直淌进床下来。盖是地板房子，铺床处压得重了，地板必定低些，做了下流之处。那宣教正蹲在里头，身上穿着齐整衣服，起初一时极了，顾不得惹了灰尘，钻了进去。而今又见水流来了，恐怕污了衣服，不觉的把袖子东收西敛来避那些齜齜水，未免有些窸窣窣之声。大夫道：“奇怪！床底下是甚么响？敢是蛇鼠之类，可拿灯烛来照照。”丫鬟未及答应，大夫急急揩抹干净。即伸手桌子上去取烛台过来。捏在手中，向床底下一看。不看时万事全休，这一看，好似：

霸王初入垓心内，张飞刚到灞陵桥。

大夫大吼一声道：“这是个甚么鸟人？躲在这底下？”县君支吾道：“敢是个贼？”大夫一把将宣教拖出来道：“你看！难道有这样齐整的贼？怪道方才见吾慌张，元来你在家养奸夫！我





out? Why are you back home at this hour of the night?" Official Zhao answered, "I've been away from home for quite a long time and I kept thinking about our family. Now I'm on my way to Wuzhou Prefecture on business. Since I'm passing by our home, I've dropped in for a stopover visit. I'll have to set off to cross the river at daybreak tomorrow."

Upon hearing these words, Official Wu was filled with surprise and joy, thinking to himself, "He is going to continue his journey. How lucky I am!" Lady Zhao asked again, "Have you had your supper?" Official Zhao answered, "I had my supper while I was on the boat. But now I need some warm water to wash my feet." Lady Zhao ordered the servant maids to bring over the foot-washbasin and fetch some warm water from the kitchen. When the water was ready, Official Zhao took off his outer clothing and started to wash his feet vigorously. He made such a fuss over the washing of his feet that the water splashed all over the floor and then flowed into the place under the bed. — The room had a wooden floor. The part of the floor under the bed must be lower than the other part due to the heavy weight of the bed. So all the water flowed in the direction of the bed. — Meanwhile Official Wu was crouching under the bed, wearing his best clothing. At first he got into under the bed desperately, totally regardless of the dirt and dust under the bed. But now as he saw water flowing toward him, he unconsciously collected his long sleeves to keep them away from the dirty water. By doing so, he unavoidably made some rustling sound. Startled, Official Zhao said, "Strange! What's that noise under the bed? Could it be possible there is a snake or a mouse under the bed? Bring me the candle and let me have a look at it."

Before the servant maids could answer him, Official Zhao lost no time in wiping his feet clean and then reached for the candle-stand on the table. With the light in one hand, he looked into the place under the bed. What he saw threw him into a rage. Boiling with anger, he shouted at the top of his voice, "Who's this bastard hiding under the bed?" Lady Zhao spoke evasively, "Could it be a burglar?" Official Zhao hauled Official Wu out from under the bed and said to Lady Zhao, "Look, have you ever seen such a neatly dressed burglar like him? No wonder you got flustered when you saw me come in! You were having an affair with this man! Is



去得几时，你就是这等羞辱门户！”先是一掌打去，把县君打个满天星。县君啼哭起来，大夫喝教众奴仆都来。此时小童也只得随着众人行止。大夫叫将宣教四马攒蹄，捆做一团。声言：“今夜且与我送去厢里吊着，明日临安府推问去！”大夫又将一条绳来，亲自动手也把县君缚住道：“你这淫妇，也不与你干休！”县君只是哭，不敢回答一言。大夫道：“好恼！好恼！且烫酒来我吃着消闷！”从人丫鬟们多慌了，急去灶上撮哄些嘎饭，烫了热酒拿来。大夫取个大瓯，一头吃，一头骂。又取过纸笔，写下状词，一边写，一边吃酒。吃得不少了，不觉懵懵睡去。县君悄悄对宣教导：“今日之事因是我误了官人，也是官人先有意向我，谁知随手事败。若是到官，两个多不好了，为之奈何？”宣教导：“多蒙县君好意相招，未曾沾得半点恩惠，今事若败露，我这一官只当断送在你这冤家手里了。”县君道：“没奈何了，官人只是下些小心求告他，他也是心软的人，求告得转的。”

正说之间，大夫醒来，口里又喃喃的骂道：“小的们打起火把，快将这贼弟子孩儿送到厢里去！”众人答应一声，齐来动手。宣教着了急，喊道：“大夫息怒，容小子一言。小子不才，忝为宣教郎，因赴吏部磨勘，寓居府上对门。蒙县君青盼，



this what you've been up to since I left home, bringing disgrace on my family?" So saying, he slapped Lady Zhao on the face, which made her see stars. Lady Zhao started to weep. Then Official Zhao shouted to the crowd of servants to move over to him. The boy too had to join the crowd of servants and follow them. Official Zhao then ordered to have Official Wu trussed up and claimed, "Take him to the wing-room and hang him up for tonight. Take him to the *yamen* of Lin'an Prefecture for trial tomorrow!" Then he got a rope and tied Lady Zhao up personally, saying, "You slut! You can not escape the responsibility either." Not daring to give an answer, Lady Zhao only wept.

Official Zhao shouted angrily, "You're driving me mad! Bring me some wine. I want to drink some wine to divert myself from ennui!" Scared out of their wits, some servant maids hurried to get some leftover food for him, while others fetched some warm wine for him. With a large cup in his hand, Official Zhao drank his wine as he let loose a stream of abuse. Then he got a piece of paper and a brush and started to write a complaint while drinking. After he had a few drinks too many, he dozed off.

Lady Zhao said to Official Wu softly, "Sorry I put you into trouble. It was my fault, but you were attracted to me first. What rotten luck we fell into his hands! We'll be finished if we're taken to the *yamen*. What should we do about it?" Official Wu said, "It was so kind of you to invite me to your place. But I haven't had a tiny bit of your favor. If I'm taken to the *yamen*, my official career will be ruined in your hands." Lady Zhao said, "Now I'm afraid I can do nothing about it either. But you need to toil single-heartedly to entreat him to let you go, for he is actually a soft-hearted man. I promise you it will work."

While Official Wu and Lady Zhao were talking, Official Zhao woke up. With a stream of curses, he shouted, "Attention, everybody! Bring your lights here and take this son-of-bitch into the wing-room!" Everyone got on moving upon hearing the order. Official Wu became anxious and shouted, "Please don't be angry. I have something to say. I'm a court gentleman of manifest virtue. I'm on my way to the Ministry of Civil Personnel to receive appraisal for my office work and I'm now staying

往来虽久，实未曾分毫犯着玉体。今若到公府，罪犯有限，只是这官职有累。望乞高抬贵手，饶过小子，容小子拜纳微礼，赎此罪过罢！”大夫笑道：“我是个宦门，把妻子来换钱么？”宣教道：“今日便坏了小子微官，与君何益？不若等小子纳些钱物，实为两便。小子亦不敢轻，即当奉送五百千过来。”大夫道：“如此口轻，你一个官，我一个妻子，只值得五百千么？”宣教听见论量多少，便道是好处的事了，满口许道：“便再加一倍，凑做千缗罢。”大夫还只是摇头。县君在旁哭道：“我只为买这官人的珠翠，约他来议价，实是我的不是。谁知撞着你来捉破了，我原不曾点污。今若拿这官人到官，必然扳下我来。我也免不得到官对理，出乖露丑，也是你的门面不雅。不如你看日前夫妻之面，宽恕了我，放了这官人罢！”大夫冷笑道：“难道不曾点污？”众从人与丫鬟们先前是小童贿赂过的，多来磕头讨饶道：“其实此人不曾犯着县君，只是暮夜不该来此，他既情愿出钱赎罪，官人罚他重些，放他去罢。一来免累此人





temporarily at the tavern across the street. Thank Lady Zhao for her kindness, it is true we saw each other quite often, but I never laid a finger on her. If you take me to the *yamen*, I will not be punished severely, for my offence is not a serious one, but it will put me into trouble as far as my government career is concerned. I hope you will overlook it and let me go. Please give me a chance and allow me to give you some money to atone for my offence.”

Official Zhao laughed heartily and said, “I’m a government official. Can I make money at the cost of my wife?” Official Wu said, “What benefit are you going to get from ruining my official career? Why not accept my money? It will be good for both of us. I do not dare to give you a small amount of money either. I’ll give you five hundred thousand coins of cash right now.” Official Zhao exclaimed, “Only such a small amount of money! Are your government post and my wife only worth of five hundred thousand coins of cash?”

Upon hearing that Official Zhao was bargaining over the amount of money, Official Wu felt it easier to have the problem settled through consultation. So he added readily, “Then I’ll give you twice as much and make it one million.” Still Official Zhao shook his head disapprovingly. Lady Zhao chipped in as she wept, saying, “It was all my fault. I just wanted to purchase his jewelries and invited him to my room to talk about the price. But you caught us in the bedroom. I did nothing with this man. If you insist on taking him to the *yamen*, I’ll definitely be involved in the matter and will have to face him in court. If this happens, it will make an exhibition of myself and naturally bring disgrace on your family. For the sake of our feelings as husband and wife, please forgive me and let this man off.”

With a faint sneer on his lips, Official Zhao asked, “Is it true you didn’t do anything with him?” All the men servants and the chamber maids, as they had been bribed by the boy, dropped on their knees and kowtowed to Official Wu, asking him to have mercy on Lady Zhao and Official Wu. They said, “Actually this man didn’t touch Lady Zhao. But he should not have come here at night. Now that he is willing to pay for his offence, you may fine him a larger amount of money and let him off.



官职，二来免致县君出丑，实为两便。”县君又哭道：“你若不依我，只是寻个死路罢了！”大夫默然了一晌，指着县君道：“只为要保全你这淫妇，要我忍这样赃污！”

小童忙擗到宣教耳边低言道：“有了口风了，快快添多些，收拾这事罢。”宣教导：“钱财好处，放绑要紧。手脚多麻木了。”大夫道：“要我饶你，须得二千缗钱，还只是买那官做，羞辱我门庭之事，只当不曾提起，便宜得多了。”宣教连声道：“就依着是二千缗，好处！好处！”大夫便喝从人，教且松了他的手。小童急忙走去把索子头解开，松出两只手来。大夫叫将纸墨笔砚拿过来，放在宣教面前，叫他写个不愿当官的招伏。宣教只得写道：

吏部候勘宣教郎吴某，只因不合闯入赵大夫内室，不愿经官，情甘出钱二千贯赎罪，并无词说。私供是实。赵大夫取来看过，要他押了个字。便叫放了他绑缚，只把脖子拴了，叫几个方才随来家的戴大帽、穿一撒的家人，押了过对门来，取足这二千缗钱。

此时亦有半夜光景，宣教下处几个手下人已此都睡熟了。这些赵家人个个如狼似虎，见了好东西便抢，珠玉犀象之类，狼藉了不知多少，这多是二千缗外加添的。吴宣教足足取勾了



On the one hand, it will save this man government post; on the other hand, Lady Zhao will be spared of making an exhibition of herself at court. It's indeed a good idea." At the same time, Lady Zhao said, weeping, "If you do not let us off, I'll commit suicide." Official Zhao kept silent for quite a long time before he said, pointing at Lady Zhao, "I'll have to put up with this humiliation for you, a slut!"

The boy jumped over to Official Wu and whispered toward his ear, "He's giving himself away. Give him more money and you'll have the matter settled." Official Wu said, "Money is not the problem. First of all, untie me. My limbs have gone dead." Official Zhao said, "You must give me two million coins of cash if you want me to let you off. And this two million is only for your government post. As regards the disgrace you brought to my family, I'll just ignore it as if nothing had happened. I'll let you off lightly this time." Official Wu nodded his agreement, saying repeatedly, "Two million is okay, okay." Then Official Zhao ordered his servants to untie Official Wu's hands. As requested, the boy did so. Official Zhao then put paper, ink, a brush and an ink stone before Official Wu and demanded him to write a statement that he would not like to be taken to the yamen. The statement read thus:

I, Court Gentleman of Manifest Virtue, Wu Yue, incidentally got into Official Zhao's wife's bedroom while I was on my way to the Ministry of Civil Personnel to receive appraisal for my office work. Instead of going to court, I'd rather pay, out of my free will, two million coins of cash to atone for my offence. This is the true state of the affair and hereby I readily acknowledge it.

Having read the written statement, Official Zhao had Official Wu sign his name on it. Then he asked his servants to untie the ropes binding Official Wu except the one on the neck. After this, he ordered his followers to take Official Wu across the street to his dwelling place in the tavern and take the two thousand strings of cash.

It was then about midnight and Official Wu's several servants were all sleeping soundly. Arriving at Official Wu's room, Official Zhao's brutal followers, savage as wolves and tigers, instantly looted all the treasures that came to their eyes, such as pearls, jade and ornaments made of



二千数目，分外又把些零碎银两送与众家人，做了东道钱，众家人方才住手。赍了东西，仍同了宣教，押到家主面前交割明白。大夫看过了东西，还指着宣教道：“便宜了这弟子孩儿！”喝叫：“打出去！”宣教抱头鼠窜走归下处，

下处店家灯尚未熄。宣教也不敢把这事对主人说，讨了个火，点在房里了，坐了一回，惊心方定。无聊无赖，叫起个小厮来，烫些热酒，且图解闷。一边吃，一边想道：“用了这几时工夫，才得这个机会，再差一会儿也到手了，谁想却如此不偶，反费了许多钱财！”又自解道：“还算造化哩。若不是县君哭告，众人拜求，弄得到当官，我这官做不成了。只是县君如此厚情厚德，又为我如此受辱。他家大夫说明日就出去的，这倒还好个机会，只怕有了这番事体，明日就使不在家，是必分外防守，未必如前日之便了。不知今生到底能勾相傍否？”心口相问，不觉潜然泪下，郁抑不快，呵欠上来，也不脱衣服，倒头便睡。

只因辛苦了大半夜，这一睡直睡到第二日晌午，方才醒来。走出店中举眼看去，对门赵家门也不关，帘子也不见了。





rhinoceros' horns and elephant trunks. These treasures were extra gains they robbed apart from the two thousand strings. Official Wu took out two thousand strings of cash, plus some oddments of silver as tips, and gave them to Official Zhao's followers. Taking the amount of money with them, the followers again took Official Wu to Official Zhao's home and handed the money over to Official Zhao. Taking a look at the money, Official Zhao shouted, pointing at Official Wu, "I've let this son-of-bitch off so lightly! Beat him and get him out of my sight!" Official Wu clasped his head and scurried away in panic towards the tavern.

The light in the tavern was still on at the moment. Official Wu was not in the mood to tell the owner of the tavern what had happened to him. He got a light from the owner and took it to his own room. He didn't recover from the fright until after he had sat for some time. Feeling extremely bored, he called over one of his boy servants and asked him to bring some warm wine so as to divert himself from boredom. While drinking, he thought, "It took me so much time and trouble before I had this opportunity. I was on the verge of making it. But I had a run of bad luck and it made me lose so much money!"

On second thoughts, he consoled himself, "It was just my luck too! Had it not been for Lady Zhao's tearful pleading and the others' good word for me, I'd have taken to court and my official career would have come to the end. I'm just deeply indebted to Lady Zhao's kindness and affection for me. Furthermore, I put her into this trouble and made her suffer so much. However, I heard her husband said that he would be leaving again tomorrow. It will be a good chance for me. But I'm afraid I will not be able to get close to her as easily as I did in the past, for she will surely be very careful about our relations in view of what had happened to us today. I wonder if we can still nestle against each other this very life." Lost in a myriad of thoughts, Official Wu started to shed tears sadly without his being aware of it. Feeling depressed, he gave a yawn and went to bed without undressing himself.

Deadly exhausted due to the accident of the night, Official Wu didn't wake up until noon of the next day. Walking out of the tavern, he found that the door of the Zhaos' house was open and the door curtain was no



一望进去，直看到里头，内外洞然，不见一人。他还怀着昨夜鬼胎，不敢自进去，悄悄叫个小厮，一步一步挨到里头探听。直到内房左右看过，并无一个人走动踪影。只见几间空房，连家伙什物一件也不见了。出来回覆了宣教。宣教忖道：“他原说今日要到外头去，恐怕出去了我又来走动，所以连家眷带去了。只是如何搬得这等罄净？难道再不回来住了？其间必有缘故。”试问问左右邻人，才晓得这赵家也是那里搬来的，住得不十分长久。这房子也只是赁下的，原非己宅，是用着美人之局，扎了火囤去了。

宣教浑如做了一个大梦一般，闷闷不乐，且到了惜惜家里消遣一消遣。惜惜接着宣教，笑容可掬道：“甚好风吹得贵人到此？”连忙置酒相待。饮酒中间，宣教频频的叹气。惜惜道：“你向来有了心上人，把我冷落了多时。今日既承不弃到此，如何只是嗟叹，像有甚不乐之处？”宣教正是事在心头，巴不得对人告诉，只是把如何对门作寓，如何与赵县君往来，如何约去私期，却被丈夫归来拿住，将钱买得脱身，备细说了一遍。惜惜大笑道：“你枉用痴心，落了人的圈套了。你前日早对我说说，我敢也先点破你，不着他道儿也不见得。我那年有一伙光棍将我包到扬州去，也假了商人的爱妾，扎了一个少年子弟



longer there. He looked straight into the house but found no one was in. As he was still cherishing his evil intents of the previous night, he didn't dare to enter the house himself. So he secretly told his boy servant to go in and have a look. The boy servant got into the inner rooms, but failed to find a single soul. Even the furniture and the contents of the house were all gone. The boy servant returned and told Official Wu about it.

Official Wu thought to himself, "He said that he would be leaving today. He might have taken his whole family away with him, because he was worried that I might come and see his wife once he was gone. But why has he moved out everything in his house? Isn't he coming back again? There must be something behind it." After inquiring the Zhaos' neighbors about the matter, Official Wu learned that the Zhaos' were not local inhabitants either, and they had not lived in this place very long. This house was not theirs either. They rented it for the purpose of making young men "plunge into flames" through sex-traps.

Official Wu looked as if he was just awakened from a dream. In low-spirits, he made his way to Ding Xixi's place to relax himself. At the sight of Official Wu, Ding Xixi was all smiles. "What a nice breeze has brought you to my place?" Ding Xixi greeted him. Instantly Ding got wine ready for him. While drinking, Official Wu heaved sighs repeatedly. Ding Xixi said, "I know you've got a sweetie and it's been a long time since you left me in the cold. I'm very happy that you've come to see today, but why do you heave sighs? It seems to me you're very upset. Can you tell me why?" Having been annoyed with this worrisome matter for some time, Official Wu was only too glad to tell it to someone. Hence he told her in detail how he happened to live opposite Lady Zhao across the street, how he knew her, how he and she dated in private and were caught by her husband upon his return, and how he bought his freedom.

Laughing heartily, Xixi said, "Your wishful thinking led you astray. You fell into a trap! If you had talked about it with me the other day, I would have warned you against it so that you could possibly avoid being snared. Years ago a gang of hooligans also took me to Yangzhou in the name of a rich merchant's concubine. We extorted thousands of taels of silver from a young man. These were no new tricks to me and I used to be



千金，这把戏我也曾弄过的。如今你心爱的县君，又不知是那一家歪刺货也！你前日瞒得我好，撇得我好，也教你受些业报。”宣教满脸羞惭，懊恨无已。丁惜惜又只顾把说话盘问，见说道身畔所有剩得不多，衍衍家本色，就不十分亲热得紧了。

宣教也觉怏怏，住了一两晚，走了出来。满城中打听，再无一些消息。看看盘费不勾用了，等不得吏部改秩，急急走回故乡。亲眷朋友晓得这事的，把来做了笑柄。宣教常时忽忽如有所失，感了一场缠绵之疾，竟不及调官而终。可怜吴宣教一个好前程，惹着了这一些魔头，不自尊重，被人弄得不尴不尬，没个收场。如此奉劝人家少年子弟每，血气未定贪淫好色，不守本分不知利害的，宜以此为鉴。诗云：

一禽肉味不曾尝，已遣缠头罄囊装。

尽道陷人无底洞，谁知洞口赚刘郎！



engaged in this trade. Who knows what a slut your lovely Lady Zhao is! Why did you keep your mouth shut about the matter when you saw me the other day? Why did you desert me? It served you right!” Flushed with embarrassment, Official Wu knew no end of regret.

Meanwhile Ding Xixi inquired further about Official Wu’s resources. Upon hearing that he had not much money left, Ding Xixi, a prostitute by nature, started to cold-shoulder him.

Feeling snubbed, Official Wu left Ding Xixi after staying a couple of nights with her. He inquired about the whereabouts of the Zhao family throughout the town, but in vain. Seeing that his traveling expense was not enough for him to continue to stay in the tavern, he hurriedly returned home before he could wait till the Ministry of Civil Personnel gave him a promotion. His relatives and friends who learned about the matter made him a laughing stock.

Later Official Wu often looked distracted and got a lingering illness. Not long afterwards, he died before he could have the chance to get a rise in position. What a shame! A promising official career was just ahead of Official Wu, but he discarded his dignity and got himself involved in such disgraceful matters and finally came to a bad end. Hereby I’d like to admonish the young men thus: those youths who are hot-blood and inexperienced, those who are lecherous and love to indulge in sex, those who do not keep their places, and those who are unaware of the serious consequences of womanizing, better take this story as a lesson.

## 卷 十 五

韩侍郎婢作夫人 顾提控掾居郎署

诗云：

曾闻阴德可回天，古往今来效灼然。

奉劝世人行好事，到头元是自周全。

话说湖州府安吉州地浦滩有一居民，家道贫窘，因欠官粮银二两，监禁在狱。家中只有一妻，抱着个一周未满的小儿子度日，别无门路可救。栏中畜养一猪，算计卖与客人，得价还官。因性急银子要紧，等不得好价，见有人来买，即便成交。妇人家不认得银子好歹，是个白晃晃的，说是还得官了。客人既去，拿出来与银匠熔着锭子。银匠说：“这是些假银，要他怎么？”妇人慌问：“有多少成色在里头？”银匠道：“那里有半毫银气？多是铅铜锡镞装成，见火不得的。”妇人着了忙，拿



## *Tale 15*

### **Deputy Director Han's Concubine Becomes a Madame with an Honorary Title Chief Commissioner Gu Is Promoted to the Post of a General Director of the Department of Rites**

A poem reads thus:

A saying goes a person's credit to good work can help  
reverse a situation hopeless.

Looking back, I find it has been well proved true  
through the ages.

Now I also suggest that people do good deeds,

For those who help others will eventually benefit from their good deeds.

Once there lived a poor man in Diputan, Anjizhou of Huzhou Prefecture (Northwest part of Tianmu Mountain in present-day Zhejiang Province). He was put to jail because he failed to return a loan of two taels of silver from the government office. He only had a wife and a baby son who was less than one year old in his family, and it turned out that no one could come to his rescue except his wife. The wife kept a pig in the pigpen. She planned to sell the pig so that she could return the loan. Since she was badly in need of the money, she couldn't afford to wait for a good price. For this reason she clinched a deal with a buyer very easily. Being a housewife, she could not tell the percentage of this piece of silver. At the sight of such a white and bright thing, she took it for granted that she could now return the loan and help get her husband out of jail.

After the buyer left, she took it to a silversmith to have it made into ingots. The silversmith said, "This is counterfeit silver. Why you took it?" The wife asked anxiously, "How much silver does it contain?" The silversmith said, "None. It's only a mixture of lead, bronze, tin and white wax. It's not to be exposed to fire." Upon hearing these words, the wife

在手中走回家来，寻思一回道：“家中并无所出，止有此猪，指望卖来救夫，今已被人骗去，眼见得丈夫出来不成。这是我不仔细上害了他，心下怎么过得去？我也不要这性命了！”待寻个自尽，看看小儿子，又不舍得，发个狠道：“罢，罢！索性抱了小冤家，同赴水而死，也免得牵挂。”急急奔到河边来。正待撞下去，恰好一个徽州商人立在那里，见他忙忙投水，一把扯住。问道：“清白后生，为何做此短见勾当？”妇人拭泪答道：“事急无奈，只图一死。”因将救夫卖猪，误收假银之说，一一告诉。徽商道：“既然如此，与小儿子何干？”妇人道：“没爹没娘，少不得一死，不如同死了干净。”徽商恻然道：“所欠官银几何？”妇人道：“二两。”徽商道：“能得多少，坏此三条性命！我下处不远，快随我来，我舍银二两，与你还官罢。”妇人转悲作喜，抱了儿子，随着徽商行去。不上半里，已到下处。徽商走入房，秤银二两出来，递与妇人道：“银是足纹，正好还官，不要又被别人骗了。”妇人千恩万谢转去，央个邻舍同到县里，纳了官银，其夫始得放出监来。





became confused and flustered. She then took it home. She thought in her mind, "I have nothing at home except this pig. I sold it in the hope of saving my husband. But I was cheated by the buyer. Now it's certain that I won't be able to get my husband out of the jail. All this was caused by my carelessness. I'm so unworthy of him! I should kill myself!" As the idea of committing suicide flashed across her mind, she caught sight of her son. She felt reluctant to leave her son behind. "Come, come," making a determined effort, she thought, "Why not take him with me while I drown myself in the river? In this case, I won't have to worry about him." So thinking, she rushed to the riverbank.

As she was about to jump into the river, a businessman from Huizhou happened to be passing by. The businessman immediately caught hold of her and asked, "He's just a baby. Why are you attempting suicide along with him?" The wife answered, "I'm thrown in dire straits and nothing can relieve me but death." Then she told the businessman how she had been fooled by the buyer and gotten counterfeit silver for the sale of her pig, with which she attempted to free her husband from jail. "This being the case," said the businessman, "does it have anything to do with this baby?" The wife answered, "Once fatherless and motherless, he won't be able to survive. It would be better if we all die together." Filled with compassion, the businessman asked, "How much do you owe the government office?" "Two taels of silver," replied the wife. "How should this small sum of money put an end to three lives? My dwelling place is not quite far away from here. Come with me and I'll give you two taels of silver. You may return it to the government office." With her sorrow giving way to delight, the wife followed the businessman to his dwelling place. After walking no more than half a *li*, they reached the businessman's dwelling place. Taking out two taels of silver, the businessman gave it to the wife and said, "This is pure silver. Now you can go and return it to the government office. Be careful with this money and don't be fooled by the tricks of others this time." After expressing a thousand thanks to the businessman, the wife, asking her neighbor to keep her company, made her way to the yamen and returned the loan. Then her husband was set free.

到了家里，问起道：“那得这银子还官救我？”妇人将前情述了一遍，说道：“若非遇此恩人，不要说你不得出来，我母子两人已作黄泉之鬼了。”其夫半喜半疑：喜的是得银解救，全了三命，疑的是妇人家没志行，敢怕独自个一时喉极了，做下了些不伶俐的勾当，方得这项银子也不可。不然怎生有此等好人，直如此凑巧？口中不说破他，心生一计道：“要见明白，须得如此如此。”问妇人道：“你可认得那恩人的住处么？”妇人道：“随他去秤银的，怎不认得？”其夫道：“既如此，我与你不可不去谢他一谢。”妇人道：“正该如此。今日安息了，明日同去。”其夫道：“等不得明日，今夜就去。”妇人道：“为何不要白日里去，倒要夜间？”其夫道：“我自有主意，你不要管我！”妇人不好拗得，只得点着灯，同其夫走到徽商下处门首。

此时已是黄昏时候，人多歇息寂静了。其夫叫妇人扣门，妇人道：“我是女人，如何叫我黑夜敲入门户？”其夫道：“我正要黑夜试他的心事。”妇人心下晓得丈夫有疑了，想道：“一



After coming back home, the husband asked, "How did you get the money to get me out of jail?" The wife recounted the course of the incident to him and said, "Had I not met this benefactor of ours, our son and I would have already become ghosts roaming about in the netherworld, not to mention buying back your freedom." Upon hearing it, the husband was half-pleased and half-suspicious. He was pleased that he had been freed from jail with the silver and the three lives of his family had been saved. He was also suspicious that his wife might have possibly had some indecent conduct while she was alone and was in a moment of desperation in order to obtain this sum of money. Otherwise, how should she have come across such a kindhearted man the very moment she was in desperation?

Keeping his doubts to himself, the husband hit upon an idea and said to himself, "If I want to know the truth of the matter, I must do this and that." So, he asked, "Do you still remember the dwelling place of our benefactor?" The wife answered, "I followed him to his dwelling place and got the silver. How can I forget it?" The husband said, "Such being the case, you and I should go to his place and express our thanks." The wife said, "Yes, we should. But he must have gone to bed now tonight. We can do it tomorrow morning." The husband said, "I can't wait till tomorrow. Let us go and visit him tonight." Confused, the wife asked, "Why must we go at this hour this night? Why not tomorrow?" The husband said, "Don't ask me why. I know my own mind." Finding it difficult to go against him, the wife had to agree. She lit a lantern and, carrying it in the hand, made her way to the businessman's dwelling place with her husband.

By the time they got to the businessman's place, night had fallen and silence was reigning everywhere. All the people around had gone to bed. The husband asked his wife to knock at the door of the businessman's house. "I'm a woman. How can I knock at his door at night?" asked the wife. "I was just thinking of giving him a test at night to find out what kind of a man he is," replied the husband. The wife then realized that her husband was suspicious of her earlier conduct. She thought in her mind, "The businessman is our benefactor. How should my husband entertain



个有恩义的人，到如此猜他，也不当人子！”却是恐怕丈夫生疑，只得出声高叫。徽商在睡梦间，听得是妇人声音，问道：“你是何人，却来叫我？”妇人道：“我是前日投水的妇人。因蒙恩人大德，救了吾夫出狱，故此特来踵门叩谢。”看官，你道徽商此时若是个不老成的，听见一个妇女黑夜寻他，又是施恩过来的，一时动了不良之心，未免说句把倬俏绰趣的话，开出门来，撞见其夫，可不是老大一场没趣，把起初做好事的念头多弄脏了？不想这个朝奉煞是有正经，听得妇人说话，便厉声道：“此我独卧之所，岂汝妇女家所当来！况昏夜也不是谢人的时节，但请回步，不必谢了。”其夫听罢，才把一天疑心尽多消散。妇人乃答道：“吾夫同在此相谢。”徽商听见其夫同来，只得披衣下床，要来开门。走得几步，只听得天崩地塌之声，连门外多震得动。徽商慌了自不必说，夫妇两人多吃了一惊。徽商忙叫小二掌火来看，只见一张卧床压得四脚多折，满床尽是砖头泥土。元来那一垛墙走了，一向床遮着不觉得，此



groundless suspicions about him?” Fearing that it would arouse greater suspicions in her husband if she turned down his request, the wife had to call to the businessman at the top of her voice.

Upon hearing the voice of a woman calling for him in his sleep, the businessman woke up and asked, “Who’s it? Why are you calling for me?” “I’m the woman who attempted suicide at the river the other day,” answered the wife. “I’m deeply grateful to your great kindness. You helped me get my husband out of jail. Now I’ve come to your place to express my gratitude.” Dear readers, if this businessman had been imprudent and hot-headed, he might as well have made some flirtatious remarks toward the wife out of momentary ill intents when he learned that a woman, on whom he had bestowed favors, came to visit him at night. Had he done so, wouldn’t he have courted a rebuff as he opened his door and saw the woman’s husband? Moreover, the good deeds he had done earlier to help the wife’s whole family would have been totally spoiled. But, as it turned out, the rich businessman was an extremely honest and respectable person. He answered in a stern voice, “I live alone in this place. This is no place for a woman. And what’s more, night hours are not the right time for people to express thanks. Please go back home. Don’t mention thanks anymore!”

After hearing the businessman’s words, the husband canceled his original suspicions. The wife continued, “My husband is also here with me.” Hearing that her husband was also with her, the businessman had to put on his outer clothing and get off his bed. As he was about to reach the doorway after having walked several steps, there suddenly came a deafening sound behind him, as if the skies were falling and the earth cracking. People outside his house could also feel the shake. Both the businessman and the couple were tremendously stunned. Then the businessman told servant boy to bring over a light to have a look at his room. To his surprise, he found that the four legs of the bed had been all broken and the whole bed crushed to the ground with piles of bricks and earth. The wall beside the bed had fallen down. The businessman hadn’t noticed anything wrong with this wall, for it was behind the large bed. It happened only accidentally that the wall collapsed at this very moment.

时偶然坍将下来。若有人在床时，便是铜筋铁骨也压死了。徽商看了，伸了舌头出来，一时缩不进去。就叫小二开门，见了夫妇二人，反谢道：“若非贤夫妇相叫起身，几乎一命难存！”夫妇两人看见墙坍床倒，也自大加惊异，道：“此乃恩人洪福齐天，大难得免。莫非恩人阴德之报？”两相称谢。徽商留夫妇茶话少时，珍重而别。

只此一件，可见商人二两银子，救了母子两命，到底因他来谢，脱了墙压之厄，仍旧是自家救了自家性命一般，此乃上天巧于报德处。所以古人说：“与人方便，自己方便。”小子起初说“到头元是自周全”，并非诳语。看官每不信，小子而今单表一个周全他人，仍旧周全了自己一段长话，作个正文。有诗为证：

有女颜如玉，酬德讵能足？  
遇彼素心人，清操同秉烛。  
兰蕙保幽芳，移来贮金屋。  
容台粉署郎，一朝畀椽属。  
圣明重义人，报施同转毂。



Anyone who was then on the bed would have been killed, though he had muscles of steel and bones of iron. Seeing this, the businessman put out his tongue and was frightened out of his wits.

After he calmed himself down, he asked his servant boy to open the door for him. Coming out of his room and seeing the couple, he thanked them by saying, "I'd have been killed if you hadn't called me to come out of my room." As they saw the bed and the fallen wall, the couple were also greatly surprised. They said, "You've got boundless blessings, so you've survived the disaster. This is definitely reciprocation for your good deeds, isn't it?" Thus both parties expressed their thanks to each other. After entertaining the couple with tea, the businessman saw them off.

The businessman saved the wife and her son with two taels of silver. Later it turned out that the businessman escaped death due to the wife's call upon him to express her gratitude. Therefore we can assume that the businessman was actually saving his own life while he saved the life of the wife and her son. This is Heavens' reward for his credit to good work. Also this is why we have the old saying "He who helps others helps himself." I was not lying when I said in the beginning of this tale that "those who help others will eventually benefit from their good deeds." If you readers do not believe me, now please allow me to tell you another tale as our main one. In this tale our hero profits a lot by helping others. The following poem may serve as a proof:

There is a beautiful girl with jade-like countenance,  
Her loving kindness and virtue incomparably profound.  
A simple and honest man with noble sentiment she encounters.  
Remaining her virginity, she is pure and fragrant like an orchid,  
And later becomes Madame of a Deputy Director.  
The simple and honest man, though an obscure official once,  
Is finally promoted to the post of General Director  
in the Department of Rites.  
Our wise emperor sets great store by noble-minded and upright men.  
Like the forever rolling wheel, doing good will always  
be rewarded with good



这段话文，出在弘治年间直隶太仓州地方。州中有一个吏典，姓顾名芳。平日迎送官府出城，专在城外一个卖饼的江家做下处歇脚。那江老儿名溶，是个老实忠厚的人，生意尽好，家道将就过得。看见顾吏典举动端方，容仪俊伟，不像个衙门中以下人，私心敬爱他。每遇他到家，便以“提控”呼之，待如上宾。江家有个嬷嬷，生得个女儿，名唤爱娘，年方十七岁，容貌非凡。顾吏典家里也自有妻子，便与江家内里通往来，竟成了一家骨肉一般。

常言道：“一家饱暖千家怨。”江老虽不怎的富，别人看见他生意从容，衣食不缺，便传说了千金、几百金家事。有那等眼光浅、心不足的，目中就着不得，不由得不妒忌起来。忽一日，江老正在家里做活，只见如狼似虎一起捕人打将进来，喝道：“拿海贼！”把店中家火打得粉碎。江老出来分辨，众捕一齐动手，一索子捆倒。江嬷嬷与女儿顾不得羞耻，大家啼啼哭哭嚷将出来，问道：“是何事端？说个明白。”捕人道：“崇明解到海贼一起，有江溶名字，是个窝家，还问什么事端！”江老夫妻与女儿叫起撞天屈来，说道：“自来不曾出外，那里





\* \* \*

This tale happened in Taicangzhou Prefecture, Southern Zhili during the Hongzhi reign (1488-1505). In Taicangzhou Prefecture there was once a head runner in the government office named Gu Fang. Each time he went out of the town to meet or see off the officials, he would settle himself down in Jiang Rong's house for the night. Jiang Rong mainly engaged himself in the trade of making and selling cakes. He was an honest and kindhearted man and his business was brisk. So the Jiang family was comfortably off. Because of Gu Fang's remarkably handsome appearance and outstanding talent, Jiang Rong held Gu in high esteem and considered him far above a runner in the government office. So each time Gu Fang dropped in Jiang's house, Jiang would respectfully call him "Chief Commissioner" and treat him like a distinguished guest. Jiang Rong and his wife had a daughter named Ainiang, who was seventeen years old and extremely beautiful. Head Runner Gu was married. He and his wife and the Jiang family visited each other frequently and they were like one big family.

As an old saying goes, "Destruction pursues the rich." In the eyes of the public, Jiang Rong must be extremely rich and possess thousands of taels of silver, because his business was brisk and his family were adequately fed and clad. But the fact was that he was not that rich. Those who were shortsighted and avaricious became very jealous of Jiang Rong.

One day while Jiang Rong was at home attending to his business, a group of official runners suddenly broke in like wolves and tigers. They shouted, "Catch him!" As they shouted thus, they smashed the household wares in the Jiang family to smithereens. Jiang Rong defended himself, but the runners swooped on him and had him trussed up. Giving no thought to shame, Jiang Rong's wife and daughter came out of their room to the scene, weeping and wailing, and said to the runners, "Why are you doing this? Give us an explanation." The runners replied, "The prefecture government office caught a gang of robbers and they confessed they harbored their loot at your house!"

Hearing this, Jiang Rong, together with his wife and daughter, started to cry out about their grievances, "I never go out. How can I have any



认得什么海贼？却不屈杀了平人！”捕人道：“不管屈不屈，到州里分辨去，与我们无干。快些打发我们见官去！”江老是个乡子里人，也不晓得盗情利害，也不晓得该怎的打发公差，合家只是一味哭。捕人每不见动静，便发起狠来道：“老儿奸诈，家里必有赃物，我们且搜一搜！”众人不管好歹，打进内里一齐动手，险些把地皮多翻了转来，见了细软便藏匿了。江老夫妻、女儿三口，杀猪也似的叫喊，搗天倒地价哭。捕人每揎拳裸手，耀武扬威。

正在没摆布处，只见一个人蹶将进来，喝道：“有我在此，不得无理！”众人定睛看时，不是别人，却是州里顾提控。大家住手道：“提控来得正好，我们不要粗鲁，但凭提控便是。”江老一把扯住提控道：“提控，救我一救！”顾提控问道：“怎的起？”捕人拿牌票出来看，却是海贼指扳窝家，巡捕衙里来拿的。提控道：“贼指的事，多出仇口。此家良善，明是冤屈。你们为我面上，须要周全一分。”捕人道：“提控在此，谁敢多话？只要分付我们，一面打点见官便是。”提控即便主张江老支持酒饭，鱼肉之类摆了满桌，任他每狼飧虎咽吃个尽情。又



relations with robbers? I'm innocent!" The runners said, "We don't care if you're innocent or not! Just go with us and offer your explanations in the government office of the prefecture! Hurry up and see that how we will take you to the *yamen*!" Being a country folk, Jiang Rong knew nothing about the serious consequence of getting involved in robbery, nor did he know he should tip the official runners. The Jiang family could do nothing but weep. Seeing that Jiang Rong remained motionless, the runners flew into a rage. They shouted, "What a sly old fox! There must be spoils in his house. Come on and make a search in his house!"

At this order, all the runners rushed into the rooms and started to search for the spoils. They almost turned the ground over as they rummaged the house, and they snatched all the valuables they found. Jiang Rong and his wife and daughter could do nothing but wail and yell at the top of their voice, while the official runners, rolling up their sleeves and raising their fists, swaggered around the house like barbarians.

While the Jiang's house was being in a chaos, a man suddenly came in and shouted, "Stop making trouble!" Raising their heads and looking up, they found the man was none other than Chief Commissioner Gu. All the official runners stopped searching the house and replied, "You're here right on time, Chief Commissioner. We'll stop being rude and await your instructions." Jiang Rong pulled at Chief Commissioner Gu's sleeve and said, "Help me, please!" Turning to the runners, Gu asked, "What's the matter?" The runners produced the arrest warrant and told Gu that a gang of robbers confessed they had harbored their spoils at Jiang Rong's house, and they were sent here by the *yamen* to arrest him. Chief Commissioner Gu said, "If it was out of the mouths of the robbers, there must be a feud between the robbers and Jiang Rong. The Jiangs are good and honest people. It is obvious they are unjustly charged. Please do me a favor and have mercy on him." The runners said, "We'll be at your service. We promise you we won't ill-treat him after we take him to the *yamen*."

Then Chief Commissioner Gu told Jiang Rong to prepare food, pork, fish and wine for the runners. When the food and wine were ready, the runners wolfed them down to their hearts' content. Gu then fished out several taels of silver from his pocket and gave them to the runners as



摸出几两银子做差使钱。众捕人道：“提控分付，我每也不好推辞，也不好较量，权且收着。凡百看提控面上，不难为他便了。”提控道：“列位别无帮衬处，只求迟带到一日，等我先见官人替他分诉一番，做个道理，然后投牌，便是列位盛情。”捕人道：“这个当得奉承。”当下江老随捕人去了，提控转身安慰他母子道：“此事只要破费，须有分辨处，不妨大事。”母子啼哭道：“全仗提控搭救则个。”提控道：“且关好店门，安心坐着，我自做道理去。”

出了店门，进城来，一径到州前来见捕盗厅官人，道：“顾某有个下处主人江溶，是个良善人户，今被海贼所扳，想必是仇家陷害。望乞爷台为顾某薄面周全则个。”捕官道：“此乃堂上公事，我也不好自专。”提控道：“堂上老爷，顾某自当禀明，只望爷台这里带到时，宽他这一番拷究。”捕官道：“这个当得奉命。”须臾，知州升堂，顾提控觑个堂事空便，跪下禀道：“吏典平日伏侍老爷，并不敢有私情冒禀。今日有个下处主人江溶，被海贼诬扳。吏典熟知他是良善人户，必是仇家所陷，故



tips. Accepting the money, the runners said, “We have no choice but to take the money, since you insist on giving it to us. We’ll show due respect for your feelings and will not make things difficult for Jiang Rong.”

Chief Commissioner Gu said, “I only hope you can put off for one day before taking him to the *yamen* so that I will be able to have some time to go and see the government official in advance and explain the matters on Jiang Rong’s behalf. I will be extremely grateful if you can do me this favor.” “No problem,” replied the runners. Then Jiang Rong left for the *yamen* with the runners. Chief Commissioner Gu consoled Jiang Rong’s wife and daughter, saying, “Don’t worry about it. It’s a mere trifle. If we spend some money on it, we will have it settled.” The mother and daughter said tearfully, “We’ll rely on you to help us.” Chief Commissioner Gu said, “Just close the door of your house and wait indoors. I’ll go and see about it at once.”

Chief Commissioner Gu arrived at the town and directly went to the police office of the *yamen*. Seeing the official in charge of the police office, he said, “I have a temporary lodging when I’m out of town on business. The host of my temporary lodging, Jiang Rong, is an honest and kind man. Now a group of robbers gave his name to the *yamen*, saying that they harbored their loots in his house. I guess the robbers must be Jiang Rong’s enemies and Jiang Rong must have been set up by them. Hope you can do me a favor and have mercy on him.” The official said, “Business is business. I’m afraid I can’t bend the law wantonly for your benefit.” Chief Commissioner Gu said, “I was just telling you what I know of Jiang Rong. I would be very much obliged to you if you could excuse him from tortures during the interrogation.” The official said, “To this I can agree.”

After a short while the Prefect emerged to hold court trials. Chief Commissioner seized an opportunity while the Prefect was not busy at the court and knelt down, saying, “I’ve been at your service for quite some time, sir. I have something to report to you. I promise what I say is not swayed by personal feelings. I have a temporary lodging when I’m out of town on business. The host of my temporary lodging, named Jiang Rong, is framed by a gang of robbers. I know Jiang Rong is an honest and



此斗胆禀明。望老爷天鉴之下，超豁无辜。若是吏典虚言妄禀，罪该万死。”知州道：“盗贼之事，非同小可。你敢是私下受人买嘱，替人讲解么？”提控叩头道：“吏典若有此等情弊，老爷日后必然知道，吏典情愿受罪。”知州道：“待我细审，也听不得你一面之词。”提控道：“老爷‘细审’二字，便是无辜超生之路了。”复叩一头，走了下来。想过：“官人方才说听不得一面之词，我想人众则公，明日约同同衙门几位朋友，大家禀一声，必然听信。”是日，拉请一般的十数个提控，到酒馆中坐一坐，把前事说了，求众人明日帮他一说。众人平日与顾提控多有往来，无有不依的。

次日，捕人已将江溶解到捕厅，捕厅因顾提控面上，不动刑法，竟送到堂上来。正值知州投文，挨牌唱名。点到江溶名字，顾提控站在旁边，又跪下来禀道：“这江溶即是小吏典昨日所禀过的，果是良善人户。中间必有冤情，望老爷详察。”知州作色道：“你两次三回替人辨白，莫非受了贿赂，故敢大胆？”提控叩头道：“老爷当堂明查，若不是小吏典下处主人



kind man and he is wronged by his enemies. So, here I make bold to report it to you. I crave your sagacious judgment and let off the innocent. I'll be guilty of a crime for which even death is too light a punishment if I'm making unfounded remarks."

The Prefect said, "Robbery is no small matter. Is it that they've bribed you and so you're here to speak for them?" Chief Commissioner Gu kowtowed and replied, "If I did receive their bribes, you will surely get to know about it in the days to come and I'll be ready to get punishment willingly for it." The Prefect said, "I will look into the case carefully. I can't believe your one-sided story." Chief Commissioner Gu said, "Your word of looking into the case carefully will do justice to the innocent." Then Chief Commissioner Gu kowtowed again and left.

When he was out of the *yamen*, Chief Commissioner Gu thought to himself, "The Prefect just now said that he couldn't believe my one-sided story. The views of the crowd are free from prejudices. Tomorrow I'll ask some of my friends working for the *yamen* to tell the Prefect that Jiang Rong is wrongly accused. Then the Prefect will definitely believe me." Immediately he invited about ten official runners to an inn and told them about the matter in the hope that they could help him the next day. These runners were all on good terms with him, so none refused him.

On the next day Jiang Rong was brought to the police office. The official of the police office, taking into consideration of Gu's feelings, didn't put Jiang Rong to torture, instead he sent him to the court directly. The Prefect was then at the court conducting investigations and trials. The moment Jiang Rong's name was called, Chief Commissioner Gu threw himself on his knee and said to the Prefect, "This Jiang Rong is the very person I talked about to you yesterday. He is really an honest and kind man. He must have been wrongly accused. Hope you can look into the matter thoroughly, sir."

The Prefect said angrily, "You've been pleading on his behalf time and again. You must have been bribed. Otherwise, why are you so bold?" Chief Commissioner Gu kowtowed and said, "You can make an investigation into this matter, sir. If he is not the host of my temporary lodging or if I was bribed, I will not complain even if I'm beaten to death."

及有贿赂情弊，打死无怨！”只见众吏典多跪下来禀道：“委是顾某主人，别无情弊，众吏典敢百口代保。”知州平日也晓得顾芳行径，是个忠直小心的人，心下有几分信他的，说道：“我审时自有道理。”便问江溶：“这伙贼人扳你，你平日曾认得一两个否？”江老儿叩头道：“爷爷，小的若认得一人，死也甘心。”知州道：“他们有人认得你否？”江老儿道：“这个小的虽不知，想来也未必认得小的。”知州道：“这个不难。”唤一个皂隶过来，教他脱下衣服与江溶穿了，扮做了皂隶，却叫皂隶穿了江溶衣服，扮做了江溶。分付道：“等强盗执着江溶时，你可替他折证，看他认得认不得。”皂隶依言与江溶更换停当，然后带出监犯来。

知州问贼首道：“江溶是你窝家么？”贼首道：“爷爷，正是。”知州敲着气拍，故意问道：“江溶怎么说？”这个皂隶扮的江溶，假着口气道：“爷爷，并不干小人之事。”贼首看着假江溶，那里晓得不是，一口指着道：“他住在城外，倚着卖饼为名，专一窝着我每赃物，怎生赖得？”皂隶道：“爷爷，冤枉！小的不曾认得他的。”贼首道：“怎生不认得？我们长在你家吃饼。某处赃若干，某处赃若干，多在你家，难道忘了？”







Then all the official runners present went down on their knees and reported to the Prefect, "It's true Jiang Rong is the host of Gu's temporary lodging and we all know Gu is not swayed by selfish motives. We can assure you of this." Fully aware of Gu's usual act, the Prefect was clear that Gu was an honest and upright person. So the Prefect, somewhat convinced, said, "I will pass a fair judgment."

The Prefect turned to Jiang Rong and asked, "The robbers gave your name to the *yamen*. Do you know any of these robbers?" Jiang Rong kowtowed and said, "I will be willing and glad to get the death punishment if I know anyone of them." The Prefect asked, "Does anyone of them know you?" Jiang Rong replied, "I'm not sure of it. But I don't think they know me." Then the Prefect said, "I've got an idea." So saying, he told a runner to take off his runner's suit and asked Jiang Rong to put it on so as to pose as a runner. Meanwhile the runner was asked to put on Jiang Rong's clothes so as to pose as Jiang Rong. The Prefect then said to the runner, "You pose as Jiang Rong at court to confront the robbers. I want to find out if the robbers know Jiang Rong or not." As requested, the runner and Jiang Rong exchanged their clothes. Soon the robbers were brought to the court.

The Prefect asked the head robber, "Did you really harbor your loots at Jiang Rong's house?" "Exactly," replied the head robber. Striking the board on the table, the Prefect asked deliberately, "Jiang Rong, what do you have to say about it?" The runner in the disguise of Jiang Rong answered, "This has absolutely nothing to do with me, sir." The head runner was totally in the dark that this man was not at all Jiang Rong. Pointing at the fake Jiang Rong, the head robber remarked, "His house is out of the town. In the name of selling pancakes, he especially keeps our loots in his house. How can he deny it?" The runner remarked, "This is not true, sir! I do not know him." The head robber said, "How can you say you don't know me? We often eat your pancakes at your house. We put such a certain amount of loots in a certain place and another amount in another certain place in your house. Could it be possible you have forgotten it?"

Having learned that the head robber was telling a lie, the Prefect feigned



知州明知不是，假意说道：“江溶是窝家，不必说了，却是天下有名姓相同。”一手指着真江溶扮皂隶的道：“我这个皂隶，也叫得江溶，敢怕是他么？”贼首把皂隶一看，那里认得？连喊道：“爷爷，是卖饼的江溶，不是皂隶的江溶。”知州又手指假江溶道：“这个卖饼的江溶，可是了么？”贼首道：“正是这个。”知州冷笑一声，连敲气拍两下，指着贼首道：“你这杀刚不尽的奴才！自做了歹事，又受有买嘱，扳陷良善。”贼首连喊道：“这江溶果是窝家，一些不差，爷爷！”知州喝叫：“掌嘴！”打了十来下，知州道：“还要嘴强！早是我先换过了，试验虚实，险些儿屈陷平民。这个是我皂隶周才，你却认做了江溶，就信口扳杀他，这个扮皂隶的，正是卖饼江溶，你却又不认得，就说道无干，可知道你受人买嘱来害江溶，元不曾认得江溶的么！”贼首低头无语，只叫：“小的该死！”知州叫江溶与皂隶仍旧换过了衣服，取夹棍来，把贼首夹起，要招出买他指扳的人来。贼首是顽皮赖肉，那里放在心上？任你夹打，只供称是因见江溶殷实，指望扳赔赃物是实，别无指使。知州



ignorance and said, “Jiang Rong keeps your loots in his house and there is no doubt about it. But it’s also true that there are many namesakes.” Pointing at the real Jiang Rong in the runner’s disguise, the Prefect continued, “This runner is also called Jiang Rong. Could it be possible you’ve put your loots in his house?” The head robber threw a glance at the false runner. How should the head robber know the truth? So the head robber shouted repeatedly, “It’s the Jiang Rong who sells cakes, not the runner Jiang Rong, sir.” With his hand pointing to the fake Jiang Rong, the Prefect confirmed it by saying, “You mean it’s this Jiang Rong who sells cakes?” “Absolutely,” replied the head robber.

Letting out a sneer, the Prefect struck the board a couple of times and shouted at the head robber, “You damn lackey! You did evil, but you were bought over to frame up an honest and kind person.” The head robber still kept on saying, “It’s true this Jiang Rong kept our loots, sir! There is nothing wrong about it!” The Prefect ordered, “Slap his face!” Then the runners gave the head robber about a dozen slaps. “How dare you talk back to me!” continued the Prefect. “I stealthily had them two exchanged their positions to test if you really know Jiang Rong or not. You almost wronged the innocent. This one is called Zhou Cai, one of my runners. But you took him as Jiang Rong and remarked offhandedly he harbored your loots. This man in the disguise of a runner is the real Jiang Rong who sells pancakes. But you told me you didn’t know him. It’s evident you have never seen Jiang Rong and you must have been bought over by others to frame Jiang Rong.” Lowering his head, the head runner went silent except saying, “I was in the wrong and I deserve death punishment.” The Prefect then told Jiang Rong and the runner to put on their own clothes.

The Prefect ordered that the head robber be tormented by clamping rods, hoping it would make him confess who the hidden instigator was. However, the head robber turned out to be a stubborn and wicked man by nature who turned a deaf ear to the Prefect’s demand. Despite the clamping and beating inflicted on him, he only admitted the fact that he hoped he could get some reparations from Jiang Rong by bringing false charges against him and insisted on saying that no one was behind the scenes. The Prefect said, “It’s crystal clear that you acted on the instigation of



道：“眼见得是江溶仇家所使，无得可疑。今这奴才死不肯招，若必求其人，他又耍信口诬害，反生株连。我只释放了江溶，不根究也罢。”江溶叩头道：“小的也不愿晓得害小的的仇人，省得中心不忘，冤冤相结。”知州道：“果然是个忠厚人。”提起笔来，把名字注销，喝道：“江溶无干，直赶出去！”当下江溶叩头不止，皂隶连喝：“快走！”江溶如笼中放出飞鸟，欢天喜地出了衙门。衙门里许多人撮空叫喜，拥住了不放。又亏得顾提控走出来，把几句话解散开了众人，一同江溶走回家来。

江老儿一进门，便唤过妻女来道：“快来拜谢恩人！这番若非提控搭救，险些儿相见不成了。”三个人拜做一堆。提控道：“自家家里，应得出力，况且是知州老爷神明做主，与我无干。快不要如此！”江嬷嬷便问老儿道：“怎么回来得这样撇脱，不曾吃亏么？”江老儿道：“两处俱仗提控先说过了，并不动一些刑法。天字号一场官司，今没一些干涉，竟自平净了。”江嬷嬷千恩万谢。提控立起身来道：“你们且慢慢细讲，我还要到衙门去谢谢官府去。”当下提控作别自去了。

江老送了出门，回来对嬷嬷说：“正是闭门家里坐，祸从天上来，谁想遭此一场飞来横祸，若非提控出力，性命难保。今虽然破费了些东西，幸得太平无事。我每不可忘了恩德，怎



Jiang Rong's enemies. But this lackey made a complete denial of it. If I press him harder for the person behind, he will probably frame others and thus put more innocent people to trouble. Now I will set Jiang Rong free and drop this matter."

Upon hearing these words, Jiang Rong kowtowed and said, "I would rather not know who had plotted against me behind the scenes, so I won't always bear them in mind and create more trouble." Hearing this, the Prefect said, "You're really an honest and kind man." So saying, the Prefect took up a brush and cancelled Jiang Rong's name. Then he shouted, "Jiang Rong is innocent. Get out of the court at once." Jiang Rong kowtowed on end. The runners standing at the court also shouted repeatedly, "Go quickly!" Overjoyed, Jiang Rong ran out of the *yamen* like a bird freed from cage. However, many people in the *yamen* stopped him and asked him to distribute money on this happy occasion. It was again Chief Commissioner Gu who came to his rescue and sent away the crowd with a few remarks. Then Gu accompanied Jiang Rong back home.

The moment he got back home, Jiang Rong called his wife and daughter over and said, "Come over and give your thanks to our benefactor! I wouldn't have come back alive without Chief Commissioner Gu's help." Then the three of the Jiang family kowtowed instantly. Seeing this, Gu said, "We're one family, so it's my duty to do so. Besides, the Prefect was sagacious in passing the fair judgment. I didn't give you much help. Stop doing this and rise quickly!" Turning to Jiang Rong, Jiang Rong's wife asked, "How come you're back so smoothly? Did they put you to any torture?" Jiang Rong answered, "Chief Commissioner Gu put in a good word for me in advance at the *yamen*. So I was freed from any torture. Now this major case is settled without bringing me any trouble." Again Jiang's wife expressed thousands of thanks. Getting onto his feet, Gu said, "Excuse me, I'll have to go to the *yamen* to thank the government officials." So saying, Chief Commissioner Gu took his leave.

After seeing Gu off, Jiang Rong said to his wife, "Disaster comes like a bolt from the sky. I never thought I would have such a sudden disaster! My life would have been endangered had it not been for Chief Commissioner Gu's assistance. I'm lucky that I'm safe and sound now,



生酬报得他便好？”嬷嬷道：“我家家事向来不见怎的，只好度日，不知那里动了人眼，被天杀的暗算，招此非灾。前日众捕人一番掳掠，狠如打劫一般。细软东西尽被抄扎过了，今日有何重物谢得提控大恩？”江老道：“便是没东西难处。就凑得些少也当不得数，他也未必肯受，怎么好？”嬷嬷道：“我到有句话商量，女儿年一十七岁，未曾许人。我们这样人家，就许了人，不过是村庄人户，不若送与他做了妾，扳他做个女婿，支持门户，也免得外人欺侮。可不好？”江老道：“此事到也好，只不知女儿肯不肯。”嬷嬷道：“提控又青年，他家大娘子又贤惠，平日极是与我女儿说得来的。敢怕也情愿。”遂唤女儿来，把此意说了。女儿道：“此乃爹娘要报恩德，女儿何惜此身？”江老道：“虽然如此，提控是个近道理的人，若与他明说，必是不从。不若你我三人，只作登门拜谢，以后就留下女儿在彼，他便不好推辞得。”嬷嬷道：“言之有理。”当下三人计议已定，拿本历日来看，来日上吉。

次日起早，把女儿装扮了，江老夫妻两个步行，女儿乘着小轿，抬进城中，竟到顾家来。提控夫妻接了进去，问道：“何



though the runners took from my home some of the household wares for daily use. We mustn't forget his kindness. In what way can we repay him for his kindness?" Jiang Rong's wife said, "Life for us has always been merely passable. I really don't understand why we fell into others' plot and suffered this disaster. Our valuables were all looted by the official runners the other day. What treasures do we have now to give Chief Commissioner Gu as a token of thanks?" Jiang Rong said, "Now we have no valuables with us. What we have now is not worth mentioning. Even if we collect them together, they won't make a good gift. I'm afraid he will not be willing to accept them. What can we do about it?"

Jiang Rong's wife said, "I have something to talk with you. Our daughter is now seventeen and is not married. If she is married one day in the future, she will only be married into an ordinary country folk's family as far as our family status is concerned. Why not offer our daughter to Chief Commissioner Gu and ask him to take her as his concubine? By doing so we'll make him our son-in-law and he will support us for a living. Moreover, we'll be able to avoid being bullied by others. What do you think of it?" Jiang Rong said, "It's not a bad idea, but I'm not sure if our daughter is willing or not."

Jiang Rong's wife said, "Chief Commissioner Gu is young. His first wife is kind and virtuous and gets along pretty well with our daughter. I guess our daughter would possibly agree to our proposal." Then the parents talked it over with their daughter. The daughter said, "In doing so, Father and Mother are repaying him for his kindness. How can I turn you down?" Jiang Rong continued, "Chief Commissioner Gu is an understanding person. If we tell him our mind, he'll definitely decline our proposal. It would be better we three make a call at his house to express our gratitude and then leave our daughter in his place. It will be difficult for him to turn us down." "This sounds reasonable," Jiang Rong's wife agreed. Having made this decision, they consulted an almanac and found out the next day was a propitious date.

Early the next morning, Jiang Rong and his wife had their daughter dressed up. The Jiang couple on foot and the daughter in a sedan chair, they made their way to the town and arrived at Gu's house. Chief



事光降？”江老道：“老汉承提控活命之恩，今日同妻女三口登门拜谢。”提控夫妻道：“有何大事，直得如此！且劳烦小娘子过来，一发不当。”江老道：“老汉有一句不知进退的话奉告：老汉前日若是受了非刑，死于狱底，留下妻女，不知流落到甚处。今幸得提控救命重生，无恩可报。止有小女爱娘，今年正十七岁，与老妻商议，送来与提控娘子铺床叠被，做个箕帚之妾。提控若不弃嫌粗丑，就此俯留，老汉夫妻终身有托。今日是个吉日，一来到此拜谢，二来特送小女上门。”提控听罢，正色道：“老丈说哪里话！顾某若做此事，天地不容。”提控娘子道：“难得老伯伯、干娘、妹妹一同到此，且请过小饭，有话再说。”提控一面分付厨下摆饭相待。饮酒中间，江老又把前话提起，出位拜提控一拜道：“提控若不受老汉之托，老汉死不瞑目。”提控情知江老心切，暗自想道：“若不权且应承，此老必不肯住，又去别寻事端谢我，反多事了。且依着他言语，我日后自有处置。”饭罢，江老夫妻起身作别，分付女儿留住，





Commissioner Gu and his wife greeted the Jiangs, saying, "Very nice to see you. Anything I can do for you?" Jiang Rong answered, "I'm greatly indebted to Chief Commissioner Gu for his generous help. My wife and my daughter and I have come to call at your place to express our gratitude." Gu and his wife said, "Don't mention it. Why bother to take your young lady here? It's too much trouble."

Jiang Rong said, "I have something to talk to you. If you are to excuse me of my boldness, I'll speak it up. If I had been ill treated with cruel torments the other day and lost my life in the jail, I would have left my wife and daughter alone in the world and I couldn't imagine where they would be stranded. But I was very lucky Chief Commissioner Gu saved my life. I do not have much to thank you except my seventeen-year-old daughter Ainiang. I've consulted my wife and we both agreed to leave my daughter to Mrs. Gu to be her chamber maid and help her make the bed. If Chief Commissioner Gu doesn't consider her too ugly and low in origin and take her as a concubine, my wife and I would have you to depend on for the rest of our life. Today is a propitious date, so we've specially come to see you to express our thanks and at the same time to bring our daughter to your house."

Upon hearing these words, Chief Commissioner Gu said with a stern countenance, "How can you do that! Heaven forbid me to do such a thing!" Chief Commissioner Gu's wife chipped in, "We're very happy that Uncle, Auntie and Sister have come to see us together. You must stay for dinner. We can talk about this matter after dinner." Then Chief Commissioner Gu ordered that dinner be prepared.

While drinking wine, Jiang Rong again brought up the subject. Getting onto his feet and cupping one hand in the other in front, Jiang said, "If you refuse my offer, I will not rest easy in my grave." Having felt Jiang Rong's eagerness, Gu thought to himself, "If I do not accept his offer for the time being, he will surely think of other ways to thank me. That will make things more complicated. I just do it at the moment as he requested. I will handle this matter some time later."

When the dinner was over, Jiang Rong and his wife rose to their feet and said to their daughter, "Stay here and serve Mrs. Gu nicely." With a



道：“他在此伏侍大娘。”爱娘含羞忍泪，应了一声。提控道：“休要如此说！荆妻且权留小娘子盘桓几日，自当送还。”江老夫妻也道是他一时门面说话，两下心照罢了。

两口儿去得，提控娘子便请爱娘到里面自己房里坐了，又摆出细果茶品请他，分付走使丫鬟铺设好一间小房，一床被卧，连提控娘子心里，也只道提控有意留住的，今夜必然趁好日同宿。他本是个大贤惠，不燃燃酸的人，又平日喜欢着爱娘，故此是件周全停当，只等提控到晚受用。正是：

一朵鲜花好护持，芳菲只待赏花时。

等闲未动东君意，惜处重将帷幕施。

谁想提控是夜竟到自家娘子房里来睡了，不到爱娘处去。提控娘子问道：“你为何不到江小娘那里去宿？莫要忌我。”提控道：“他家不幸遭难，我为平日往来，出力救他。今他把女儿谢我，我若贪了女色，是乘人危处，遂我欲心，与那海贼指扳，应捕抢掳，肚肠有何两样？顾某虽是小小前程，若坏了行止，永远不吉。”提控娘子见他说出咒来，知是真心。便道：“果然如此，也是你的好处。只是日间何不力辞脱了，反又留在家中做甚？”提控道：“江老儿是老实人，若我不允女儿之事，他



shy look, Ainiang gave a reply of “Yes, I will,” as she tried hard to hold back her tears. Chief Commissioner Gu said hurriedly, “Don’t say so. My wife will keep her here for several days. It’s certain that I will send her back to you.” Jiang Rong and his wife, considering Gu’s words nothing but merely lip service, took it for granted that Gu had gladly made their daughter his concubine.

After Jiang Rong and his wife were gone, Gu’s wife invited Ainiang into her room and treated her with fruit and tea. Then she told a servant girl to tidy up a small room and make the bed for Ainiang. Gu’s wife also took it for granted that Chief Commissioner Gu had agreed to take Ainiang as his concubine and that he would definitely sleep with her on this lucky day. As a kind and virtuous woman, Gu’s wife didn’t have the slightest jealousy of Ainiang. Moreover, she was very fond of Ainiang on ordinary days. Therefore, she got everything ready for Chief Commissioner Gu and Ainiang’s first night together.

Much care and attention moistens a fresh flower.

With its luxuriant and rich fragrance,

the flower is awaiting its worthy viewer.

Unfortunately the viewer treats it casually,

And in vain the kind and virtuous woman has fixed the bed curtain

Out of everyone’s expectation, Chief Commissioner Gu went to his wife’s room for the night. Gu’s wife asked, “Why don’t you go and sleep in Ainiang’s room? I won’t be in your way.” Chief Commissioner Gu answered, “Her family suffered misfortune. I gave them a hand because our two families have been on friendly terms. Today Jiang Rong came to thank me by giving me his daughter. I would be a mean fellow if I coveted Ainiang’s beauty by taking advantage of the Jiangs’ precarious position. I would be no different from those bandits and robber official runners. Though I am a nobody, I know I will have a run of bad luck if I do anything bad.”

Hearing the curse, Gu’s wife knew that he was serious about the matter. So she said, “It’s very kind of you. But why did you agree to keep her in our home instead of talking them over today?” Chief Commissioner Gu answered, “Jiang Rong is an honest and kind man. If I had turned him

又剜肉做疮，别寻道路谢我，反为不美。他女儿平日与你相爱，通家姊妹，留下你处住几日，这却无妨。我意欲就此看个中意的人家子弟，替他寻下一头亲事，成就他终身结果，也是好事。所以一时不辞他去，原非我自家有意也。”提控娘子道：“如此却好。”当夜无词。

自此江爱娘只在顾家住，提控娘子与他如同亲姐妹一般，甚是看待得好。他心中也时常打点提控到他房里的，怎知道：

落花有意随流水，流水无情恋落花。

直待他年荣贵后，方知今日不为差。

提控只如常相处，并不曾起一毫邪念，说一句戏话，连爱娘房里脚也不蹀进去一步。爱娘初时疑惑，后来也不以为怪了。

提控衙门事多，时常不在家里。匆匆过了一月有馀。忽一日得闲在家中，对娘子道：“江小娘在家，初意要替他寻个人家，急切里凑不着巧。而今一月多了，久留在此也觉不便。不如备下些礼物，送还他家。他家父母必然问起女儿相处情形。他晓得我心事如此，自然不来强我了。”提控娘子道：“说得有理。”当下把此意与江爱娘说明了。就备了六个盒盘，又将出



down, he would rack his brains to think of other ways to thank me. This would be the most undesired thing for me. His daughter has been getting along quite well with you and you're like sisters on ordinary days. There is no harm for her to stay with you for several days. I was thinking of finding her a good match during her stay in house and helping her bring about the event of lifelong significance. It will be no bad thing for her. This is why I didn't turn them down. I never thought of taking her as my concubine." "Well done," said Gu's wife. That night passed with no story.

Since then Jiang Ainiang settled down in Gu's family and lived in peace and harmony with Gu's wife. In her mind she also calculated that Chief Commissioner Gu would come to her room one moment or another. However,

Shedding petals, the waterside flower pines for love,  
While the heartless brook babbles on.  
He will not realize the soundness of his present conduct  
Until he has attained high position and great wealth.

But Chief Commissioner Gu just got along with her as usual, without the slightest ill-intents or any teasing remarks. He didn't even set foot in Ainiang's room. In the beginning Ainiang felt rather confused about it. However, with the elapse of time, she didn't seem to care about it any more and found it nothing to be surprised at.

Chief Commissioner Gu was always away from home, for he had lots of things to attend to at the *yamen*. More than one month passed quickly. One day when he was at home, he said to his wife, "Originally I agreed to Jiang Ainiang's stay in our home in the hope of finding her a good husband. But eager as we were, it so happened that we haven't found her one. Now she has stayed in our home for more than one month. I don't think it proper for her to continue to stay with us. I'd rather get some gifts and send her to her own home. Unavoidably her parents will ask her about her stay in our home. After they've learned my determination concerning this matter, they will naturally give it up." "It sounds reasonable," replied his wife. Then Gu and his wife told Jiang Ainiang about their plan. After getting ready six boxes of gifts, Gu and his wife gave Ainiang some hair ornaments, four pearl-made flowers and a pair of gold earrings, and helped



珠花四朵、金耳环一双，送与江爱娘插戴好，一乘轿着个从人径送到江老家里来。

江老夫妻接着轿子，晓得是顾家送女儿回家，心里疑道：“为何叫他独自个归来？”问道：“提控在家么？”从人道：“提控不得工夫来，多多拜上阿爹，这几时有慢了小娘子，今特送还府上。”江老见说话跷蹊，反怀着一肚子鬼胎道：“敢怕有甚不恰当处。”忙忙领女儿到里边坐了，同嬷嬷细问他这一月的光景。爱娘把顾娘子相待甚厚，并提控不进房、不近身的事，说了一遍。江老呆了一晌道：“长要来问个信，自从为事之后，生意淡薄，穷忙没有工夫，又是素手，不好上门。欲待央个人来，急切里没便处。只道你一家和睦，无些别话，谁想却如此行径。这怎么说？”嬷嬷道：“敢是日子不好，与女儿无缘法，得个人解襁解襁便好。”江老道：“且等另拣个日子，再送去又做处。”爱娘道：“据女儿看起来，这个提控不是贪财好色之人，乃是个正人君子。我家强要谢他，他不好推辞得，故此权留这几时，誓不玷污我身。今既送了归家，自不必再送去。”江老道：“虽然如此，他的恩德毕竟不曾报得，反住在他家打搅多时，



her put them on. Thus Jiang Ainiang was carried to her own home in a sedan chair by several servants.

Jiang Rong and his wife were very much confused as they saw their daughter being carried back home in a sedan chair by Gu's servants. "Why is she coming back alone?" they wondered. Turning to the servants, Jiang Rong asked, "Is Chief Commissioner Gu at his home?" The servants answered, "Chief Commissioner Gu is busy at the moment, but he asked us to bring you many gifts to extend his greetings. He asked us to take Ainiang back to you." Feeling something amiss in the servants' remarks, Jiang Rong asked nervously, "Has my daughter done anything improper?" Before he could get an answer, Jiang Rong hastily pulled his daughter by the hand and led her into the inner room. Then Jiang Rong and his wife anxiously inquired their daughter about the details of her one-month stay in Gu's house.

Ainiang told her parents that Gu's wife had treated her very nicely, but Chief Commissioner Gu had never set foot in her room to get close to her. Jiang Rong remarked, "I've long thought of going to see you. But unfortunately business became slack after you left our home and I couldn't manage to find time to spare. Besides, we thought it not good to go and visit the Gus without giving them some gifts. We also considered asking someone to go and see you on our behalf, but we haven't had the chance to find one. We thought you must be doing pretty well in Gu's home. We had never expected it was like this. What can we do about it? I'll pick up another lucky date and take you to his home again."

Ainiang said, "It seems to me Chief Commissioner Gu is a man of high principle rather than a man lusting for money and women. Having seen through your strong desire to thank him by giving me to him, he thought it inappropriate to turn you down at the moment. Thus he decided to allow me to stay in his home for the time being, but he was determined that he would not sleep with me. Now that he has sent me back home, I don't think you should take me to his home again." Jiang Rong said, "If I leave the matter as it is now, I won't feel at ease, for I haven't repaid a tiny bit of his kindness. Contrary to my wishes, I left you in his place and gave much trouble to his family. Moreover, they've given me such a



又加添礼物送来，难道便是这样罢了？还是改日再送去的是。”爱娘也不好阻当，只得凭着父母说罢了。

过了两日，江老夫妻做了些饼食，买了几件新鲜物事，办着十来个盒盘，一坛泉酒，雇个担夫挑了，又是一乘轿抬了女儿，留下嬷嬷看家，江老自家伴送过顾家来。提控迎着江老，江老道其来意，提控作色道：“老丈难道不曾问及令爱来？顾某心事唯天可表，老丈何不见谅如此？此番决不敢相留。盛惠谨领，令爱不及款接，原轿请回。改日登门拜谢。”江老见提控词色严正，方知女儿不是诳语。连忙出门止住来轿，叫他仍旧抬回家去。提控留江老转去茶饭，江老也再三辞谢，不敢叨领，当时别去。

提控转来，受了礼物，出了盒盘，打发了脚担钱，分付多谢去了。进房对娘子说江老今日复来之意。娘子道：“这个便老没正经，难道前番不谐，今番有再谐之理？只是难为了爱娘，又来一番，不曾会得一会去。”提控道：“若等他下了轿，接了进来，又多一番事了。不如决绝回头了的是。这老儿真诚，





handsome gift along with your return. Can I leave this matter as it is now? I would rather take you to him some day.” Finding it hard to stop her parents, Ainiang had to give in.

A few days later, Jiang Rong and his wife made some pancakes, bought some fruits just in season and put them in about a dozen of boxes. Apart from these, he also bought a jar of wine. Hiring a porter to carry these gifts, he again had his daughter carried to the Gu’s house in a sedan chair. This time Jiang Rong’s wife stayed at home to look after the household affairs, while Jiang Rong alone accompanied his daughter to Gu’s house. Chief Commissioner Gu received them and Jiang Rong told him about what they had come for. Chief Commissioner Gu said with a severe countenance, “Didn’t you ask your daughter about her previous stay in my home? Only heaven knows my mind. Why couldn’t you understand me? I will not keep her in my home this time. Thank you for your generous gifts and I’ll have them with pleasure. But do take your daughter back home. Please pardon me for my being rude in not having the time to entertain her this time. I’ll make a call at your house and express my gratitude some other day.”

Seeing Gu’s stern and principled expression, Jiang Rong was convinced that her daughter had not lied to him. Running out of Gu’s house, Jiang Rong stopped her daughter’s sedan chair and told the bearers to take her back home. Chief Commissioner Gu wanted to treat Jiang Rong to tea and dinner, but Jiang Rong declined with a strong determination, saying it would be too much trouble. Gu accepted the gifts Jiang had brought him and then awarded the porter with some money and sent him off. Then Jiang Rong parted with Chief Commissioner Gu.

Chief Commissioner Gu entered the room and told his wife about Jiang Rong’s purpose in coming. Gu’s wife remarked, “This old fellow is really muddle-headed. Since we’ve long decided to send her back home, there is no reason for us to let her stay in our home this time. But it was really a bother for Ainiang to make this trip again. What’s worse, I didn’t get the chance to see her.” Chief Commissioner Gu said, “If she got off the sedan chair and came into our house, it would cause us more trouble. It was better to send her away at that very moment. Honest and kind as



却不见机。既如此把女儿相缠，此后往来到也要稀疏了些。外人不知就里，惹得造下议论来，反害了女儿终身，是要好成歉了。”娘子道：“说得极是。”自此提控家不似前日十分与江家往来得密了。

那江家原无甚么大根基，不过生意济楚，自经此一番横事剥削之后，家计萧条下来。自古道：“人家天做。”运来时，撞着就是趁钱的，火焰也似长起来；运退时，撞着就是折本的，潮水也似退下去。江家悔气头里，连五热行里生意多不济了。做下饼食，常管五七日不发市，就是馊蒸气了，喂猪狗也不中。你道为何如此？先前为事时不多几日，只因惊怕了，自女儿到顾家去后，关了一个多月店门不开，主顾家多生疏，改向别家去，就便拗不转来。况且窝盗为事，声名扬开去不好听，别人不管好歹，信以为实，就怕来缠帐。以此生意冷落，日吃日空，渐渐支持不来。要把女儿嫁个人家，思量靠他过下半世，又高不凑，低不就。光阴眨眼，一错就是论年，女儿也大得过期了。



Jiang Rong is, he is a person with one-track mind. I think we need to drift apart from the Jiangs in the future, since Jiang Rong has set his mind to bringing his daughter to our family. The outsiders are in the dark about this matter. Once it gives rise to gossips, Aininag will become the victim and will be landed in an unfavorable position as regards her event of lifelong significance. This should be the least desired.” “You’re right,” said Gu’s wife. Since then the Gus gradually alienated the Jiangs.

Originally the Jiangs had not been very abundant in resources, except that their family business was just considerably brisk. But after experiencing the disaster, business became slack. As an old saying goes, “Fate is everything.” While having a run of good luck, whatever one does, he makes money and fortune rolls in like raging flames; while having a run of bad luck, whatever one does, he loses money and fortune decreases like ebbing tides. Now the Jiangs were down on their luck in money matters and their pancake business could no longer make money. The pancakes they made didn’t sell well and had to be kept in their home for five to seven days. They often went so spoiled that even pigs and dogs refused to eat them. Can you figure out why the Jiangs had come to such a miserable condition? In the beginning when the disaster hit upon Jiang Rong, his whole family was scared out of their wits. Then they went out of business for over one month after they sent their daughter to Gu’s house.

For this reason, their old customers all shifted to other cake stores to buy pancakes. In addition to this, as the people around heard about he was involved in case of harboring loots, they all took it as a fact without discriminating the truth or falsehood of the matter. Therefore, his former customers all stayed away from the Jiangs for fear that they might get involved in the robbery case. Naturally Jiang Rong’s pancake business was left out in the cold. Soon life became hard for the Jiangs as they had to eat up their original property day by day. Jiang Rong and his wife attempted to marry their daughter off to get some money for the rest of their life, unfortunately they were unable to find her the best match, yet were unwilling to make do with the second best. Time flew and one year after another passed quickly. Their daughter Ainiang had missed her best



忽一日，一个徽州商人经过，偶然间瞥见爱娘颜色，访问邻人，晓得是卖饼江家。因问：“可肯与人家为妾否？”邻人道：“往年为官事时，曾送与人做妾，那家行善事，不肯受，还了的。做妾的事，只怕也肯。”徽商听得此话，去央个熟事的媒婆，到江家来说此亲事。只要事成，不惜重价。媒婆得了口气，走到江家，便说出徽商许多富厚处，情愿出重礼，聘小娘子为偏房。江老夫妻正在喉急头上，见说得动火，便问道：“讨在何处去的？”媒婆道：“这个朝奉只在扬州开当中盐，大孺人自在徽州家里。今讨去做二孺人，住在扬州当中，是两头大的，好不受用！亦且路不多远。”江老夫妻道：“肯出多少礼？”媒婆道：“说过只要事成，不惜重价。你每能要得多少，那富家心性，料必勾你每心下的，凭你们讨礼罢了。”江老夫妻商量道：“你我心下不割舍得女儿，欲待留下他，遇不着这样好



years for marriage.

All of a sudden a businessman from Huizhou met Ainiang while he was passing this place one day and was deeply attracted by her beauty. He inquired the local inhabitants about Ainiang and learned that she was the daughter of Jiang Rong, a pancake seller. He asked the local inhabitants, “Would she be willing to be a concubine?” The local inhabitants answered, “Once her family got into trouble, her parents gave her to their benefactor to be his concubine as a token of thanks. Their benefactor was a very kind man. He refused to take her as his concubine and sent her back to her parents again. I guess her parents would be willing to agree to your request.”

Upon hearing this, the businessman from Huizhou found an experienced matchmaker to go to the Jiangs’ to make the match, saying that he would not hesitate to pay a huge sum for it if Ainiang and her family gave their consent. Then the matchmaker got to Jiang’s house and told Jiang Rong and his wife that the businessman from Huizhou was extremely rich and was willing to offer a handsome gift to make Ainiang his concubine. At this point Jiang Rong and his wife were worrying about their daughter’s marriage. Hearing this good news, they asked eagerly, “Where will this businessman and Ainiang settle down if he takes her as his concubine?”

The matchmaker answered, “This rich businessman now lives in Yangzhou, running a pawnshop and at the same time doing salt business. His first wife now lives in his hometown Huizhou. He’s thinking of taking a second wife and will have her settled down in his pawnshop in Yangzhou. The second wife is not supposed to live together with the first wife, so the second wife will receive exactly the same treatment with his first wife.. What a nice thing it is! Besides, Yangzhou is not very far from here.” Jiang Rong and his wife asked, “How much will he offer for the betrothal gift?” The matchmaker answered, “He said he would offer a huge sum only if he could make the match. How much will you demand? He is a rich man. I guess he can meet your demand. You may demand however much you like.”

Jiang Rong and his wife talked it over and said, “Though we hate to



主。有心得把与别处人去，多讨得些礼钱，也勾下半世做生意度日方可。是必要他三百两，不可少了。”商量已定，对媒婆说过。媒婆道：“三百两，忒重些。”江嬷嬷道：“少一厘，我也不肯。”媒婆道：“且替你们说说看，只要事成后，谢我多些儿。”三个人尽说三百两是一大主财物，极顶价钱了，不想商人慕色心重，二三百金之物，那里在他心上？一说就允。如数下了财礼，拣个日子娶了过去，开船往扬州。江爱娘哭哭啼啼，自道终身不得见父母了。江老虽是卖去了女儿，心中凄楚，却幸得了一主大财，在家别做生理不题。

却说顾提控在州六年，两考役满，例当赴京听考。吏部点卯过，拨出在韩侍郎门下办事效劳。那韩侍郎是个正直忠厚的大臣，见提控谨厚小心，仪表可观，也自另眼看他，时留在衙前听候差役。

一日侍郎出去拜客，提控不敢擅离衙门左右，只在前堂伺候归来。等了许久，侍郎又往远处赴席，一时未还。提控等得



part with our daughter, we're also worried that she will possibly not be able to have such a good chance if we continue to keep her in our home. If we decide to marry her off, we need to get a sum which will be large enough for us to make a living and start a business for the rest of our life. We'll ask for no less than three hundred taels of silver." Then they spoke their mind to the matchmaker, who said, "Three hundred taels of silver is too much." Jiang Rong's wife insisted, "It won't do even if it's one coin less." The matchmaker said, "I'll go and talk to the businessman. But don't forget to thank me with some more money if I help you make the match."

All the three considered three hundred taels of silver was a huge amount of money, but the rich businessman thought it was nothing for him, for he was so deeply attracted to Ainiang. And it turned out that the businessman agreed to it readily. After giving the Jiangs the sum of betrothal gift, the rich businessman picked up a lucky date and got married with Ainiang. Then the newly-weds made their way to Yangzhou by boat. Ainiang wept and wailed, thinking that she would possibly never have the chance to see her parents again. Jiang Rong and his wife were sad too to sell their daughter, but they got a fortune from it and with this money they could make a living and start a new business.

After serving in the *yamen* of the prefecture for six years, Chief Commissioner Gu went to the capital city to receive check and appraisal for his performance. Arriving at the Ministry of Civil Personnel, Gu passed the check and appraisal successfully and was assigned to work under the leadership of Deputy Director Han. Deputy Director Han was an honest and upright high-ranking official. Soon Han found out that Chief Commissioner Gu was a handsome man and at the same time very careful about his manners. So he looked up to him with special respect and often asked him to stay indoors to wait for his instructions and assignments.

One day, Deputy Director Han went out on business. Not daring to go out of the *yamen*, Chief Commissioner Gu had to wait for his return in the front hall of the *yamen*. After waiting for a long time, Gu received a message that Deputy Director Han had gone for another feast in a distant place and would not be able to come back for the time being. Long time

不耐烦，困倦起来，坐在槛上打盹，朦胧睡去。见空中云端里黄龙现身，彩霞一片，映在自己身上。正在惊看之际，忽有人蹴他起来，飒然惊觉，乃是后堂传呼，高声喝：“夫人出来！”提控仓惶失措，连忙趋避不及。夫人步到前堂，亲看见提控慌遽走出之状，着人唤他转来。提控自道失了礼度，必遭罪责，趋至庭中跪倒，俯伏地下，不敢仰视。夫人道：“抬起头来我看。”提控不敢放肆，略把脖子一伸。夫人看见道：“快站起来，你莫不是太仓顾提控么？为何在此？”提控道：“不敢，小吏顾芳，实是太仓人。考满赴京，在此办事。”夫人道：“你认得我否？”提控不知甚么缘故，摸个头路不着，不敢答应一声。夫人笑道：“妾身非是别人，即是卖饼江家女儿也。昔年徽州商人娶去，以亲女相待。后来嫁于韩相公为次房。正夫人亡逝，相公立为继室，今已受过封诰。想来此等荣华，皆君所致也。若是当年非君厚德，义还妾身，今日安能到此地位？妾身时刻在心，正恨无由补报。今天幸相逢于此，当与相公说知就里，少图报效。”提控听罢，恍如梦中一般，偷眼觑着堂上夫人，正





waiting made Gu feel tired and boring. He became sleepy and dozed off as he was sitting on the threshold. In his sleep he dreamed about a yellow dragon making an appearance on the top of the clouds, and the rosy clouds shed light upon him. While he was still amazed watching the scene, someone suddenly kicked him to wake him up. He woke up with a start. Just at this moment there came a loud shout from the back hall, "Madame is coming!" Thrown into a panic, Chief Commissioner Gu found it too late to get out of her sight.

Walking into the front hall, Madame noticed Chief Commissioner Gu rushing out the hall in terror. She ordered that he be brought over to her. Thinking his act was a serious breach of etiquette, Chief Commissioner Gu felt he would avoidably get an abuse. So he returned to the front hall and went down on his knees in front of Madame. With his head lowered, he dared not look up at her. "Look up at me," said Madame. To avoid being rude, Gu raised his head slightly. Madame took a look at him and said, "Rise, please. Aren't you Chief Commissioner Gu from Taicangzhou? Why are you here?"

Chief Commissioner Gu answered, "I am Gu Fang from Taicangzhou. I came to the capital city to receive assessment for my past performance and I got a new assignment to serve the master." Madame asked, "Do you know me?" Unable to make head or tail out of it, Gu couldn't figure out why she asked this question. He didn't dare to mutter an answer. Madame said, smiling, "I'm the daughter of Jiang Rong the pancake seller. Years ago I was married with a businessman from Huizhou. But he treated me as his own daughter. Later I got married with Deputy Director Han as his second wife. After the death of his first wife, he made me his first wife and I was conferred a title by imperial edict. I own this great honor of mine to you. How would I have come to this if you hadn't been so kind to send me back home the other year? I've been thinking of repaying you for your kindness, and it has kept me in suspense for a long time that I was not able to get to know your whereabouts. Fortunately I've now found you. I'll talk to my husband and see to it how we will thank you."

As if in a dream, Chief Commissioner Gu fixed his eyes on Madame and, surprisingly, found that she was none other than Ainiang from the



是江家爱娘。心下道：“谁想他却有这个地位？”又寻思道：“他分明卖与徽州商人做妾了，如何却嫁得与韩相公？方才听见说徽商以亲女相待，这又不知怎么解说。”当下退出外来，私下偷问韩府老都管，方知事体备细。

当日徽商娶去时节，徽人风俗，专要闹房炒新郎。凡是亲戚朋友相识的，在住处所在，闻知娶亲，就携了酒榼前来称庆。说话之间，名为祝颂，实半带笑耍，把新郎灌得烂醉方以为乐。是夜徽商醉极，讲不得甚么云雨勾当，在新人枕畔一觉睡倒，直至天明。朦胧中见一个金甲神人，将瓜锤扑他脑盖一下，蹴他起来道：“此乃二品夫人，非凡人之配，不可造次胡行！若违我言，必有大咎！”徽商惊醒，觉得头疼异常，只得扒了起来。自想此梦稀奇，心下疑惑。平日最信的是关圣灵签，梳洗毕，开个随身小匣，取出十个钱来，对空虔诚祷告，看与此女缘分何如。卜得个乙戌，乃是第十五签。签曰：

两家门户各相当，不是姻缘莫较量。

直待春风好消息，却调琴瑟向兰房。



Jiangs. “How come she has come to such a high position?” thought Gu. Again Gu thought in his mind, “She had been sold to the businessman from Huizhou to be his concubine, but how come she got married again with Deputy Director Han? Just now she mentioned the businessman from Huizhou treated her as his own daughter. What was all that about?” After Gu parted with Madame, he secretly inquired the chief steward about the matter. He was told as follows:

On that day the businessman from Huizhou took Ainiang to his pawnshop in Yangzhou. The local customs in Huizhou were that people would crowd in the bridal chamber to tease the new couple on the wedding night and play practical jokes on them. Having learned of the happy occasion, all the businessman’s friends and relatives living in this area, all carrying wine with them, came to congratulate the newly-weds. In name they came to express congratulations, in reality they came to tease the bride and the bridegroom with practical jokes. They would not feel happy and satisfied until they had made the bridegroom dead drunk.

That night the businessman was as drunk as a lord. He fell deep asleep by the bride immediately after he fell to the bed, without making love. In his sleep he saw a man in armor and helmet. The man in armor and helmet struck the businessman on the head lightly with a gourd-shaped iron hammer and gave him a kick, and said, “This woman will be a lady of the second highest rank, and she is not to be the wife of an ordinary man. Don’t be impetuous! If you turn a deaf ear to my words, you’re sure to suffer from calamities!” Awakened from his dream with a start, the businessman felt a severe pain in the head. He got out of his bed, and felt extremely puzzled at this strange dream.

On ordinary days the businessman had faith in the oracle obtained from the deity Guandi<sup>1</sup> After washing himself; he opened a small box and took out ten coins. Looking upward, he prayed for divination with great piety, hoping to see if this woman could be his wife. He threw the coins and obtained an oracle according to the number of the fronts and backs of the coins, which read:

Don’t enter into marriage if it’s not predestined,  
Though you two be well-matched in social status.

详了签意，疑道：“既明说不是姻缘了，又道直待春风，却调琴瑟，难道放着见货，等待时来不成？”心下一发糊涂。再缴一签，卜得个辛丙，乃是第七十三签。签曰：

忆昔兰房分半钗，而今忽报信音乖。

痴心指望成连理，到底谁知事不谐。

得了这签，想道：“此签说话明白，分明不是我的姻缘，不能到底的了。梦中说有二品夫人之分，若把来另嫁与人，看是如何？”祷告过，再卜一签，得了个丙庚，乃是第二十七签。签曰：

世间万物各有主，一粒一毫君莫取。

英雄豪杰本天生，也须步步循规矩。

徽商看罢，道：“签句明白如此，必是另该有个主，吾意决矣。”

虽是这等说，日间见他美色，未免动心，然但是有些邪念，便觉头疼。到晚来走近床边，愈加心神恍惚，头疼难支。徽商想道：“如此跷蹊，要见梦言可据，签语分明。万一破他女身，必为神明所恶。不如放下念头，认他做个干女儿，寻个人嫁了他，后来果得富贵，也不可不知。”遂把此意对江爱娘说道：“在 下年四十馀岁，与小娘子年纪不等。况且家中原有大孺人，今



Be patient and wait for the spring breeze that carries good news,  
For matrimonial harmony won't be far away as it seems

Reading the oracle carefully, he wondered, "since it has made it clear we two will not be a couple, why does it suggest I should 'Be patient and wait for the spring breeze' and say 'matrimonial harmony won't be far away?' Should I just leave her as she is and wait for some more time?" This obscure and unintelligible oracle filled him with more doubts and suspicions. He did it one more time and got another oracle, which contained the following two lines:

Eventually all your previous efforts will come to naught,  
However strong your desire is to have her as your wife.

With this prediction in mind, he thought to himself, "What this oracle says is crystal clear. Definitely she won't be my wife. In my dream I was told she'll be a lady of the second highest rank. Why not marry her off to someone else to see if my dream will come true or not?" After praying, he asked for the third oracle, which read:

Predestined it is everything in the world has particular owners.  
Do not take a tiny bit that is not fated to belong to you.  
Heroes as you are by nature though,  
You must also abide by the rules to the letter.

Having read these lines, the businessman said, "The meaning of this oracle is extremely explicit. She will be the wife of someone else. Now I've known what I should do."

Resolute as he was, the businessman couldn't help taking a fancy for her when he saw her at daytime. However, he was assailed by headache the moment he harbored evil-intents for her. As he approached her bed at night, he would feel anxious and distracted and have a splitting headache. "This is really so strange," thought the businessman. "No wonder I had such a dream and got these oracles. I will be surely damned if I deprive her of her girlhood. I'd rather give up my ill intentions and take her as my nominally adoptive daughter, and then help her find a husband. Possibly she will acquire a high position and become a rich lady."

One day the businessman said to Jiang Ainiang, "I'm now in my forties. I'm afraid I'm too old to be your match. Apart from this, I have a wife in

扬州典当内又有二孺人。前日只因看见小娘子生得貌美，故此一时聘娶了来。昨晚梦见神明，说小娘子是个贵人，与在下非是配偶。今不敢胡乱辱莫了小娘子，在下痴长一半年纪，不若认义为父女，等待寻个好姻缘配着，图个往来。小娘子意下如何？”江爱娘听见说不做妾做女，有甚么不肯处？答应道：“但凭尊意，只恐不中抬举。”当下起身，插烛也似拜了徽商四拜。以后只称徽商做“爹爹”，徽商称爱娘做“大姐”，各床而睡。

同行至扬州当里，只说是路上结拜的朋友女儿，托他寻人家的，也就分付媒婆替他四下里寻亲事。正是春初时节，恰好凑巧韩侍郎带领家眷上任，舟过扬州，夫人有病，要娶个偏房，就便伏侍夫人，停舟在关下。此话一闻，那些做媒的如蝇聚膻，来的何止三四十起？各处寻将出来，多看得不中意。落末有个人说：“徽州当里有个干女儿，说是太仓州来的，模样绝美，也





my hometown and a concubine in my pawnshop in Yangzhou. I took you as my concubine the other day because you're beautiful. But I had a dream last night. In my dream, the deity told me that you are a lady with an honorary title conferred on by the imperial edict and that I'm not your match. So I dare not venture to take you as my concubine. I have fears that it might bring disgrace to you. Since my age is twice as much as yours, I'm considering of taking you as my nominally adoptive daughter. When I find a nice man, I'll marry you off to him. What do you think of this?"

Upon hearing the businessman would take her as his nominally adoptive daughter instead of his concubine, Jiang Ainiang was filled with joy. "I would gladly follow your orders," replied Ainiang. "But I'm afraid I won't live up to your expectations." Getting onto her feet and bowing toward the businessman four times, Ainiang instantly acknowledged the businessman as her nominally adoptive father. From then on the businessman and Ainiang started to address each other father and daughter, and they slept in separate rooms.

Back in the pawnshop, the businessman from Huizhou made it known to the public that Ainiang was the daughter of his new friend he made on the way and that he had been entrusted by his new friend to find her a good match. Accordingly he asked the matchmakers for help.

It was then early spring. It happened that Deputy Director Han, now on his way to take office, and his family were passing through Yangzhou by boat. All of a sudden, Han's wife was ill. Han stopped his boat at Yangzhou with the intention of taking a concubine to take care of his sick wife. This news spread far and wide quickly, and in an instant more than three dozens of matchmakers came to him to make proposals of marriage on behalf of the girls' families. However, the fact was that none of the girls the matchmakers had mentioned caught Han's fancy. In the end someone remarked casually, "The pawnbroker, a businessman from Huizhou, has an adopted daughter. It's said this girl is from Taicangzhou and is extremely beautiful. I heard people say she is willing to be a concubine. There is no harm in asking her if she is willing to be Deputy Director Han's concubine." Hearing this, a matchmaker went to the

是肯与人为妾的，问问也好。”其间就有媒婆叨揽去当里来说。

原来徽州人有个僻性，是“乌纱帽”、“红绣鞋”，一生只这两件不争银子，其余诸事吝啬了。听见说个韩侍郎娶妾，先自软瘫了半边，自夸梦兆有准，巴不得就成了。韩府也叫人看过，看得十分中意。徽商认做自己女儿，不争财物，反赔嫁妆，只贪个纱帽往来，便自心满意足。韩府仕宦人家，做事不小，又见徽商行径冠冕，不说身价，反轻易不得了，连钗环首饰缎匹银两也下了三四百金礼物。徽商受了，增添嫁事，自己穿了大服，大吹大擂，将爱娘送下官船上来。侍郎与夫人看见人物标致，更加礼义齐备，心下喜欢，另眼看待。到晚云雨之际，俨然身是处子，一发敬重。一路相处，甚是相得。到了京中，不料夫人病重不起，一应家事尽嘱爱娘掌管。爱娘处得井井有条，胜过夫人在日。内外大小，无不喜欢。韩相公得意，拣个吉日，立为继房。恰遇弘治改元覃恩，竟将江氏入册报去，请







pawnshop in a hurry to consult the businessman from Huizhou about this matter.

People from Huizhou had an eccentric disposition. They were all very stingy throughout their life. But they became extremely liberal with silver when it came to these two things: one was the gauze cap and the other red embroidered shoes. Upon hearing that a senior official like Deputy Director Han was thinking of taking a concubine, the businessman from Huizhou was so excited that he felt weak and limp all over. He started to swagger about the accurateness of his previous dream and wished he could bring about this marriage as soon as possible.

When Deputy Director Han met with Ainiang, he was extremely pleased with her. The businessman did not extort money and things. On the contrary, he advanced a handsome dowry in the hope of establishing some connections with this senior official. Seeing that the businessman was high-toned as regards the betrothal gifts, Deputy Director Han, who was rich and influential, felt he should not belittle him and act rashly. He then offered the businessman a huge betrothal gift, including hair ornaments, silk and some silver, totaling up to three to four hundred taels of silver. Accepting the gift from Han, the businessman augmented the dowry and, making a big fanfare, sent Ainiang down to Han's boat.

Both Deputy Director Han and his wife were very happy and looked up to Ainiang with special respect as they saw Ainiang was so pretty and the etiquette so impeccable. When he made love with her at night, Han found out that Ainiang was still a virgin. So Han viewed her with even more respect.

Ainiang got along pretty well with the Hans as the boat sailed on in the direction of the capital city. After arriving at the capital city, Deputy Director Han's wife became very ill and was unable to get out of bed. Then Ainiang took on all the household affairs. Ainiang did a better job in handling the household affairs than Han's wife and put everything in perfect order. She was revered by all the members of the Han family. Feeling very much contented with her, Deputy Director Han picked up an auspicious date and made Ainiang his second wife. Meanwhile, it happened that Emperor Xiaozong ascended the throne and named the

下了夫人封诰，从此内外俱称夫人了。

自从做了夫人，心里常念先前嫁过两处，若非多遇着好人，怎生保全得女儿之身，致今日有此享用？那徽商认做干爷，兀自往来不绝，不必说起。只不知顾提控近日下落，忽然堂前相遇，恰恰正在门下走动。正所谓：

一叶浮萍归大海，人生何处不相逢？

夫人见了顾提控，返转内房。等候侍郎归来，对侍郎说道：“妾身有个恩人，没路报效，谁知却在相公衙门中服役。”侍郎问是谁人，夫人道：“即办事吏顾芳是也。”侍郎道：“他与你有何恩处？”夫人道：“妻身原籍太仓人，他也是太仓州吏，因妾家里父母被盗扳害，得他救解，幸免大祸。父母将身酬谢，坚辞不受，强留在彼，他与妻子待以宾礼，誓不相犯。独处室



title of his reign Hongzhi in 1488. Seizing this opportunity, Emperor Xiaozong started to grant titles to his ministers and subjects and carry out remissions. Deputy Director Han had Jiang Ainiang enrolled in the list and reported it to the imperial court. Soon Ainiang was conferred with the title of Madame by the imperial edict. And so, she was now addressed as Madame by the whole family.

Since she became Madame of the Han family, Ainiang had been concerned about two things. Firstly, had she not met two kindhearted men, how could she have retained her virginity and acquired the present honor? As the businessman from Huizhou was her nominally adoptive father, she had kept frequent contacts with him, and there was no question about that. The second thing that worried her was that the present whereabouts of Chief Commissioner Gu had been totally unknown to her.

At last she bumped into Chief Commissioner Gu right in her own house. This perfectly fitted the saying:

Though like duckweeds floating in the wide ocean,  
Some people are fated to meet somewhere in the future.

Having met with Chief Commissioner Gu, Madame went back to her room. When Deputy Director Han was back home, Madame said to him, "I looked for a benefactor of mine for a long time, but in vain. To my great surprise, I discovered just a moment ago my benefactor is right now in your service in this very house." When asked who this man was, Madame answered, "Gu Fang, your head-runner." "How did he become your benefactor?" asked Deputy Director Han.

"My hometown is Taicangzhou," replied Madame, "and Gu Fang used to be an official runner in the *yamen* of Taicangzhou. Once my family was falsely charged by a gang of robbers and got into trouble. He saved my family from suffering a calamity. My parents thanked him by giving me to him. But he declined resolutely. Nevertheless, my parents managed to leave me in his home. Gu Fang and his wife treated me with due respect and he never touched me. After I'd stayed in his house for over a month, he sent me back home along with a huge gift. Some time later, the businessman from Huizhou took me as his nominally adoptive daughter.

中一月，以礼送归。后来过继与徽商为女，得有今日。岂非恩人？”侍郎大惊道：“此柳下惠、鲁男子之事，我辈所难，不道掾吏之中，却有此等仁人君子，不可埋没了他。”竟将其事写成本，奏上朝廷。本内大略云：

窃见太仓州吏顾芳，暴白冤事，侠骨著于公庭；峻绝谢私，贞心矢乎暗室。品流虽贱，衣冠所难。合行特旌，以彰笃行。

孝宗见奏大喜道：“世间那有此等人？”即召韩侍郎面对，问其详细。侍郎一一奏知，孝宗称叹不置。侍郎道：“此皆陛下中兴之化所致，应与表扬。”孝宗道：“何止表扬，其人堪为国家所用。今在何处？”侍郎道：“今在京中考满，拨臣衙门办事。”孝宗回顾内侍，命查那部里缺司官。司礼监秉笔内监奏道：“昨日吏部上本，礼部仪制司缺主事一员。”孝宗道：“好，好。礼部乃风化之原，此人正好。”即御批：“顾芳除补，吏部知道。”韩侍郎当下谢恩而出。



So, now I've attained my present honor. Don't you think he is my benefactor?" Surprised, Deputy Director Han remarked, "What a gentleman! I never thought there could be such a benevolent gentleman among the runners. We should not stifle such a man of talent and virtue!" So saying, he made an account of Gu Fang's exemplary exploits and presented a memorial to the throne. The memorial read roughly:

Gu Fang, a head runner of Taicangzhou, is a true gentleman with a strong sense of justice. He is always ready to help the weak by righting the wrong done to them. As a man of integrity, he resolutely refused to take advantage of his favor done to others for his private ends. Even though he is just a low rank official, impeccably-dressed high officials cannot be mentioned in the same breath with him. I humbly propose that this man be highly commended for his honest and noble character.

After reading the memorial, Emperor Xiaozong was overjoyed. He said, "I've never seen such a nice gentleman!" Then he summoned Deputy Director Han to an interview and asked him in detail about Gu Fang. Han, as requested, gave the emperor a full account of Gu's good deeds, while Emperor Xiaozong praised Gu Fang again and again. Deputy Director Han suggested, "This is the outcome of the prosperity of our country under Your Majesty's wise reign. He is indeed praiseworthy." "It should be far more than praises!" remarked Emperor Xiaozong. "This man can render great services to our country. Where is he now?" Han answered, "He's now working in my *yamen*."

Upon hearing this, Emperor Xiaozong ordered his attendants to go and check which Department in the Six Boards was understaffed. The official in charge of rites reported, "The Board of Civil Personnel reported yesterday the Protocol Department under the Board of Rites wants a General Director." "Nice," Emperor Xiaozong said. "The Board of Rites is the fountainhead of decency and our moral codes. This man should be the most qualified person for this post." Then Emperor Xiaozong issued an imperial edict, which read, "The Board of Civil Personnel see to it that Gu Fang fills up the vacancy of the post of General Director of the Protocol Department." Deputy Director Han accepted the imperial edict with thanks and took his leave.

侍郎初意不过要将他旌表一番，与他个本等职衔，梦里也不料圣意如此嘉奖，骤与殊等美官，真个喜出望外。出了朝中，竟回衙来，说与夫人知道。夫人也自欢喜不胜，谢道：“多感相公为妾报恩，妾身万幸。”侍郎看见夫人欢喜，心下愈加快活。忙叫亲随报知顾提控。提控闻报，犹如地下升天，还服着本等衣服，随着亲随进来，先拜谢相公。侍郎不肯受礼，道：“如今是朝廷命官，自有体制。且换了冠带，谢恩之后，然后私宅少叙不迟。”须臾，便有礼部衙门人来伺候，伏侍去到鸿胪寺报了名。次早，午门外谢了圣恩，到衙门到任。正是：

昔年萧主吏，今日叔孙通。

两翅何曾异？只是锦袍红。

当日顾主事完了衙门里公事，就穿着公服，竟到韩府私宅中来拜见侍郎。顾主事道：“多谢恩相提携，在皇上面前极力举荐，故有今日。此恩天高地厚。”韩侍郎道：“此皆足下阴功





Deputy Director Han was overwhelmed with joy as he left the imperial court, because in the beginning he had only planned to extol Gu and help him get an official title, and had never anticipated that His Majesty would commend Gu Fang so much by granting him such a high position. Arriving at the *yamen*, he told it to Ainiang, his present wife. Ainiang was very much pleased at the news too. She thanked Han, saying, "Thank you for your repaying him for his kindness on my behalf." Seeing that Ainiang was so pleased, Deputy Director Han also felt very happy. Immediately Han told his attendant to go and inform Gu Fang of the good news. Upon hearing this news, Chief Commissioner Gu felt as if he had ascended to heaven from the earth. He followed the attendant to Han's mansion right away to express his thanks, still wearing his runner's suit.

Unwilling to accept Gu's great courtesy, Deputy Director Han said, "You're now a ranking official too. So I should abide by the formal practices and receive you accordingly. It won't be late for you to come to my house and have a chat after you first change into your official's robe and go and thank the emperor for his favor." Before long, the officials from the Board of Rites all came to Gu Fang to wait upon him. Then the officials went to the Honglu Temple, the organization mainly responsible for the sacrificial ceremonies and rites of the imperial court, and put his name down there so that he could have the chance to face the emperor and express his thanks. On the next morning, Emperor Xiaozong received him at the entrance of Women Gate. Feeling greatly honored, Gu Fang kowtowed repeatedly to express his thanks for the emperor. Then he assumed office in the government *yamen*.

Gu Fang, like the once the Obscure Official Xiao He  
Has now become Shu Suntong.  
The two wings of his official hat still remain as they were,  
Only the color of his official robe is now red.

After his first day's office work was over, General Director Gu called at Han's house in his official's robe. Seeing Han, Gu Fang said, "Thank you very much for your help in getting me promoted. I owe my present honor to your recommendation in front of the emperor. My gratitude to you is beyond words." Deputy Director Han said, "You got this special



浩大，以致圣主宠眷非常，得此殊典，老夫何功之有？”拜罢，主事请拜见夫人，以谢推许大恩。侍郎道：“贱室既忝同乡，今日便同亲戚。”传命请夫人出来相见。夫人见主事，两相称谢，各拜了四拜。夫人进去治酒。是日侍郎款待主事，尽欢而散。夫人又传问顾主事，离家在几时，父母的安否下落。顾主事回答道：“离家一年。江家生意如常，却幸平安无事。”侍郎与顾主事商议，待主事三月之后，给个假限回籍，就便央他迎取江老夫妇。顾主事领命。果然给假衣锦回乡，乡人无不称羨。因往江家拜候，就传女儿消息。江家喜从天降。主事假满，携了妻子回京复任，就分付二号船里着落了江老夫妇。到京相会，一家欢忭无极。

自此侍郎与主事通家往来，俨如伯叔子侄一般。顾家大娘子与韩夫人愈加亲密，自不必说。后来顾主事三子皆读书登第。主事寿登九十五岁，无病而终。此乃上天厚报善人也。所以奉劝世间，行善原是积来自家受用的。有诗为证：





honor because of your profound credit for your outstanding work and the emperor's great favor. How can I claim the credit?" Then General Director Gu requested an audience with Madame so as to thank her for her high regard. Deputy Director Han said, "Since my wife and you are fellow townsmen, we should consider ourselves relatives." So saying, Han asked his wife to come and meet Gu. As Madame and Gu met with each other, they both extended greetings and thanked each other. Then Madame withdrew to have dinner and wine prepared. Han entertained Gu with a banquet and Gu did not leave until both had thoroughly enjoyed themselves.

Later afterwards, Madame again inquired Gu when he left home for the capital city and how her parents were doing. General Director Gu said, "I left home one year ago. Your parents' pancake business is the same as before and they're all fine." Deputy Director Han consulted General Director Gu if he could ask for a leave to visit his family after three month's service in office and by the way bring the Jiangs to Deputy Director Han's home. Luckily Gu was granted the leave and returned to his home in silken robes, commanding admiration from all. When he reached Jiang Rong's home, General Director Gu told Jiang Rong how his daughter was doing recently. For Jiang Rong and his wife, this was really a godsend.

When his period of leave ran out, General Director Gu went back to the capital city by boat to resume his post along with his wife. Jiang Rong and his wife were put up in the second boat right behind Gu's. As they reached the capital city, the Jiangs reunited and were extremely overjoyed. Ever since then, the Hans and the Gus got along pretty well like close relations. Undoubtedly, Gu Fang's wife and Deputy Director Han's wife became even more intimate with each other. Later Gu Fang's three sons all passed the imperial civil examinations. Gu Fang died at the age of ninety-five without any illness. This is truly heaven's reward for kindhearted people. Therefore, I suggest that people do good deeds, for definitely they will profit by their credit for good work. The following lines may serve as a proof:

美色当前谁不慕？况是酬恩去复来。  
若使偶然通一笑，何缘掾吏入容台？



Who can resist the attraction of a beauty?  
Let alone this beauty is a reward for his kindness.  
Had he incidentally harbored evil designs for her,  
How could a head-runner have been promoted to such a high rank?



## 卷 十 六

迟取券毛烈赖原钱 失还魂牙僧索剩命

诗云：

一陌金钱便返魂，公私随处可通门。  
鬼神有德开生路，日月无光照覆盆。  
贫者何缘蒙佛力？富家容易受天恩。  
早知善恶多无报，多积黄金遗子孙。

这首诗乃令狐撰所作。他邻近有个乌老，家资巨万，平时奸贪不义。死去三日，重复还魂。问他缘故，他说死后亏得家里广作佛事，多烧楮钱，冥宫大喜，所以放还。令狐撰闻得，大为不平道：“我只道只有阳世间贪官污吏受财枉法、卖富差贫，岂知阴间也自如此！”所以做这首诗。后来冥司追去，要





## *Tale 16*

### **Deferring the Return of a Pawn Ticket Mao Lie Disavows Having Received the Money Losing the Chance of Reviving after Death Monk Gao Extorts the Life of His Remaining Years**

A poem goes thus:

So little amount of money as a hundred copper coins is able to  
make one come back to life,

And is also enough to make all the doors open to both public  
and private interest.

A ghost will revive after death if Buddhist service  
is held to his credit.

The sun and the moon shine no more on the earth  
and wrongs cannot get redressed.

Impossible it is for the poor to get assistance from Buddha.

But it is easy for the rich to receive the imperial bestowals.

Had I known that good and evil are not to be rewarded,

I'd have long ago accumulated gold for my offspring.

The author of this poem is Linghu Zhuan. He had an aged neighbor surnamed Wu. Old Wu had an extremely large family property which amounted up to tens of thousands of taels of silver. Ordinarily he was a treacherous and insatiably avaricious evildoer. Three days after his death, Wu came back to life. When asked why he could revive after death, he answered, "After my death, my family held countless Buddhist services and burned lots of paper money for me. The judge in the nether world felt very much pleased at what they did for me. So he sent me back." Hearing this, Linghu Zhuan said indignantly, "I thought we have corrupt officials only in this world of ours who take bribes and bend the law. I've never expected it is the same in the nether world!" For this reason, he wrote this



治他谤讪之罪，被令狐撰是长是短辨析一番。冥司道他持论甚正，放教还魂，仍追乌老置之地狱。盖是世间没分割处的冤枉，尽拼到阴司里理直。若是阴司也如此糊涂，富贵的人只消作恶造业，到死后分付家人多做些功果，多烧些楮钱，便多退过了，却不与阳间一样没分晓？所以令狐生不伏，有此一诗。其实阴司报应，一毫不差的。

宋淳熙年间，明州有个夏主簿，与富民林氏共出本钱，买扑官酒坊地店，做那沽拍生理。夏家出得本钱多些，林家出得少些，却是经纪营运尽是林家家人主当。夏家只管在里头照本算帐，分些干利钱。夏主簿是个忠厚人，不把心机提防，指望积下几年，总收利息。虽然零碎支动了些，拢统算着，还该有二千缗钱多在那里。若把银算，就是二千两了。去到林家取讨时，林家到店管帐的共有八个，你推我推，只说算帐未清，不肯付还。讨得急了两番，林家就说出没行止话来道：“我家累年价辛苦，你家打点得自在钱，正不知钱在那里哩！”夏主簿



poem.

Later Linghu Zhuan was taken to the court in the nether world and was charged with the crime of slandering. He tried his best to justify himself in the nether world. Feeling deeply convinced, the court in the nether world released him from the underworld and made him come back to life. Meanwhile, the court in the nether world again claimed the life of Wu and put him in hell. So, the wrongs that have failed to be sorted out in this world have to be redressed in the nether world. If the nether world is also a muddle-headed one and will release the rich and make them revive, paying no heed to whatever evil deeds they have done, after they tell their families to hold some more Buddhist services and burn some more paper money for them, does it have any difference with this unjust world of ours? With these doubts and suspicions, Linghu Zhuan wrote this poem. Actually justice does exist in the nether world and retribution is bound to follow.

During the Chunxi reign (1174-1190) of the Song Dynasty, there lived an accountant with the family name of Xia in Mingzhou County. Accountant Xia and a rich man surnamed Lin jointly put in some capital and started a wine shop. Accountant Xia had a comparatively larger proportion of the capital, while the wine shop was run by Lin. Xia just cared about his capital and hoped to get some interest from his input.

Account Xia was an honest and kind man. Being not of the calculating sort, he just looked forward to harvesting a considerable amount of interest after several years. Though he had drawn some of the interest on odds and ends, in general terms he should still have a sum of interest of over two thousand taels of silver kept in the Lins.

As he went to the Lin family to claim that interest, each of the eight accountants of the Lin family shirked the responsibility and turned him down by offering him the excuse that the account had not been settled. When Xia pressed the Lins harder for the money, the Lins began to use strong language, saying, "Our family has been toiling all the year round while you did nothing but think of drawing interest from us. I'm also wondering where I can get some money!" Thinking the Lins' remarks rather odd, Xia realized that they were planning to repudiate the interest



见说得蹊跷，晓得要赖他的，只得到州里告了一状。林家得知告了，笑道：“我家将猫儿尾拌猫饭吃，拼得将你家利钱折去了一半，官司好歹是我赢的。”遂将二百两送与州官。连夜叫八个干仆把簿籍尽情改造，数目字眼多换过了。反说是夏家透支了，也诉下状来。州官得过了贿赂，那管青红皂白？竟断道：“夏家欠林家二千两。”把夏主簿收监追比。

其时郡中有个刘八郎，名元，人叫他做刘元八郎，平时最有直气。见了此事，大为不平，在人前裸臂揎拳的嚷道：“吾乡有这样冤枉事！主簿被林家欠了钱，告状反致坐监，要那州县何用？他若要上司去告，指我作证，我必要替他伸冤理枉，等林家这些没天理的个个吃棒！”到一处，嚷一处。林家这八个人见他如此行径，恐怕弄得官府知道了，公道上去不得，翻过案来。商量道：“刘元八郎是个穷汉，与他些东西，买他口静罢。”就中推两个有口舌的去邀了八郎，到旗亭中坐定。八郎问道：“两位何故见款？”两人道：“仰慕八郎义气，敢此沽一杯奉敬。”酒中说起夏家之事，两人道：“八郎不要管别人家





that had originally belonged to him. Xia brought an action against Lin at the local court of the county *yamen*.

After learning he was sued by Xia, Lin laughed and said, "I will beat him at court. I'd rather suffer the loss of half of your interest to win this lawsuit." Lin bribed the County Magistrate two hundred taels of silver. On the same night, he ordered his accountants to have all the items of the account changed. Then he also brought a case against Xia to the same local court on the charge that he had already made an overdraft of the interest. Having taken bribes from Lin, the County Magistrate made no distinction between right and wrong and rashly passed a judgment that "Xia owes Lin a debt of two thousand taels of silver." And Xia was put behind the bars as a punishment.

At that time, there was a man called Liu Yuan, nicknamed Balang. Liu Balang was a most chivalrous and just man. Boiling with resentment at this injustice, he rolled up his sleeve and raised his fists and shouted among the crowd, "What an injustice! It is Lin who owes Xia money. Creditor Xia lodged a complaint against Lin at court, but Xia was imprisoned! Bullshit County Magistrate! If Xia is to appeal to higher authorities and asks me to serve as his witness, I'll definitely help him redress the injustice and have the wicked Lins punished in accordance with the law." Liu Balang shouted like this wherever he went.

The eight accountants of the Lin family became very much worried as they knew about Liu Balang's remarks and conduct, fearing that the verdict might be reversed once Liu Balang made the case known to the higher authorities. They talked it over and said, "Liu Balang is a poor guy. Let's give him some silver to keep his mouth closed about this matter." Then two accountants with glib tongues were sent to invite Liu Balang to a small inn.

Arriving at the small inn, Liu Balang asked the two accountants, "Why do you two treat me to dinner and wine?" "We admire your chivalry and strong sense of justice," said the two accountants. "Here we'd like to propose our toast." During the course of drinking, Liu Balang brought up the grievance Accountant Xia had suffered. Seizing this chance, the two accountants suggested, "Don't poke your nose into other's business. Just



闲事，且只吃酒。”酒罢，两人袖中摸出官券二百道来送与八郎，道：“主人林某晓得八郎家贫，特将薄物相助。以后求八郎不要多管。”八郎听罢，把脸儿涨得通红，大怒起来道：“你每做这样没天理的事，又要把没天理的东西脏污我。我就饿死了，决不要这样财物！”叹一口气道：“这等看起来，你每财多力大，夏家这件事在阳世间不能勾明白了。阴间也有官府，他少不得有剖雪处。且看，且看。”忿忿地叫酒家过来，问道：“我每三个吃了多少钱钞？”酒家道：“算该一贯八百文。”八郎道：“三个同吃，我该出六百文。”就解一件衣服，到隔壁柜上解当了六百文钱，付与酒家。对这两人拱拱手道：“多谢携带。我是清白汉子，不吃这样不义无名之酒。”大踏步竟自去了。两个人反觉没趣，算结了酒钱自散了。

且说夏主簿遭此无妄之灾，没头没脑的被贪赃州官收在监里。一来是好人家出身，不曾受惯这苦；二来被别人少了钱，反关在牢中，心中气蛊，染了牢瘟，病将起来。家属央人保领，方得放出，已病得八九分了。临将死时，分付儿子道：“我受了这样冤恨，今日待死。凡是一向扑官酒坊公店，并林家欠钱帐目与管帐八人名姓，多要放在棺内，吾替他地府申辨去。”才



help yourself with wine.” When drinking was over, the two accountants took out from their sleeves a sheet of government voucher, a cash equivalent worthy of two hundred taels of silver, and handed it to Liu Balang, saying, “Our master Lin knows that you’re not well-off. He asked us to give you this money on his behalf and he hoped that you stop minding other’s business in the future.”

Upon hearing this, Liu Balang flushed with anger. “Heaven forbid your heartless conduct!” he shouted at the top of his voice. “Now you’re going to bring shame on me with this dirty money! I’d rather die than accept your money!” Heaving a sigh, he continued, “You’re wealthy and influential. I’m afraid the injustice done to Xia will not be redressed in this world. There is also a court in the nether world. I’m sure he will get his case overturned there. Let’s wait and see.” Still fuming with anger, he called forward the innkeeper and asked, “How much is our dinner?” The innkeeper answered, “Eighteen hundred copper coins.” Liu Balang said, “We’re three. I pay six hundred.” So saying, Liu Balang took off an outer garment and went to a pawnshop next-door. He pawned it for six hundred copper coins and gave the money to the innkeeper. Folding his hands in a bow, he said to the two accountants, “Thanks for inviting me to dinner. But I’m a man of stainless reputation, and I should not have come to this ill-intentioned dinner!” Then he left the small inn in leaps and bounds. Feeling snubbed, the two accountants left the inn too after they paid for the dinner.

Now let’s turn to Accountant Xia. An unexpected misfortune fell upon him. Without rhyme or reason he was put behind the bars by the corrupt County Magistrate. As he was from a good family, he could not endure the torture. On the other hand, he felt extremely dejected that he was imprisoned while someone else owed him a debt. Gradually anxiety wore him down and he became ill. When he was finally bailed out by his family, he was almost beyond cure. As he lay dying, he said to his son, “They wronged me. I’m dying today. After my death, put all the records concerning the wine shop, the account that proves Lin owes me money, and the names of Lin’s eight accountants in my coffin. I’ll make an appeal to the court in the nether world.”



死得一月，林氏与这八个人陆陆续续尽得暴病而死。眼见得是阴间状准了。

又过一个多月，刘八郎在家忽觉头眩眼花，对妻子道：“眼前境界不好，必是夏主簿要我做对证，势必要死。奈我平时没有恶业，对证过了，还要重生。且不可入殓！三日后不还魂，再作道理。”果然死去。两日，活将转来，拍手笑道：“我而今才出得这口恶气！”家人问其缘故，八郎道：“起初见两个公吏邀我去，走勾百来里路，到了一个官府去处。见一个绿袍官人在廊房中走出来，仔细一看，就是夏主簿。再三谢我道：‘烦劳八郎来此。这里文书都完，只要八郎略一证明，不必忧虑。’我抬眼看见丹墀之下，林家与八个管帐人共顶着一块长枷，约有一丈五六尺长，九个头齐齐露出在枷上。我正要消遣他，忽报王升殿了。吏引我去见过，王道：‘夏家事已明白，不须说得。旗亭吃酒一节，明白说来。’我供道：‘是两人见招饮酒，与官券二百道，不曾敢接。’王对左右叹道：‘世上却有如此好人！须商议报答他，可检他来算。’吏禀：‘他该七十九。’王道：‘穷人不受钱，更为难得，岂可不赏？添他阳寿一纪。’就



One month after Xia's death, Lin and his eight accountants all died of sudden illnesses one after another. Obviously the court in the nether world had accepted Xia's appeal.

About one month later, Liu Balang suddenly felt dizzy. He said to his wife, "I'm not feeling very well. Accountant Xia must be requesting me to serve as his witness. I'm dying. Since ordinarily I've never done any evil things, I will possibly come back to life after I've made my presence at the court in the nether world. Don't put me into the coffin for the time being. You may get me encoffined if my spirit does not return to my body in three days." Then he died. Two days after his death, he came back to life. Clapping his hands, he laughed and said, "My grievances are now redressed!"

When asked why, he continued, "Two men like official-runners brought me to a place sort of like a *yamen* after walking about a hundred *li*. Then a man in a green robe came to me. Looking at him closely, I found it was Accountant Xia. He thanked me repeatedly for my coming, saying, 'I've handed all my materials and evidences to the court. I only need you to appear in court as my witness. You needn't worry about anything.' Then I raised my head and saw that Lin and his eight accountants were put in one wooden yoke four to five meters long. As I was about to make fun of them, there suddenly came the report that the King of Hell was coming for the trial. The runners took me to meet the King of Hell. The King of Hell said, 'Xia's case has now been cleared and there is no need for you to say more about it. You just tell me about your having dinner and wine with Lin's two accountants in the small inn.' 'Two of Lin's accountants invited me to dinner and wine,' I replied, 'and they tried to give me a sheet of government voucher, a cash equivalent of two hundred taels of silver. But I turned them down.' The King of Hell heaved a sigh and said to his subordinates around him, 'What a righteous man he is! We need to talk it over how to award him. Go and find out his life expectancy.' A runner reported, 'He's supposed to live to seventy-nine.' The King of Hell said, 'It's really hard to come by for a poor man not to take bribes. He's really admirable! Reward him ten more years of life in the world.' So saying, he sent the two runners to escort me back to home.



着元追公吏送我回家。出门之时，只见那一伙连枷的人赶入地狱里去了。必然细细要偿还他的，料不似人世间葫芦提。我今日还魂，岂不快活也！”后来此人整整活到九十一岁，无疾而终。可见阳世间有冤枉，阴司事再没有不明白的。

只是这一件事，阴报虽然明白，阳世间欠的钱钞到底不曾显还得，未为大畅。而今说一件阳间赖了，阴间断了，仍旧阳间还了，比这事说来好听。

阳世全凭一张纸，是非颠倒多因此。

岂似幽中业镜台，半点欺心没处使。

话说宋绍兴年间，庐州合江县赵氏村有一个富民，姓毛名烈，平日贪奸不义，一味欺心，设谋诈害。凡是人家有良田美宅，百计设法，直到得上手才住。挣得泼天也似人家，心里不曾有一毫止足。看见人家略有些小衅隙，便在里头挑唆，于中取利，没便宜不做事。其时昌州有一个人，姓陈名祈，也是个狠心不守分之人，与这毛烈十分相好。你道为何？只因陈祈也有好大家事。他一母所生还有三个兄弟，年纪多幼小，只是他



As I was getting out of the gate of the nether world, I saw the nine men chained by the yoke were driven into the Hell. Xia's case now has been overturned and sooner or later he'll get back his money. So, now I've come back to life. Why shouldn't I feel happy?" Later it turned out that Liu Balang lived to ninety-one and died with any illness. From this event, we can draw the conclusion that injustices do exist in this world, but in the nether world all the injustices can be fully redressed.

Though the court in the nether world passed a fair judgment, there was still some regret in this matter, for the debt was after all not paid in this world. Here I'll tell you another story. In this story, a man denies the fact of having received a sum of money and, after the court in the underworld passes a just verdict, the money is finally returned to its original owner in this world. This story is more amusing.

In this world what accounts is what is written in black and white.

Without written statement, truth and falsehood will be easily blurred.

But in the underworld things are completely different.

Even the slightest deception can never escape the evil-reflection mirror.

\* \* \*

During the Shaoxing reign (1131-1163) of the Song Dynasty, there lived a rich man named Mao Lie in Zhaoshi Village, Hejiang County of Luzhou Prefecture. On ordinary days Mao Lie was a treacherous, insatiably greedy evildoer who always resorted to deception and bullying good and weak people. He would always employ all kinds of schemes to grab other people's good land and beautiful houses. Though he had built up a tremendous fortune, his insatiable desire never made him feel contented and satisfied with what he had obtained. Also he would stir up trouble behind the scenes once he saw the slightest chance of minor disputes within a family, hoping to make a profit. Nothing he did was without gains..

Meanwhile, there was also a man named Chen Qi in Changzhou, who was also a wicked man. Chen Qi and Mao Lie were good friends. Do you know why? Chen Qi had an extremely large family property too. He had three younger brothers who were all very young. As he was the only grown-up of the four brothers, Chen Qi was in full charge of the family



一个年纪长成，独掌家事。时常恐怕兄弟每大来，这家事须四分分开，要趁权在他手之时做个计较，打些偏手，讨些便宜。晓得毛烈是个极有算计的人，早晚用得他着，故此与他往来交好。毛烈也晓得陈祈有三个幼弟，却独掌着家事，必有欺心毛病，他日可以在里头看景生情，得些渔人之利。所以两下亲密，语话投机，胜似同胞一般。

一日，陈祈对毛烈计较道：“吾家小兄弟们渐渐长大，少不得要把家事四股分了。我枉替他们白做这几时奴才，心不甘伏，怎么处？”毛烈道：“大头在你手里，你把要紧好的藏起了些不得？”陈祈道：“藏得的藏了，田地是露天盘子，须藏不得。”毛烈道：“只要会计较，要藏时田地也藏得。”陈祈道：“如何计较藏地？”毛烈道：“你如今只推有甚么公用，将好的田地卖了去，收银子来藏了，不就是藏田地一般？”陈祈道：“祖上的好田好地，又不舍得卖掉了。”毛烈道：“这更容易。你只拣那好田地，少些价钱，权典在我这里，目下拿些银子去用用，





affairs. He had always been worried that when they grew up, his three younger brothers would request that the family property be divided into four parts. So he harbored the ill intention to acquire more benefits from the family property by resorting to tricks while he was still in power. Being aware that Mao Lie was an extraordinarily calculating man, Chen Qi was sure that Mao Lie would be useful to him in the future. This was why he had intentionally developed a friendly relationship with Mao Lie.

On the other hand, Mao Lie also knew that Chen Qi had three younger brothers. Seeing that Chen Qi had purposely seized the power of taking care of all the family property, Mao Lie knew well Chen Qi was harboring ill intents. So he decided to get along with Chen Qi on friendly terms so that he could seize the chance to get some fishermen's gains. Therefore they two always talked agreeably and got on pretty well like dear brothers.

One day Chen Qi said to Mao Lie, "My younger brothers are growing up and inevitably my family property will be divided into four parts. I've been working hard at taking care of the property for them for nothing. I'm not willing to take it lying down that way. What should I do?" "Most of your family property is now at your disposal," said Mao Lie. "Why not cover up those that you think are the most valuable?" Chen Qi said, "The things that can be put under cover have been covered up. How can I put the land into hiding?" Mao Lie said, "If we think hard, I'm certain we'll be able to think of some way to do it if we want to." "How?" asked Chen Qi. Mao Lie said, "You can sell the good land with an excuse that the family needs money. Then you get silver from the sale. You can conceal the silver and keep it to yourself. By so doing, you'll have the land covered up, won't you?" Chen Qi hesitated for a moment before he said, "The good land has been handed down to me by my forefathers. I'm afraid I mustn't sell them."

Mao Lie then suggested, "This being the case, I can make things easier for you. You can pawn your good land to me at a reduced price and take some silver from my pawnshop. You can come to my pawnshop and redeem your good land with the same amount of silver you took from me after you and your brothers have divided your remaining land into four parts and each has taken their own share. Then the good land will be



以后直等你们兄弟已将见在田地四股分定了，然后你自将原银在我处赎了去。这田地不多是你自己的了？”陈祈道：“此言诚为有见。但你我虽是相好，产业交关，少不得立个文书，也要用着个中人才使得。”毛烈道：“我家出入银两，置买田产，大半是大胜寺高公做牙佻。如今这件事，也要他在里头做个中见罢了。”陈祈道：“高公我也是相熟的。我去查明了田地，写下了文书，去要他着字便了。”

元来这高公法名智高，虽然是个僧家，到有好些不像出家人处。头一件是好利，但是风吹草动，有些个赚得钱的所在，他就钻的去了。所以囊钵充盈，经纪惯熟。大户人家做中做保，到多是用得他着的，分明是个没头发的牙行。毛家债利出入，好些经他的手，就是做过几件欺心事体，也有与他首尾过来的。陈祈因此央他做了中，将田立券，典与毛烈。因要后来好赎，十分不典他重价钱，只好三分之一，做个交易的意思罢了。陈祈家里田地广有，非止一处，但是自家心里贪着的，便把来典在毛烈处做后门。如此一番，也累起本银三千多两了，其田足值万金，自不消说。毛烈放花作利，已此便宜得多了。只为陈祈自有欺心，所以情愿把便宜与毛烈得了去。

以后陈祈母亲死过，他将见在户下的田产分做四股，把三股分与三个兄弟，自家得了一股。兄弟们不晓得其中委曲，见眼前分得均平，多无说话了。

过了几时，陈祈端正起赎田的价银，径到毛烈处取赎。毛烈笑道：“而今这田却不是你独享的了？”陈祈道：“多谢主见



yours for sure, am I right?" Hearing this, Chen Qi said, "It's a wonderful idea! But this is a business transaction concerning land, we'd better sign a contract and have a middleman for this matter." Mao Lie said, "Monk Gao from Dasheng Temple often works as my middleman when my family buys land or the like. We might ask him to serve as our middleman." "I know Monk Gao too," said Chen Qi. "I'll go and ascertain my land and draw up a contract. Then we can ask Monk Gao to sign his name on it."

Monk Gao's clerical name was Zhigao. Though a monk, he was not like a monk at all in many ways. Firstly, he would stop at nothing to secure personal gains. So he was pretty well off and very good at doing businesses. Most big and rich families often used him to work as a business middleman. He was actually a business middleman who did not wear hairs. While working as middleman for Mao Lie in the past, he had profited a lot by doing several heartless things.

Having drafted the contract, Chen Qi had Monk Gao signed it and pawned one piece of his land to Mao Lie at a very low price which was about only one-third of its value, hoping he could redeem it easily in the future. Therefore the transaction was more or less like an excuse. Apart from the piece of land Chen Qi had pawned to Mao Lie, he still had a lot more pieces of land. Later he gradually pawned all the other pieces of land he loved to Mao Lie in the hope of keeping them all to himself. By doing so, he spent more than three thousand taels of silver, whereas the land he pawned out was worth no less than ten thousand taels of silver. Mao Lie profited a lot by practicing usury. As he was seized with the ill intents of hogging all the good land of the family, Chen Qi was willing to allow Mao Lie to get some gains.

A few years later Chen Qi's mother died. He divided up the remaining land into four shares and gave his three brothers each a share and kept one share to himself. Being in no position to know the ins and outs of the story, his three brothers had nothing to say about the division which seemed to be very fair and reasonable in their eyes.

Some time later, Chen Qi gathered the sum of silver for the redemption of his land and made his way to Mao Lie's pawnshop to redeem it. "Now you've taken exclusive possession of all the land, haven't you?" said



高妙。今兄弟们皆无言可说，要赎了去自管。”随将原价一一交明。毛烈照数收了，将进去交与妻子张氏藏好。此时毛烈若是个有本心的，就该想着出的本钱原轻，收他这几年花息，便宜多了。今有了本钱，自该还他去，有何可说？谁知狠人心性，却又不然。道这田总是欺心来的，今赎去独吞，有好些放不过。他就起个不良之心，出去对陈祈道：“原契在我拙荆处，一时有些身子不快，不便简寻。过一日还你罢。”陈祈道：“这等，写一张收票与我。”毛烈笑道：“你晓得我写字不大便当，何苦难我？我与你甚样交情，何必如此？待一二日间翻出来就送还罢了。”陈祈道：“几千两往来，不是取笑。我交了这一主大银子，难道不要讨一些把柄回去？”毛烈道：“正为几千两的事，你交与我了，又好赖得没有不成？要甚么把柄？老兄忒过虑了。”陈祈也托大，道是毛烈平日相好，其言可信，料然无事。

隔了两日，陈祈到毛烈家去取前券，毛烈还推道一时未寻得出。又隔了两日去取，毛烈躲过，竟推道不在家了。如此两番，陈祈走得不耐烦，再不得见毛烈之面，才有些着急起来。走到大胜寺高公那里去商量，要他去问问毛烈下落。高公推道：



Mao Lie. "I'm deeply indebted to your excellent idea," said Chen Qi. "My brothers all thought that we've shared out the family property impartially. So I'd like to take back the land and run it myself." As he said this, Chen Qi produced the silver for the redemption of the land. Mao Lie accepted it, went to the inner room and handed it to his wife Zhang, who accordingly kept it in a secret place. Had Mao Lie been a kind and honest man, he should have surely returned Chen Qi the pawn ticket, for in the past few years he had gained a lot through this transaction and now he was to get back his silver. But it turned out that greedy people were never satisfied with their present gains. He thought, "Anyway Chen Qi took possession of the land through deception. I must not let him have it all to himself easily."

Then an evil idea hit upon him. Coming out of the inner room, he said to Chen Qi, "My wife keeps the pawn ticket. She is not feeling very well, so she is not in the mood to look for it right now. I'll return it to you tomorrow, okay?" "In this case," said Chen Qi, "write me a receipt, please." Mao Lie said, laughingly, "You know I'm sort of illiterate. Why you deliberately make it difficult for me? Think of our relationship. Do you think it necessary for me to write a receipt? I'll find it out and return it to you in a couple of days, okay?" "Several thousand taels of silver are no trifle," said Chen Qi. "I need to have a receipt for such a huge sum, shouldn't I?" "Indeed it's such a huge sum," said Mao Lie. "How am I going to deny it since it's such a huge sum? No need to write a receipt. You're being over-anxious about it, my old friend." Putting on airs, Chen Qi calculated he could trust him and there shouldn't be anything amiss about it, for ordinarily they had been on good terms.

A couple of days later Chen Qi arrived at Mao Lie's home for the ticket, but Mao Lie again put off the return of it with the excuse that he had not found it. Another two days passed and Chen Qi again went to Mao Lie get the ticket. This time Mao Lie had simply fled. Unable to find Mao Lie, Chen Qi became flustered. Then he made his way to the Dasheng Temple to look for Monk Gao, hoping he could help him inquire about Mao Lie's whereabouts. However, Monk Gao said, "I'm afraid I can't help you. You didn't let me know about it when you returned him the



“你交银时不曾通我知道，我不好管得。”陈祈没办法，只得又去伺候毛烈。一日撞见了，好言与他取券，毛烈冷笑道：“天下欺心事只许你一个做？你将众兄弟的田偷典我处，今要出去自吞。我便公道欺心，再要你多出两千也不为过。”陈祈道：“原只典得这些，怎要我多得？”毛烈道：“不与我，我也不还你券，你也管田不成。”陈祈大怒道：“前日说过的说话，怎倒要诈我起来？当官去说，也只要的我本钱。”毛烈道：“正是，正是。当官说不过时，还你罢了。”

陈祈一忿之气，归家写张状词，竟到县里告了毛烈。当得毛烈预先防备这着的，先将了些钱钞去寻县吏丘大，送与他了，求照管此事。丘大领诺。比及陈祈去见时，丘大先自装腔了，问其告状本意。陈祈把实情告诉了一遍，丘大只是摇头道：“说不去。许多银两交与他了，岂有没个执照的理？教我也难帮衬你。”陈祈道：“因为相好的，不防他欺心，不曾讨得执照。今告到了官，全要提控说得明白。”丘大含糊应承了，却在知



silver.” Totally landed in a helpless situation, Chen Qi had no other way out but to go and wait for Mao Lie at his home.

Finally Chen Qi bumped into Mao Lie one day. Chen Qi claimed the ticket in sincere words. With a sneer, Mao Lie said, “You are not the only person who is allowed to pull the wool over other people’s eyes, are you? You secretly pawned your brothers’ land to me and now you’re thinking of keeping it all to yourself. To uphold justice, I guess I won’t be going too far if I ask you to give me two thousand taels of silver more.” “I pawned it for that sum of silver. How can you ask for more?” protested Chen Qi. Mao Lie insisted, “I won’t return the ticket to you if you refuse to give me more silver, and you won’t be able to run your land.” Flying into a rage, Chen Qi shouted, “You said the other day you would return it to me. Why did you cheat me? You shouldn’t ask for one coin more except the original sum of silver I pawned from you even if we go to court. “Well, well,” said Mao Lie, “if you can beat me at court, then I’ll return you the ticket.”

In an outburst of anger, Chen Qi wrote a complaint against Mao Lie and forwarded it to the court of the county. Meanwhile Mao Lie took precautions against the lawsuit. He bribed the court official Qiu Da a sum of silver in advance, hoping that Qiu Da could see to this dispute. Qiu Da accepted the bribery readily. Chen Qi went to see Qiu Da for this matter. Qiu Da assumed airs when he asked Chen Qi why he was suing Mao Lie. After Chen Qi made a full account of what had happened between him and Mao Lie, Qiu Da kept on shaking his head with doubts, saying, “What you said doesn’t make any sense. How could it be possible that you didn’t even get a receipt for such a huge sum of silver? I’m afraid I’m in no position to help you if you don’t have the receipt for it.” Chen Qi explained it by saying, “I didn’t guard against him because we were good friends. So I didn’t request him to write me a receipt at the moment. Now that I’ve come to the court, I would be very grateful if you could help me.” Qiu Da gave him an equivocal reply.

As Qiu Da reported the case to the County Magistrate, Qiu Da was absolutely biased to Mao Lie’s side. He also sent some gifts to the Country Magistrate on Mao Lie’s behalf. Thus the County Magistrate lent an ear



县面前只替毛烈说了一边的话，又替毛家送了些孝顺意思与知县了。知县听信。到得两家听审时，毛烈把交银的事一口赖定，陈祈其实一些执照也拿不出。知县声口有些向了毛烈。陈祈发起极来，在知县面前指神罚咒。知县道：“就是银子有的，当官只凭文券；既没有文券，有甚么做凭据断还得你？分明是一划混赖！”倒把陈祈打了二十个竹篔，问了“不合图赖人”罪名，量决脊杖。这三千银子只当丢去东洋大海，竟没说处。

陈祈不服，又到州里去告，准了。及至问起来，知是县间问过的，不肯改断，仍复照旧。又到转运司告了，批发县间，一发是原问衙门。只多得一番纸笔，有甚么相干？落得费坏了脚手，折掉了盘缠。毛烈得了便宜，暗地喜欢。陈祈失了银子，又吃打吃断，竟没处申诉。正所谓：

浑身似口不能言，遍体排牙说不得。

欺心又遇狠心人，贼偷落得还贼没。

看官，你道这事多只因陈祈欺瞒兄弟，做这等奸计，故见得反





only to one side.

When Chen Qi and Mao Lie confronted each other at court, Mao Lie flatly disavowed that he had accepted the silver, while Chen Qi could not produced the receipt at court. At this point the County Magistrate started to speak in favor of Mao Lie. Greatly enraged, Chen Qi started to swear at the court. The County Magistrate said, “You might have given him the silver, but what accounts at court is evidence. Since you don’t have the evidence of the receipt, how can I decide the case and ask him to return the ticket to you? Obviously you’re talking nonsense and getting up to mischief!” Hearing this, Chen Qi became completely tongued-tied. Then the County Magistrate passed a judgment that Chen Qi was guilty of framing a charge against Mao Lie and would be punished with twenty floggings on the back. Thus Chen Qi’s three thousand taels of silver were gone, as if a stone were sunk into the deepest bottom of the sea.

Feeling not convinced with the County Magistrate’s verdict, Chen Qi appealed to the court at the prefectural level. Seeing that the case had been decided by the court of the county, the prefecture court was unwilling to change the original judgment. So the prefecture court affirmed the original judgment and Chen Qi’s appeal was thus rejected. Then Chen Qi made another appeal to the court at the provincial level. But the court at the provincial level transmitted it back to the county court, which was exactly the same court that had made the previous verdict. What was the use of all Chen Qi’s efforts except that he had wasted some paper and ink? Chen Qi only ended up in wasting traveling expenses and bringing himself more trouble. Mao Lie got lots of gains in this matter and kept the joy to himself, while Chen Qi not only lost his silver, but also was punished with floggings by the county court. Worse still, Chen Qi was in no position to have the wrong done to him righted. Just as the old saying goes:

He could only remain utterly speechless, though he is full of teeth and mouths.

The one who bullies others turns out to be duped by a more heartless man.

Readers, you see, Chen Qi hoodwinked his brothers with this evil scheme and it turned out that he was in return fooled by someone else. It serves him right! But Mao Lie had gone much farther in bullying and



被别人赚了，也是天有眼力处。却是毛烈如此欺心，难道银子这等好使的不成？不要性急，还有话在后头。

且说陈祈受此冤枉，没处叫撞天屈，气忿忿的，无可摆布。宰了一口猪、一只鸡，买了一对鱼、一壶酒。左近边有个社公祠，他把福物拿到祠里摆下了，跪在神前道：“小人陈祈，将银三千两与毛烈赎田。毛烈收了银子，赖了券书。告到官司，反问输了小人，小人没处申诉。天理昭彰，神目如电。还是毛烈赖小人的小人赖毛烈的？是必三日之内求个报应。”叩了几个头，含泪而出。到家里，晚上得一梦，梦见社神来对他道：“日间所诉，我虽晓得明白，做不得主。你可到东岳行宫诉告，自然得理。”

次日，陈祈写了一张黄纸，捧了一对烛、一股香，竟望东岳行宫而来。进得庙门，但见：

殿宇巍峨，威仪整肃。离娄左视，望千里如在目前；师旷右边，听九幽直同耳畔。草参亭内，炉中焚百合明香；祝献台前，案上放万灵杯琰。夜听泥神声诺，朝闻木马号嘶。比岱宗具体而微，虽行馆有呼必应。若非真正冤情事，敢到庄严法相前？



making a fool of Chen Qi. Could it be possible he would keep the silver so easily to himself? Don't be impatient. Our story has not come to the end.

Now let's continue with Chen Qi and the wrong done to him. His appeal to the higher authorities was turned down and it filled him with deep resentment. Very much depressed, he felt extremely helpless. He butchered a pig and a chicken, bought two fish and a pot of wine and took them to a small temple housing the local god of the land located at the left side of his village. Placing his offerings in the small temple, he dropped onto his knees and prayed towards the image of the local god of the land, "I'm Chen Qi. I gave Mao Lie three thousand taels of silver to redeem my land. He took the silver, but refused to return the pawn ticket to me. I sued him at the court, but I was beaten. I've got nowhere to go to have the wrong done to me righted. Heaven will eventually settle all accounts and gods have the brightest eyes! Who was lying, Mao Lie or I? I'd like to know your judgment on this matter in three days." His prayer finished, Chen Qi kowtowed several times and left in tears.

Coming back to his home, Chen Qi had a dream that night. He dreamed that the local god of the land came to him and said, "I got what you told me today, but it's not up to me to have the final say on this matter. You may go to the Temple of the God of Mount Tai located in this region to lodge a complaint and pour out your grievances. Then you will get an answer there."

On the next day Chen Qi arrived at the Temple of the God of Mount Tai with a complaint, a pair of candles and a bundle of joss sticks.

With dignified bearing, all the deities in this temple looked awe-inspiring. On the left side was Li Lou, the Farsighted God; on the right side was Shi Kuang, the Long-distance-Hearing God. In the thatched abode, joss sticks were burning in the incense burner. In front of the sacrificial altar was a table, on which the device for divination was placed. At night one could hear the clay gods talking; at dawn one could hear the wood horses neighing. Compared with the Temple of the God of Mount Tai this one was small but complete. Though it was not located in Tai'an, it would responded to every plea. Had he not been treated so unjustly, how could Chen Qi have



陈祈衔了一天怨忿，一步一拜，拜上殿来。将心中之事，是长是短，照依在社神面前时一样，表白了一遍。只听得幡帷里面，仿佛有人声到耳朵内道：“可到夜间来。”陈祈吃了一惊，晓得灵感，急急站起，走了出来。候到天色晚了，陈祈是气忿在胸之人，虽是幽暗阴森之地，并无一些畏怯，一直走进殿来。将黄纸状在烛上点着火，烧在神前炉内了，熙旧通诚拜祷。已毕，又听得隐隐一声道：“出去。”陈祈亲见如此神灵，明知必有报应。不敢再读，悚然归家。此时是绍兴四年四月二十日。

陈祈时时到毛烈家边去打听。过了三日，只见说毛烈死了。陈祈晓得蹊跷。去访问邻舍间，多说道：“毛烈走出门首，撞见一个着黄衣的人，走入门来揪住。毛烈奔脱，望里面飞也似跑，口里喊道：‘有个黄衣人捉我，多来救救。’说不多几句，倒地就死。从不见死得这样快的。”陈祈口里不说，心里暗暗道：“是告的阴状有应，现报在我眼里了。”又过了三日，只见



the audacity to enter this temple?

On bended knees, he made his way into the main hall of the temple. Then he again made a full account of his grievances in front of the image of the god as he had done in the small temple housing the local god of the land. All of a sudden, he seemed to hear someone talking to him from behind the heavy curtain, "You may come again tonight." Taken aback, Chen Qi knew it worked. Instantly he rose to his feet and walked out.

Night came and Chen Qi again got to the main hall of the temple directly. Though it looked gruesome and ghastly in the temple, he was not afraid at all, because he was completely overcome with indignation at that moment. With the same devoutness, he lit up the complaint with the candle light and put it into the incense burner in front of the image of god. Throwing himself onto his knees, he prayed piously. Again he seemed to hear someone saying faintly, "Now you can move out of here." Not daring to hang on in the temple any longer, Chen Qi hurriedly went back home, surprised and puzzled. Seeing that it really worked, he was sure that retribution would be bound to follow. All this happened on the twentieth day of the fourth month, the fourth year of the Shaoxing reign of the Song Dynasty.

From time to time, Chen Qi strolled around Mao Lie's house and inquired Mao's neighbors if anything had happened in the Mao family. Three days later, he was told that Mao Lie had died. This struck Chen Qi as rather mysterious. Hence he again went to ask Mao Lie's neighbors in detail about how he had died. Mao Lie's neighbors said, "While walking out of his door, Mao Lie bumped into a man dressed up in yellow. Suddenly the man in yellow grabbed him. Mao Lie desperately freed himself from the man in yellow and ran towards his room like mad. He yelled, 'Help, Help! A man in yellow is chasing after me!' Before he could shout anything more, he fell down to the ground and died. We've never seen anyone who dies so quickly!" Chen Qi remained silent as he listened to their account of Mao Lie's death, but he thought to himself secretly, "It must be that the complaint I submitted to the god in the underworld has been approved. So retribution has now come true right before my eyes."

Three more days later, he heard that Monk Gao from Dasheng Temple



有人说，大胜寺高公也一时卒病而死。陈祈心里疑惑道：“高公不过是原中，也死在一时，看起来莫不要阴司中对这件事么？”不觉有些恍恍惚惚，走到家里，就昏晕了去。少顷醒将转来，分付家人道：“有两个人追我去对毛烈事体，闻得说我阳寿未尽，未可入殓。你们守我十来日着，敢怕还要转来。”分付毕，即倒头而卧，口鼻俱已无气。家人依言，不敢妄动，呆呆守着，自不必说。

且说陈祈随了来追的人竟到阴府，果然毛烈与高公多先在那里了。一同带见判官。判官一一点名过了，问道：“南岳发下状来，毛烈赖了陈祈三千银两，这怎么说？”陈祈道：“是小人与他赎田，他亲手接受，后来不肯还原券，竟赖道没有。小人在阳间与他争讼不过，只得到南岳大王处告这状的。”毛烈道：“判爷休听他胡说。若有银与小人时，须有小人收他的执照。”判官笑道：“这是你阳间哄人，可以借此厮赖。”指着毛烈的心道：“我阴间只凭这个，要甚么执照不执照！”毛烈道：“小人其实不曾收他的。”判官叫取业镜过来。旁边一个吏就拿着铜盆大一面镜子来照着毛烈。毛烈、陈祈与高公三人一齐看那镜子里面，只见里头照出陈祈交银，毛烈接受，进去付与妻子张氏，张氏收藏。是那日光景宛然见在。判官道：“你



also died of a sudden illness. “Monk Gao was just a middleman,” wondered Chen Qi, “but he died too. It seems as if he is also going to appear at the court in the nether world as the witness.” Lost in thought, Chen Qi was overcome with a faint dizziness. As he reached home, he lost consciousness. Before long he came to and told his family, “Two men were pulling me to the underworld to deal with my dispute with Mao Lie. I was told my life in this world is not over, so don’t have me encoffined. I may come back to life in about ten days.” Having finished these words, he fell onto the bed and stopped breathing. His family kept watch over him as they had been told, not daring to put him into the coffin.

Arriving at the nether world, Chen Qi found out that Mao Lie and Monk Gao had already been there. Then they three were all brought to the court to meet the judge. After the roll call was done, the judge asked, “I received a complaint which sues Mao Lie of disavowing the fact of having received three thousand taels of silver from Chen Qi. How was that?” Chen Qi answered, “I gave him three thousand taels of silver to redeem my land and he took the silver personally. But later he refused to return me the pawn ticket, and he even denied he had taken my silver. I sued him in the human world, but I was beaten. Having no other choice, I submitted a complaint to the god in the Temple of God of Mount Tai.” Mao Lie retorted by saying, “Reverent Judge, don’t listen to his nonsense. Had I taken his silver, he should have a receipt to prove it.” The judge laughed and said, “This is how you people in the human world fool each other around and how you use it to resort to deception.” Pointing towards Mao Lie’s heart, the judge continued, “In our underworld this is the only thing that counts. What’s the use of a receipt?” Mao Lie said, “It’s true I didn’t take his silver.”

Then the judge ordered that an evildoing-reflecting mirror be brought forward. An official standing by then took the large mirror to Mao Lie and told him to look at the mirror. Chen Qi and Monk Gao looked at the mirror too. The past events were vividly reproduced on the mirror: how Chen Qi handed the silver to Mao Lie, how Mao Lie accepted it and took it to the inner room to his wife Zhang and how Zhang kept it. “Do you still think I need to see the receipt in this place?” asked the judge. Mao



看我这里可是要甚么执照的么？”毛烈没得开口。陈祈合着掌向空里道：“今日才表明得这件事。阳间官府要他做甚么干？”高公也道：“元来这银子果然收了，却是毛大哥不通。”

当下判官把笔来写了些甚么，就带了三人到一个大庭内。只见旁边列着兵卫甚多，也不知殿上坐的是甚么人，远望去是冕旒袞袍的王者。判官走上去说了一回，殿上王者大怒，叫取枷来，将毛烈枷了。口里大声分付道：“县令听决不公，削去已后官爵。县吏丘大，火焚其居，仍削阳寿一半。”又唤僧人智高问道：“毛烈欺心事，与你商同的么？”智高道：“起初典田时，曾在里头做交易中人，以后事体多不知道。”又唤陈祈问道：“赎田之银，固是毛烈耍赖欺心。将田出典的缘故，却是你的欺心。”陈祈道：“也是毛烈教导的。”王者道：“这个推不得，与智高僧人做牙佻一样，该量加罚治。两人俱未合死，只教阳世受报。毛烈作业尚多，押入地狱受罪！”说毕，只见毛烈身边就有许多牛头夜叉，手执铁鞭、铁棒赶得他去。毛烈一头走，一头哭，对陈祈、高公说道：“吾不能出头了。二公与我传语妻子，快作佛事救援我。陈兄原券在床边木箱之内，





Lie felt tongue-tied. Putting his hands together and looking upward, Chen Qi remarked, "This event is now crystal clear. What's the use of the *yamen* in the human world?" Monk Gao also chipped in, saying, "Mao Lie did receive the silver. It's Brother Mao who was wrong."

Right at that instant the judge took up a brush and wrote down something and then brought them three to a huge palace. On both sides of the palace stood innumerable guards and sitting on the throne was the king wearing a crown with jade ornaments hanging both at front and back and a dress with dragon designs. The judge went close to the king and murmured something to him. Upon hearing the judge's report, the king flared up. First he ordered that Mao Lie be put in fetters, and then he announced loudly, "The County Magistrate was unfair in passing the judgment. He will be removed from office for the rest of his life. Set court official Qiu Da's house to fire and cut down half of his lifetime in the human world."

Then turning to monk Zhigao, the king asked, "Is it true that Mao Lie consulted you in his evildoings?" "I worked as the middleman when Chen Qi pawned his land to Mao Lie," replied Zhigo, "but I was entirely in the dark as regards what happened between them after the pawning of the land." Then turning to Chen Qi, the king said, "It's true Mao Lie lied when he disavowed having received your silver to redeem the land, but you had originally harbored ill intentions when you pawned your land." "It's also Mao Lie who had instructed me to do so," protested Chen Qi. The king said, "You're not to shirk the responsibility! You, along with monk Zhigao who served as middleman for profits, will be punished in accordance with your crimes. Now you two are not totally dead yet. Go back to the human world to receive the punishment. Mao Lie has committed too many evildoings. Take him to Hell to suffer."

This being pronounced, countless ghost-runners in the nether world holding iron whips and iron sticks in their hands rushed up to Mao Lie in a crowd and drove him to Hell. Weeping sadly as he walked away, Mao Lie said to Chen Qi and Monk Gao, "Now I won't be able to get out of here. Please tell my wife to do Buddhist services for me so as to deliver me from my sufferings. Brother Chen's title deeds for the land are kept in



还有我平日贪谋强诈得别人家田宅文券，共有一十三纸，也在箱里。可叫这一十三家的人来，一一还了他，以减我罪。二公切勿有忘！”

陈祈见说着还他原契，还要再问个明白，一个夜又把一根铁棍在陈祈后心窝里一捣，喝道：“快去！”陈祈慌忙缩退，飒然惊醒，出了一身冷汗。只见妻子坐在床沿守着。问他时节，已过了七昼夜了。妻子道：“因你分付了，不敢入殓。况且心头温温的，只得坐守，幸喜果然还魂转来。毕竟是毛烈的事对得明白否？”陈祈道：“东岳真个有灵，阴间真个无私，一些也瞒不得。大不似阳世间官府没清头、没天理的。”因把死后所见事体备细说了一遍。

抖搜了精神，坐定了性子一回，先叫人到县吏丘大家一看，三日之前已被火烧得精光，止烧得这一家火就息了。陈祈越加敬信。再叫人到大胜寺中访问高公，看果然一同还魂，意思要约他做了证见，索取毛家文券。人回来说：“三日之前，寺中师徒已把他茶毗了。”——说话的，怎么叫做“茶毗”？看官，这就是僧家西方的说话，又有叫得“阇维”的，总是我们



the wooden suitcase beside the bed. I also grabbed thirteen title deeds for land and houses from other families. They're all kept in the same suitcase too. Tell the thirteen families to take them back so as to reduce my punishment. Don't forget it!"

Upon hearing that Mao Lie had agreed to return him his title deeds for the land, Chen Qi was eager to ask something more when a ghost-runner suddenly struck him in the back of his heart with an iron stick. The ghost-runner shouted, "Get out of here right now!"

In panic Chen Qi shrank back and then came back to life with a start, sweating coldly with fear. He noticed his wife was sitting beside him on the bed. His wife told him it had been seven whole days since he lost consciousness. She said, "We dared not to get you encoffined, because you told us not to. Moreover, we felt it warm on your chest. So we've got to sit here beside you and keep a watch on you. Now it turns out you've really come back to life. Have you had your lawsuit against Mao Lie settled?" "The God of Mount Tai is really powerful," exclaimed Chen Qi, "and the nether world is just in passing judgments. Nothing can be glossed over. It's absolutely different from the *yamens* in our human world, which are all muddle-headed and have no justice at all." Then he told his family in detail what had happened to him in the underworld.

Pulling himself together and calming himself down, Chen Qi sent someone to court official Qiu Da's home to have a look. Three days before a fire had reduced only Qiu Da's house to ashes and then the fire went out, leaving the other surrounding houses intact. From then on Chen Qi felt more convinced and became even more respectful toward the gods. Then he sent someone else to Dasheng Temple to see if Monk Gao's spirit had returned to his body, hoping that Monk Gao could be with him as a witness when he went to claim the pawn ticket from Mao Lie's family. The man came back to him with the words, "The monks of Dasheng Temple cremated his body three days ago." Hearing that Monk Gao had been cremated, Chen Qi was stunned. He said, "Both he and I were told in the underworld that our lifetime in the human world are not over yet and we came back to life together. How come they've cremated his body? Where is his spirit going to return? This is really terrible! How is it going



华言“火化”也。——陈祈见说高公已火化了，吃了一大惊，道：“他与我同在阴间，说阳寿未尽，一同放转世的。如何就把来化了？叫他还魂在何处？这又是了不得的事了，怎么收场？”

陈祈心下忐忑，且走到毛家，去取文券。看见了毛家儿子，问道：“尊翁故世，家中有什么影响否？”毛家儿子道：“为何这般问及？”陈祈道：“在下也死去七日，倒与尊翁会过一番来，故此动问。”毛家儿子道：“见家父光景何如？有甚说话否？”陈祈道：“在下与尊翁本是多年相好的，只因不还我典田文书，有这些争讼。昨日到亏得阴间对明，说文书在床前木箱里面，所以今日来取。”毛家儿子道：“文书便或者在木箱里面，只是阴间说话，谁是证见，可以来取？”陈祈道：“有到有个证见，那时大胜寺高师父也在那里同见说了，一齐放还魂的。可惜他寺中已将他身尸火化，没了个活证。却有一件可信，你尊翁还说另有一十三家文券，也多是来路不明的田产，叫还了这一十三家，等他受罪轻些。又叫替他多做些佛事。这须是我造不出的。”毛家儿子听说，有些呆了。你道为何？原来阴间业镜照出毛妻张氏同受银子之时，张氏在阳间恰像做梦一般，也梦见阴司对理之状，曾与儿子说过，故听得陈祈说着阴间之事，也有些道是真的了。走进去与母亲说知，张氏道：“这



to end?"

Feeling rather disturbed, Chen Qi made his way to Mao Lie's family to fetch the pawn ticket. When he saw Mao Lie's son, he asked, "Did anything happen to your family after your father's death?" "Why do you ask such a question?" asked Mao Lie's son in retort. Chen Qi said, "I was dead for seven days and I met your deceased father. This is why I asked so." Mao Lie's son asked, "How was my father doing? Any message for me?"

Chen Qi said, "Your father and I had been good friends for years. We two went to court because he refused to return the pawn ticket to me. Our dispute was settled yesterday in the underworld. Your father told me the title deeds for my land are kept in the wooden suitcase beside the bed. So now I'm here to take it." Mao Lie's son said, "Possibly the title deeds might be kept in the suitcase, but you said the dispute had been settled in the underworld. Do you have a witness for that?" Chen Qi said, "I had a witness. Monk Gao from Dasheng Temple was there with us and witnessed everything. He and I were permitted to return to the human world at the same time. Unfortunately the monks of Dasheng Temple have had his body cremated. Now I don't have a living witness. But I still have one more thing to tell you. Your father told me he had grabbed another thirteen title deeds for land and houses from thirteen families without any good reasons. He requested me to tell you to return them to the thirteen families so as to reduce his sufferings in the underworld. He also asked me to send word to you that you do some more Buddhist services for him. This should not be my fabrication."

Mao Lie's son was struck dumb at these words. Do you know why? This was because the moment Mao Lie saw in the evildoing mirror that his wife Zhang took the silver, his wife Zhang had a dream in the human world that the lawsuit was being passed at the court in the nether world. She had told it to her son. So as he heard Chen Qi mention about the events happened in the underworld, Mao Lie's son felt it sounded familiar. So he started to believe it.

Mao Lie's son got into the room and told his mother what Chen Qi had come for. Zhang said, "It is true I took the silver. Your father considered



项银子委实有的。你父亲只管道便宜了他，勒措着文书不与他，意思还要他分外出些加添。不道他竟自去告了官，所以索性一口赖了。又不料死得这样诧异。今恐怕你父亲阴间不宁，只该还了他。既说道还有一十三纸，等明日一总番将出来，逐一还罢。”毛家儿子把母亲说话对陈祈说了，陈祈道：“不要又像前番，回了明日，渐渐赖皮起来。此关系你家尊翁阴间受罪，非同阳间儿戏的。”毛家儿子道：“这个怎么还敢！”陈祈当下自去了。

毛家儿子关了门进来。到了晚间，听得有人敲门，开出去却又不见，关了又敲得紧。问是那个，外边厉声答道：“我是大胜寺中高和尚。为你家父亲赖了典田银子，我是原中人，被阴间追去做证见。放我归来，身尸焚化，今没处去了。这是你家害我的，须凭你家里怎么处我？”毛家儿子慌做一团，走进去与母亲说了。张氏也怕起来，移了火，同儿子走出来。听听外边，越敲得紧了，道：“你若不开时，我们缝里自会进来。”张氏听着果然是高公平日的声音，硬着胆回答道：“晓得有累



it would not be a bargain if he returned Chen Qi's title deeds to him easily. So your father refused to give it back to him, hoping that he could get some more silver from Chen Qi. But Chen Qi sued your father at the court and, having no alternative, your father had to disavow having received his silver. Your father's death was rather strange, so I'm very much concerned that he is not having a peaceful time in the nether world. I think we should now return Chen Qi's title deeds. Since he said there are still another thirteen title deeds, let's rummage through the suitcase tomorrow and find them out. Then we'll return them to their original owners by one by one."

Mao Lie's son came out and told Chen Qi what his mother had said. Chen Qi said, "Hope you won't go back on your word like last time. It has a great deal to do with your father's sufferings in the underworld, and it's absolutely unlike the trifling matter in the human world." "How should I dare this time?" said Mao Lie's son. Then Chen Qi left Mao's home.

Mao Lie's son went to his room and barred the door behind him. At night, he heard a knock on the door. He opened the door, but he was surprised to find no one there. He barred the door again, but the knocks on the door came even harder. Mao Lie's son asked who it was. A stern voice came from outside the door, "This is Monk Gao from Dasheng Temple. Your father refused to return Chen Qi's title deeds for land. Because I had worked as the middleman for their transaction, I was pulled into the court of the underworld to appear as witness for their dispute. Then I was released from the underworld and came back to life. But they cremated my body. So now my spirit has nowhere to return to. I got this terrible blow because of your father's ill-intentioned conduct. You and your family must think of a way to help me."

Thrown into utter confusion, Mao Lie's son got into the inner room and told his mother what was happening. Zhang was scared out of her wits too. After she put out the light, she came out with her son. The rapid knocks on the door became much stronger and harder. The one outside the door said impatiently, "If you don't open the door for me, I'll get in on my own through the crack." Having realized it was really Monk Gao's voice, Zhang braced herself up and answered, "Sorry to have put you



师父了。而今既已如此，教我们母子也没奈何，只好做些佛事超度师父罢。”外边鬼道：“我命未该死，阴间不肯收留。还有世数未尽，又去脱胎做人不得，随你追荐阴功也无用处。直等我世数尽了才得托生。这些时叫我在哪里好？我只是守住在你家不开去了。”毛家母子只得烧些纸钱，奠些酒饭，告求他去。鬼道：“叫我别无去处，求我也没干。”毛家母子没奈何，只得跚跚蹒跚，过了一夜。第二日急急去寻请僧道做道场，一来追荐毛烈，二来超度这个高公。

母子亲见了这些异样，怎敢不信？把各家文券多送去还了。谁知陈祈自得了文券之后，忽然害起心痛来，一痛发便待死去，记起是阴中被夜叉将铁棍心窝里捣了一下之故，又亲听见王者道“陈祈欺心，阳世受报”，晓得这典田事是欺心的，只得叫三个兄弟来，把毛家赎出之田均作四分分了。却是心痛仍不得止，只因平日掌家时，除典田之外，他欺心处还多。自此





into trouble. Now since you've come to this, I'm afraid I and my son are in no position to give you a hand. But we'll hold some more Buddhist services for you to relieve you from your sins and sufferings."

The one outside the door said, "I'm not wanted in the nether world, because I still have ten more years of life. But my life now does not have a body to return to either. So at present it's no good for you to hold whatever Buddhist services for me. I won't be reborn until my lifetime has run out. Where am I to stay at this period of time? I'll have to stay in your home and I won't go anywhere else." Mao Lie's wife Zhang and his son had to burn some paper money and offer some wine and food as sacrifices for Monk Gao in the hope of sending him away. The one outside the door continued, "I have nowhere to go except your home. It's no use for you to do all these for me." Having no way out, Zhang and her son passed the night with horror and anxiety.

On the next day Zhang invited many monks and Taoists to her home to perform Taoist and Buddhist rites to deliver both Mao Lie and Monk Gao.

Terribly scared by Monk Gao's ghost, Zhang and her son could not hold back their fear. Soon they returned all the title deeds respectively.

After he had got his title deeds for the land, Chen Qi had a sudden attack of heart disease. He could hardly endure the pain in the heart each time it began to act up. Then he remembered that it was because he had been struck in the back of his heart with an iron stick by a ghost-runner. He also remembered the king's words about him while he was in the nether world that he had originally harbored ill intentions when he first pawned the land to Mao Lie and that he was to pay for his evildoings in the human world. He called his three brothers forward and divided the land he had redeemed back from Mao Lie's home into four shares and gave one share to each of his three brothers. In spite of all this, he still felt extremely painful in the heart. Of course, the reason for this was that he had done a lot more other evildoings except the pawning of the land. Each time his heart ached, he would invite monks and Taoists to his home to perform rites for him or he would go to the Temple of God of Mount Tai to burn joss sticks. The money he spent on these things was huge and



每一遭痛发，便去请僧道保禳，或是东岳烧献。年年所费，不计其数。此病随身，终不脱体。到得后来，家计倒比三个兄弟消耗了。

那毛家也为高公之鬼不得离门，每夜必来扰乱，家里人口不安。卖掉房子，搬到别处，鬼也随着不舍。只得日日超度，时时斋醮。以后看看声音远了些，说道：“你家福事做得多了。虽然与我无益，时常有神佛在家，我也有些不便。我且暂时去去，终是放你家不过的。”以后果然隔着几日才来，这里就做法事退他，或做佛事度他。如此缠帐多时，支持不过，毛家私也逐渐消费下来。以后毛家穷了，连这些佛事、法事多做不起了，高公的鬼也不来了。

可见欺诈之财，没有得与你人已受用的。阴司比阳世间公道，使不得奸诈，分毫不差池。这两家显报，自不必说。只高公僧人，贪财利，管闲事，落得阳寿未终，先被焚烧。虽然为此搅破了毛氏一家，却也是僧人的果报了。若当时徒弟们不烧其尸，得以重生，毕竟还与陈祈一样，也要受些现报，不消说得的。人生作事，岂可不知自省？



the heart disease followed him for the rest of his life. Later, all his three brothers were better off than him.

Since then, the Mao family had been greatly disturbed by the ghost of Monk Gao which appeared to make trouble at his home every night. The Maos sold their house and moved to another place, but the ghost of Monk Gao followed them wherever they moved to. Having no alternative, the Maos had to perform rites everyday for the ghost of Monk Gao. Some time later, the ghost's voice became fainter. One day the Mao family heard the ghost say, "You've done quite a lot of Buddhist and Taoist services, though it is of no value to me. I can often see deities in your home, so I find it inappropriate for me to stay in your home any longer. Now I'm leaving your home for the time being. But keep it in your mind, I won't let you off easily." It later turned out that Monk Gao's ghost would come to the Mao family once in several days. Each time the ghost came, the Mao family would hold Buddhist or Taoist rites to deliver him or send him away. With the elapse of time, it cost the Mao family so much to hold these services that they could no longer afford it. Thus the Mao family declined. As they became too poor to perform the rites, the ghost of Monk Gao stopped disturbing them.

From this we can see clearly that one can never enjoy the money or property he gets by fraud. There is more justice in the underworld than in our human world. Moreover, deceptions never work and justice is always done with unerring accuracy in the underworld. Mao Lie and Chen Qi had seen the day of judgment and there is no need to say more about it. Meanwhile Monk Gao ended up in being cremated before his life should be over, because he was avaricious and liked to poke his nose into other people's business. As a monk, he deserved this punishment, though he had succeeded in bringing down Mao Lie's family. Had his fellow monks not cremated his body, he might as well have been able to come back to life to get some punishments in the human world as Chen Qi did. As a human being, how could we go without examining our thoughts and conducts?

阳间有理没处说，阴司不说也分明。

若是世人终不死，方可横心自在行。

又有人道这诗未尽，番案一首云：

阳间不辨到阴间，阴间仍旧判阳还。

纵是世人终不死，也须难使到头顽。



In the human world it's hard to reason things out.  
In the underworld rights and wrongs are perfectly clear  
and admit of no dispute.  
People can steel themselves to have their own way in everything,  
Only unless they are immortals.

Later, one person thought the poem above was not quite well written.  
He improved it thus:

Hard nuts in the human world have to be cracked  
in the underworld.  
The underworld makes a judgment that all accounts  
be settled in the human world.  
People can never steel themselves to have their own way  
in everything,  
Even though immortals they are.



## 卷 十 七

### 同窗友认假作真 女秀才移花接木

诗曰：

万里桥边薛校书，枇杷窗下闭门居。

扫眉才子知多少，管领春风总不如。

这四句诗，乃唐人赠蜀中妓女薛涛之作。这个薛涛乃是女中才子，南康王韦皋做西川节度使时，曾表奏他做军中校书，故人多称为薛校书。所往来的是高千里、元微之、杜牧之一班儿名流。又将浣花溪水造成小笺，名曰“薛涛笺”。词人墨客得了此笺，犹如拱璧。真正名重一时，芳流百世。

国朝洪武年间，有广东广州府人田洙，字孟沂，随父田百禄到成都赴教官之任。那孟沂生得风流标致，又兼才学过人，



## *Tale 17*

### **Two Classmates Mistakenly Pass on the Girl in a Man's Makeup as a Man A Distinguished Woman Scholar in a Man's Makeup Grafts One Twig on Another**

A poem reads thus:

Xue Tao, though once a renowned singsong girl  
with outstanding poetic thoughts,  
Used to be a high-ranking secretary living in seclusion  
near the Wanli Bridge in Chengdu.  
There were innumerable talented men of letters at the time,  
But none could get the better of Secretary Xue.

These four lines were written by a Tang Dynasty poet to sing the praise of Xue Tao, a distinguished woman scholar. While being the Military Commissioner of Xichuan, Wei Gao once presented a memorial to the emperor, hoping to have Xue Tao work as his secretary. So Xue Tao was often addressed as Secretary Xue. She used to have close associations with her contemporary celebrities and the most renowned poets of the time like Gao Pian, Yuan Zhen and Du Mu. Also she made paper by using the water in Huanhuaxi. This paper was called Xue Tao paper. Once the literati got this paper, they would take it as a rare treasure. For this reason, Xue Tao gained an immortal fame.

During the Hongwu's reign (1368-1399) in our Ming Dynasty, Tian Zhu, whose style name was Meng Yi, a native of Guangzhou Prefecture of Guangdong, followed his father Tian Bailu to Chengdu when his father assumed office there as an instructor. Both handsome and learned, Meng Yi excelled in painting, calligraphy, music and chess, and he got along quite well with his fellow schoolmates. One year later, Bailu intended to send his son Meng Yi back to his native home. However, Meng Yi's mother

书画琴棋之类，无不通晓。学中诸生日与嬉游，爱同骨肉。过了一年，百禄要遣他回家。孟沂的母亲心里舍不得他去，又且寒官冷署，盘费难处。百禄与学中几个秀才商量，要在地方上寻一个馆与儿子坐坐，一来可以早晚读书，二来得些馆资，可为归计。这些秀才巴不得留住他，访得附郭一个大姓张氏要请一馆宾，众人遂将孟沂力荐于张氏。张氏送了馆约，约定明年正月元宵后到馆。至期，学中许多有名的少年朋友，一同送孟沂到张家来，连百禄也自送去。张家主人曾为运使，家道饶裕，见是老广文带了许多时髦到家，甚为喜欢。开筵相待，酒罢各散，孟沂就在馆中宿歇。

到了二月花朝日，孟沂要归省父母。主人送他节仪二两，孟沂袋在袖子里了，步行回去。偶然一个去处，望见桃花盛开，一路走去看，境甚幽僻。孟沂心里喜欢，伫立少顷，观玩景致。忽见桃林中一个美人，掩映花下。孟沂晓得是良人家，不敢顾盼，径自走过。未免带些卖俏身子，拖下袖来，袖中之银，不觉落地。美人看见，便叫随侍的丫鬟拾将起来，送还孟沂。孟沂笑受，致谢而别。







hated to part with him. Worse still, Bailu had not made enough money for the journey back home by working as an instructor. Bailu then asked some of the local scholars to help Meng Yi find a tutoring job in a family school, hoping that, on the one hand, he could engage himself in reading classics both in the morning and evening and, on the other hand, he could earn some money as his traveling expenses for going back home.

The local scholars all hoped that Meng Yi could stay with them. When they learned that a rich family surnamed Zhang was looking for a family tutor, the local scholars strongly recommended Meng Yi for the post. Finally Zhang agreed and decided that he start work after the Lantern Festival of the first month of the following year.

After the Lantern Festival, many of Meng Yi's young friends saw him off to the Zhang family. Even Bailu, Meng Yi's father, was also among the send-off group of the scholars. The Zhangs were an extremely rich family, for years ago the master of the family used to be a high-ranking official in charge of military supplies and water and land transport. Seeing that Bailu had brought so many distinguished men of letters to his home, Master Zhang was very happy and entertained them with dinner. When the dinner was over, all took their leave except Meng Yi. Meng Yi was then put up in the Zhang family school for the night.

On the fifteenth day of the second month, the birthday of all flowers, Meng Yi decided to go back home to see his parents. Master Zhang gave him two taels of silver as pay. Tucking it into his sleeve, Meng Yi set out on foot. On his way to his father's place he came across a spectacular view of peach blossoms. Arriving there, he found it a pretty quiet place. Overwhelmed with joy, he stopped to enjoy the wonderful peach blossoms. All of a sudden he noticed a beautiful lady among the peach blossoms. Thinking that she must be a woman from a good family, he felt he should not look intently at her. He walked off quickly, unavoidably putting on a showy flirtatious air. But as he walked, his sleeve fell down and the piece of silver in the sleeve dropped to the ground without his noticing it. Seeing the piece of silver slip out of his sleeve, the beautiful lady told her servant girl to pick it up and return it to Meng Yi. Meng Yi took the silver with a smile and thanked the servant girl. Then he bid her farewell.



明日，孟沂有意打那边经过，只见美人与丫鬟仍立在门首。孟沂望着门前走去，丫鬟指道：“昨日遗金的郎君来了。”美人略略敛身避入门内。孟沂见了丫鬟，叙述道：“昨日多蒙娘子美情，拾还遗金，今日特来造谢。”美人听得，叫丫鬟请入内厅相见。孟沂喜出望外，急整衣冠，望门内而进。美人早已迎着，至厅上相见礼毕，美人先开口道：“郎君莫非是张运使宅上西宾么？”孟沂道：“然也。昨日因馆中回家，道经于此，偶遗少物，得遇夫人盛情，命尊姬拾还，实为感激。”美人道：“张氏一家亲戚，彼西宾即我西宾。还金小事，何足为谢？”孟沂道：“欲问夫人高门姓氏，与敝东何亲？”美人道：“寒家姓平，成都旧族也。妾乃文孝坊薛氏女，嫁与平氏子康，不幸早卒，妾独孀居于此。与郎君贤东乃乡邻姻娅，郎君即是通家了。”孟沂见说是孀居，不敢久留。两杯茶罢，起身告退。美人道：“郎君便在寒舍过了晚去。若贤东晓得郎君到此，妾不能久留款待，觉得没趣了。”即分付快办酒馔。不多时，设着两席，与孟沂相对而坐。坐中殷勤劝酬，笑语之间，美人多



On the next day, Meng Yi intentionally passed by the peach blossoms and found that the beautiful lady and her servant girl were again standing at the entrance of a house. Meng Yi walked over toward the house. Pointing at Meng Yi, the servant girl said to the beautiful lady, "Look, the man who lost his silver here yesterday is coming again." Then the beautiful lady retreated into her room.

At the sight of the servant girl, Meng Yi said, "I'm especially here today to express my thanks for your kindness to return my lost silver." Upon hearing this, the beautiful lady in the room ordered her servant girl to invite Meng Yi into her room. Feeling pleasantly surprised, Meng Yi adjusted his hat and his clothing and went inside. The beautiful lady greeted him and then led him to the main hall. After courteous greetings, the beautiful lady spoke up first, "You're the family tutor of Master Zhang's family school, aren't you?" Meng Yi answered, "Yes, I am. While I was passing this place on my way home yesterday, I lost some silver right at this place. I very much appreciate your kindness in asking your servant girl to return it to me."

The beautiful lady said, "The Zhangs and I are close relations. The return of your lost silver is not worth mentioning at all." Meng Yi asked, "May I know your family name? What's your relationship with Master Zhang?" The beautiful lady answered, "My ex-husband's family name is Ping and my forefathers were from Chengdu. My family name is Xue and I used to live at Wenxiaofang. I was married to Ping Zikang, but unfortunately my husband died early. Now I live at this place alone. Your host Master Zhang and I are relatives by marriage. For this reason, I can also regard you as my relative." Learning that she was a widow, Meng Yi thought it improper for him to stay there very long.

After drinking some tea, he rose to his feet to say goodbye. The beautiful lady said, "Please stay in my house for the night. Master Zhang will become angry at me if he learns of my inhospitality to you." So saying, the beautiful lady ordered that dinner and wine be prepared immediately. In no time, the table was set and both the beautiful lady and Meng Yi took their seats at the table, facing each other. During the dinner, the beautiful lady urged Meng Yi to wine repeatedly with flirtatious remarks. In his

带些谑浪话头。孟沂认道是张氏至戚，虽然心里技痒难熬，还拘拘束束，不敢十分放肆。美人道：“闻得郎君倜傥俊才，何乃作儒生酸态？妾虽不敏，颇解吟咏。今遇知音，不敢爱丑，当与郎君赏鉴文墨，唱和词章。郎君不以为鄙，妾之幸也。”遂叫丫鬟取出唐贤遗墨与孟沂看。孟沂从头细阅，多是唐人真迹手翰诗词，惟元稹、杜牧、高骈的最多，墨迹如新。孟沂爱玩不忍释手，道：“此希世之宝也。夫人情钟此类，真是千古韵人了。”美人谦谢。两个谈话有味，不觉夜已二鼓。孟沂辞酒不饮，美人延入寝室，自荐枕席道：“妾独处已久，今见郎君高雅，不能无情，愿得奉陪。”孟沂道：“不敢请耳，固所愿也。”两个解衣就枕，鱼水欢情，极其缱绻。枕边切切叮宁道：“慎勿轻言。若贤东知道，彼此名节丧尽了。”次日，将一个卧狮玉镇纸赠与孟沂，送至门外道：“无事就来走走，勿学薄幸人！”





mind Meng Yi understood it as that she behaved like this because she must have taken him as a close relative and was trying to be nice to him. Itchy as he was in the heart, Meng Yi felt ill at ease and dared not throw all restraint to the winds.

The beautiful lady said, "It is said you are an unconventional and romantic young man. Why do you assume the air of an impoverished pedantic scholar? Though I'm not very intelligent, I do love to read poetry. Since I've met such a talented man of letters like you, I'd like to share with you the authentic works of calligraphy of some poems. I would feel it a great honor if you could condescend to enjoy them with me." So saying, she asked her servant girl to go and fetch the authentic calligraphy of some famous Tang Dynasty poets. Then she showed them to Meng Yi. Having examined them carefully one after another, Meng Yi found out that they were all Tang Dynasty poems in their authentic calligraphy, and most of the poems were written by Yuan Zhen, Du Mu and Gao Pian. Moreover, the ink looked fresh and new. Meng Yi was so fond of them that he could scarcely take his eye off them. He said, "They're really rare treasures. You keep and love such treasures, so you must be a lady of lofty taste." The beautiful lady thanked him for his compliments. Their conversation went on agreeably until it was very late at night without their being aware of it.

As Meng Yi stopped drinking, the beautiful lady pulled him into her bedroom. Pointing at her bed, she said, "It's been a long time since I slept alone on this bed. Since you're so refined and graceful, I mustn't be heartless. I'd love to sleep with you." Meng Yi responded, "I'm not so bold, but I'm willing to from the bottom of my heart." So saying, the two undressed themselves and made love affectionately. While they were lying on the pillows, the beautiful lady exhorted Meng Yi time and again, "Just keep it between you and me. If your host Master Zhang gets to know our affair, both you and I will lose our good name and integrity."

On the next day the beautiful lady gave Meng Yi a jade paperweight in the shape of crouching lion as a memento. Seeing him off out of her house, she said, "Don't forget to drop in and see me when you're free. Hope you're not a heartless man." "There is no need for you to tell me



孟沂道：“这个何劳分付？”

孟沂到馆，哄主人道：“老母想念，必要小生归家宿歇，小生不敢违命留此，从今早来馆中，晚归家里便了。”主人信了说话，道：“任从尊便。”自此，孟沂在张家，只推家里去宿，家里又说在馆中宿，竟夜夜到美人处宿了。整有半年，并没一个人知道。

孟沂与美人赏花玩月，酌酒吟诗，曲尽人间之乐。两人每每你唱我和，做成联句，如《落花二十四韵》、《月夜五十韵》，斗巧争妍，真成敌手。诗句太多，恐看官每厌听，不能尽述。只将他两人《四时回文诗》表白一遍。美人诗道：

花朵几枝柔傍砌，柳丝千缕细摇风。

霞明半岭西斜日，月上孤村一树松。（《春》）

凉回翠簟冰人冷，齿沁清泉夏月寒。

香篆袅风清缕缕，纸窗明月白团团。（《夏》）

芦雪覆汀秋水白，柳风凋树晚山苍。

孤帟客梦惊空馆，独雁征书寄远乡。（《秋》）

天冻雨寒朝闭户，雪飞风冷夜关城。

鲜红炭火围炉暖，浅碧茶瓯注茗清。（《冬》）

这个诗怎么叫得回文？因是顺读完了，倒读转去，皆可通得。最难得这样浑成，非是高手不能，美人一挥而就。孟沂也和他四首道：

芳树吐花红过雨，入帘飞絮白惊风。

黄添晓色青舒柳，粉落晴香雪覆松。（《春》）

瓜浮瓮水凉消暑，藕叠盘冰翠嚼寒。



this,” replied Meng Yi.

Coming back to Zhang’s family school, Meng Yi lied to Zhang, “My mother missed me so much that she requested me to spend the night at home. I’m afraid I can’t go back on my mother’s words and continue to stay in the school for the night. From now on I’ll have to come to school in the morning and go back home at night.” Feeling convinced at Meng Yi’s words, Zhang said, “You may have it your own way.” Then Meng Yi told his family that he would be staying in Zhang’s family school for the night and told Zhang that he would be staying in his own home for the night. But the fact was that he was with the beautiful lady every night. Thus half a year passed and his affair with the lady was unknown to everyone.

The beautiful lady and Meng Yi enjoyed each other’s company to their hearts’ content, feasting their eyes on garden flowers and the wonderful view of the full moon, drinking wine and reading poetry. They would often compose a poem together. During the time of half a year when they were together, they composed countless wonderful poems on the subjects of flowers and the moon. I find it difficult to copy them here, because they were too many and I fear you readers might feel bored to read them all. Anyway, the talented young man Meng Yi and the beautiful lady had an extremely happy time while they were together.

However, as an old saying goes, “All good things must come to an end.” One day Master Zhang made a casual visit to Meng Yi’s father Meng Bailu and said, “It’s really hard labor for your son to come back home for the night every day. Why not ask him to stay in my family school for the night?” Bailu answered, “He has been staying in your family school ever since he started his work. He only stayed for a couple of days in my home when my wife was ill the other day. He has never stayed in my home for the night recently. Why did you say so?” Realizing there must be some reason for Meng Yi’s lying about this matter, Master Zhang feared that further probing into the matter might hurt Meng Yi. Therefore, he dropped the matter and bade Bailu farewell.

On that same night when Meng Yi told Zhang he was leaving for home, Zhang didn’t let the cat out of the bag. But he told his servant to follow



斜石近阶穿笋密，小池舒叶出荷团。（《夏》）

残石绚红霜叶出，薄烟寒树晚林苍。

鸾书寄恨羞封泪，蝶梦惊愁怕念乡。（《秋》）

风卷雪蓬寒罢钓，月辉霜柝冷敲城。

浓香酒泛霞杯满，淡影梅横纸帐清。（《冬》）

孟沂和罢，美人甚喜。真是才子佳人，情味相投，乐不可言。

却是“好物不坚牢”，自有散场时节。一日，张运使偶过学中，对老广文田百禄说道：“令郎每夜归家，不胜奔走之劳。何不仍留寒舍住宿，岂不为便？”百禄道：“自开馆后，一向只在公家。止因老妻前日有疾，曾留得数日，这几时并不曾来家宿歇，怎么如此说？”张运使晓得内中必有跷蹊，恐碍着孟沂，不敢尽言而别。

是晚，孟沂告归，张运使不说破他，只叫馆仆尾着他去。到得半路，忽然不见。馆仆赶去追寻，竟无下落。回来对家主说了。运使道：“他少年放逸，必然花柳人家去了。”馆仆道：“这条路上，何曾有什么伎馆？”运使道：“你还到他衙中问问看。”馆仆道：“天色晚了，怕关了城门，出来不得。”运使道：“就在田家宿了，明日早晨来回我不妨。”到了天明，馆仆回话，说是不曾回衙。运使道：“这等，那里去了？”正疑怪间，孟沂恰到。运使问道：“先生昨宵宿于何处？”孟沂道：“家间。”运使道：“岂有此理！学生昨日叫人跟随先生回去，因半路上不见了先生，小仆直到学中去问，先生不曾到宅，怎如此说？”孟沂道：“半路上偶到一个朋友处讲话，直到天黑回家，故此盛仆来时间不着。”馆仆道：“小人昨夜宿在相公家了，方才回





him at a certain distance and see where he would go. Meng Yi disappeared abruptly halfway. The servant searched for him, but failed to find him. The servant came back and told Zhang what had happened. “He is young and unrestrained,” said Master Zhang. “He must have gone whoring.” The servant said, “There are no brothels along the way.” Master Zhang said, “You go to his home and see if he is there.” The servant said, “Now it’s late. I’m afraid the city gate will keep me out if I go to his home now.” Master Zhang said, “You can stay at Bailu’s home for the night. It’s okay you come to report it to me tomorrow morning.”

The next day the servant came back to Master Zhang and told him Meng Yi was not at his home the previous night. “Where has he gone?” Master Zhang wondered. Just at that instant, Meng Yi arrived. “Where were you last night?” asked Master Zhang. Meng Yi’s reply was, “I was at my home.” Master Zhang retorted, “Nonsense! I sent my servant to follow you yesterday. But you got lost halfway. Then my servant went to your home and found you were not there. Why so?” Meng Yi answered, “I made a stopover halfway at a friend’s house and didn’t get home until it was nighttime. This is why your servant failed to see me when he arrived at my home.” Hearing this, the servant said, “I stayed at your home last night. I got back only a minute ago. Your father was very worried about you when he heard we were looking for you and he said he would come to the Zhang family to inquire about the matter. How could you tell a lie?”

Tongue-tied, Meng Yi flushed. “Don’t hesitate to tell us the truth if you have some reason for it,” said Master Zhang. Realizing that he could no longer cover it up, Meng Yi recounted how he had encountered a young lady by the family name of Xue, wife of Ping Zikang. Then Meng Yi said, “She said she was your relative by marriage and she strongly asked me to stay in her house for the night. As for me, I wouldn’t be so bold to do that immoral conduct.” Master Zhang said, “I don’t have any relatives in this region. Moreover, I don’t have any relations by the family name of Ping. She must be a ghost. From now on, you’d better have proper respect for yourself. See her no more.”

Though he consented to it in words, how was Meng Yi going to listen



来的。田老爹见说了，甚是惊慌，要自来寻问。相公如何还说着在家的话？”孟沂支吾不来，颜色尽变。运使道：“先生若有别故，当以实说。”孟沂晓得遮掩不过，只得把遇着平家薛氏的话说了一遍，道：“此乃令亲相留，非小生敢作此无行之事。”运使道：“我家何尝有亲戚在此地方？况亲中无平姓者，必是鬼祟。今后先生自爱，不可去了。”

孟沂口里应承，心里那里信他？傍晚又到美人家里去，备对美人说形迹已露之意。美人道：“我已先知道了。郎君不必怨悔，亦是冥数尽了。”遂与孟沂痛饮，极尽欢情。到了天明，哭对孟沂道：“从此永别矣！”将出洒墨玉笔管一枝，送与孟沂道：“此唐物也，郎君慎藏在身，以为记念。”挥泪而别。

那边张运使料先生晚间必去，叫人看着，果不在馆。运使道：“先生这事必要做出来，这是我们做主人的干系，不可不对他父亲说知。”遂步至学中，把孟沂之事备细说与百禄知道。百禄大怒，遂叫了学中一个门子，同着张家馆仆，到馆中唤孟沂回来。孟沂方别了美人，回到张家，想念道：“他说永别之言，只是怕风声败露，我便耐守几时再去走动，或者还可相会。”正踌躇间，父命已至，只得跟着回去。百禄一见，喝道：“你书到不读，夜夜在那里游荡？”孟沂看见张运使一同在家了，便无言可对。百禄见他不说，就拿起一条柱杖劈头打去，道：“还不实告！”孟沂无奈，只得把相遇之事，及录成联句



to Master Zhang? On the same night, he again got to the beautiful lady's house and told her that there had been a leak about their affair. "I've already known about the matter," said the beautiful lady. "You needn't feel sad about it. Fate has it that our affair is now coming to the end." So saying, they started to drink wine to their hearts' content and then they made love.

On the following morning, the beautiful lady wept as she said to Meng Yi, "Now we'll part forever!" Then she gave him a jade-handled writing brush and said, "This writing brush is from the Tang Dynasty. You may keep it as a souvenir." Thus they parted in tears.

Master Zhang thought Meng Yi would surely go and see Xue again at night. When night came, Zhang sent his servant to the family school to see if Meng Yi was there. But it turned out that Meng Yi was not there. Master Zhang said, "Meng Yi has set his mind to carrying on the affair with this lady. I don't think I should keep my mouth closed to his father about this matter." Then Zhang made a detailed account of Meng Yi's conduct in the past six months in front of Bailu. Burning with fury at the news, Bailu ordered that his son be brought back home immediately from Zhang's family school.

After parting the beautiful lady, Meng Yi went back to Zhang's family school. He thought to himself, "She must have been worried about the rumor of our affair once it leaked out when she said we would part forever. So I have to be a bit patient now. Probably I'll have the chance to see her after some time." As he was thus thinking, the man his father had sent to the school to fetch him arrived. He had no alternative but to follow the man back home.

Seeing his son coming home, Bailu shouted, "You didn't engage yourself in reading. Where have you been hanging around at nights?" Meng Yi noticed that Master Zhang was at his home too, so he was at a loss for words. Seeing his son was not to speak up, Bailu snatched up a walking stick and struck him right on the head, shouting, "Tell me the truth right now!" Having no option, Meng Yi had to tell his father how he had met the beautiful lady, how they had composed poems together and compiled them into a collection. Along with this collection of their poems,



一本，与所送镇纸、笔管两物多将出来，道：“如此佳人，不容不动心，不必罪儿了。”百禄取来逐件一看，看那玉色是几百年出土之物，管上有篆刻“渤海高氏清玩”六个字。又揭开诗来，从头细阅，不觉心服。对张运使道：“物既稀奇，诗又俊逸，岂寻常之怪！我每可同了不肖子，亲到那地方去查一查踪迹看。”遂三人同出城来，

将近桃林，孟沂道：“此间是了。”进前一看，孟沂惊道：“怎生屋宇俱无了？”百禄与运使齐抬头一看，只见水碧山青，桃株茂盛。荆棘之中，有冢累然。张运使点头道：“是了，是了。此地相传是唐妓薛涛之墓。后人因郑谷诗有‘小桃花绕薛涛坟’之句，所以种桃百株，为春时游赏之所。贤郎所遇，必是薛涛也。”百禄道：“怎见得？”张运使道：“他说所嫁是平氏子康，分明是平康巷了。又说文孝坊，城中并无此坊，‘文孝’乃是‘教’字，分明是教坊了。平康巷教坊乃是唐时妓女



he also showed his father the paperweight and the writing brush she had given him. Then he said to his father, “She is really a wonderful beauty and I just couldn’t refrain myself from falling in love with her. Don’t blame me, Father.”

Bailu examined these two objects one by one. He found out that the jade handle of the brush was an unearthed relic of several hundred years old, and on the handle was inscribed the words: Gao Pian from Bohai. (Bohai was part of the national territory of the Tang Dynasty, along the present Wusulijiang River in the Northeast of China.) Then he read the collection of their poems carefully and gasped in admiration. Turning to Master Zhang, he said, “The writing brush is rare and uncommon and the poems are wonderful. Don’t you think it strange? Why not go to that place with my son and have a look?” So saying, they three went out of the town together.

As they approached the peach trees, Meng Yi said, “Here we are.” But a closer watch gave him a surprise. “Where has the house gone?” Meng Yi asked. Bailu and Master Zhang looked up and saw a wonderful view: luxuriant peach trees were set against the backdrop of the green hills and clear waters. But there was a grave mound among the brambles. Nodding his head, Master Zhang said, “I got it, I got it. It’s said this is the grave of Xue Tao, a singsong girl during the Tang Dynasty. In accordance with a line by a Tang poet Zheng Gu, which read, “Peach blossoms surrounds Xue Tao’s grave,” a hundred peach trees were planted right here by later generations to make this place a scenic spot for spring outing. The beautiful lady Meng Yi met must be Xue Tao.” “Why so?” asked Bailu.

“When she said she was married to Ping Zikang,” answered Master Zhang, “she was suggesting she was from Pingkang Xiang of Chang’an, the capital of the Tang Dynasty. (Later generations call prostitutes Pingkang.) Also she mentioned she used to live at Wenxiaofang, but the fact is that there has never been such a place by the name of Wenxiaofang in Chang’an. The two characters “xiao” and “wen” make the word “jiao” when being put together. “Jiaofang” was the government agency in charge of the imperial court music. Jiaofang of Pingkang Xiang was the prostitutes’ quarters in Chang’an during the Tang Dynasty. Moreover,

所居，今云薛氏，不是薛涛是谁？且笔上有高氏字，乃是西川节度使高骈。骈在蜀时，涛最蒙宠待，二物是其所赐无疑。涛死已久，其精灵犹如此。此事不必穷究了。”

百禄晓得运使之言甚确，恐怕儿子还要着迷，打发他回归广东。后来孟沂中了进士，常对人说，便将二玉物为证。虽然想念，再不相遇了，至今传有《田洙遇薛涛》故事。

小子为何说这一段鬼话？只因蜀中女子从来号称多才，如文君、昭君，多是蜀中所生，皆有文才。所以薛涛一个妓女，生前诗名不减当时词客，死后犹且诗兴勃然，这也是山川的秀气。唐人诗有云：

锦江膩滑蛾眉秀，幻出文君与薛涛。

诚为千古佳话。至于黄崇嘏女扮为男，做了相府掾属，今世传有《女状元》本，也是蜀中故事。可见蜀女多才，自古为然。至今两川风俗，女人自小从师上学，与男人一般读书。还有考试进庠做青衿弟子。若在别处，岂非大段奇事？

而今说着一家子的事，委曲奇咤，最是好听。



she also said her family name was Xue. Who else could she be, if not Xue Tao? Apart from this, the inscription on the handle of the writing brush contains the name of Gao Pian who used to be the military Commissioner of west Sichuan. Xue Tao used to be Gao Pian's most favorite singsong girl while he was in office. Undoubtedly these two objects must be Gao Pian's gifts to Xue Tao. It has been quite a long time since Xue Tao's death, but her spirit is still so roaming around this place. Now there is no more need to get to the bottom of this matter."

Bailu was deeply convinced at what Master Zhang had said. Fearing that his son would possibly have more tender thoughts for the lady, Bailu sent him back to Guangdong. Later Meng Yi became a *jinshi* and he often told others of this experience of his and showed them the two relics as a proof. Though he missed the beautiful lady very much, he never had the opportunity to meet her. However, the story of Meng Yi's meeting with Xue Tao has been handed down to this very day.

Why do I tell you such a ghost story? It is because Sichuan is a fair place that has produced a large number of extraordinarily talented women ever since ancient times. Ancient outstanding female personalities like Wenjun<sup>1</sup> and Zhaojun were all natives of Sichuan. Singsong girl as she was, Xue Tao's name as a poet was no less great than her contemporary poets. That's why her poetic thoughts were still so vigorous even after her death. All this must be indebted to the miraculous landscape of the locality. The beauty of the Jinjiang River and the Emei Mountains produces Wenjun and Xue Tao.

Based on the true story of Huang Chonggu, Xu Wei of our Ming Dynasty wrote a *zaju*<sup>2</sup> entitled *Number One Woman Scholar*. From generation to generation, Sichuan has produced countless talented women. Tradition has it that girls from Sichuan all go to school to receive education like boys. Some even take part in the imperial examinations and become *xiucais*. Wouldn't such events be extremely strange if they had taken place elsewhere?

\* \* \*

Now I'd love to tell you another unusually interesting story happened in Sichuan.



从来女子守闺房，几见裙钗入学堂？

文武习成男子业，婚姻也只自商量。

话说四川成都府绵竹县，有一个武官，姓闻名确，乃是卫中世袭指挥。因中过武举两榜，累官至参将，就镇守彼处地方。家中富厚，赋性豪奢。夫人已故，房中有一班姬妾，多会吹弹歌舞。有一子，也是妾生，未满三周。有一个女儿，年十七岁，名曰蜚娥，丰姿绝世，却是将门将种，自小习得一身武艺，最善骑射，直能百步穿杨。模样虽是娉婷，志气赛过男子。他起初因见父亲是个武出身，受那外人指目，只说是个武弁人家，必须得个子弟在黉门中出入，方能结交斯文士夫，不受人的欺侮。争奈兄弟尚小，等他长大不得，所以一向妆做男子，到学堂读书。外边走动，只是个少年学生。到了家中内房，方还女扮。如此数年，果然学得满腹文章，博通经史。这也是蜀中做惯的事。遇着提学到来，他就报了名，改为胜杰，说是胜过豪杰男人之意，表字俊卿，一般的入了队去考童生。一考就进了学，做了秀才。他男扮久了，人多认他做闻参将的小舍人，一





From time immemorial, girls have been confined to their boudoirs.  
Who has seen any girl attending school?  
But our heroine is well versed both in civil and military affairs.  
More surprisingly, she chooses the man she wishes to marry.

Once upon a time there was a hereditary regional military commander named Wen Que in Mianzhu County, Chengdu Prefecture of Sichuan. Starting as a successful candidate in the provincial military examinations, he was later promoted to the position of a general. He possessed a huge family property and was excessively luxurious by nature. He lived with a group of his concubines after his wife's death. All of his concubines were good at playing musical instruments, singing and dancing. He had a three-year-old son born of a concubine. He also had a daughter named Fei'e who was seventeen years old.

Though an extremely beautiful girl, Fei'e, like father, like daughter, learned martial arts skills as a child. Excelling in horsemanship and archery, she could shoot an arrow with infallible precision. Girl as she was, she had higher aspirations than men. When she was still a child, she had witnessed that her family was always looked down upon because of her father's military background. She thought the only solution to steering clear of humiliation was that the younger generation of her family must go to school and make friends with men of letters and civilian officials. Unfortunately her younger brother was too young to go to school, and she found she couldn't wait till he came to school age. For this reason, she disguised herself as a man and went to school. While she was out of her home, she dressed herself up as a man; while she was in her home, she changed into her woman's dress. After years of diligent study, she became talented and versed in writing and acquired an extensive knowledge of Confucian classics as well as history. This too is common practice in Sichuan.

When the chief examiner of the county arrived at the school, Fei'e renamed herself Shengjie, meaning surpassing outstanding men, with the style name of Junqing, and signed up to take part in the imperial examinations at the county level. The result was that she successfully passed the examinations and became a *xiucai*. Since she had been in the



进了学，多来贺喜，府县迎送到家，参将也只是将错就错，一面欢喜开宴。盖是武官人家，秀才乃极难得的，从此参将与官府往来，添了个帮手，有好些气色。为此，内外大小却像忘记他是女儿一般的，凡事尽是他支持过去。

他同学朋友，一个叫做魏造，字撰之；一个叫做杜亿，字子中。两人多是出群才学，英锐少年，与闻俊卿意气相投，学业相长。况且年纪差不多：魏撰之年十九岁，长闻俊卿两岁；杜子中与闻俊卿同年，又是闻俊卿月生大些。三人就像一家兄弟一般，极是过得好，相约了同在学中一个斋舍里读书。两个无心，只认做一伴的好朋友。闻俊卿却有意要在两个里头拣一个嫁他。两个人并起来，又觉得杜子中同年所生，凡事仿佛些，模样也是他标致些，更为中意，比魏撰之分外说的投机。杜子中见闻俊卿意思又好，丰姿又妙，常对他道：“我与兄两人可惜多做了男子，我若为女，必当嫁兄；兄若为女，我必当娶兄。”



disguise of a man, all the people around mistook her as a man and called her General Wen's successor.

Upon Fei'e's admittance to the school as a *xiucai*, many officials from the county *yamen* called at General Wen's house with congratulations. Meanwhile, General Wen, leaving the error alone, gave the county officials a feast to celebrate this special occasion. Generally speaking, it was very hard to come by for a military official's family to have a *xiucai*. From then on General Wen started to have contacts with *yamen* officials and was no longer slighted by others. Owing to the excellent performance of Fei'e, her whole family seemed as if they had forgotten she was a girl.

In the school Junqing had two best classmates, one was Wei Zao, style name being Zhuanzhi, the other Du Yi, style name being Zizhong. Both Wei and Du were extraordinarily talented young men and both were congenial in temperament with Wen Junqing. While they were studying in school, each of them benefited a lot from each other. Wei was nineteen, two years senior to Junqing, and Du Zizhong and Junqing were of the same age, with Junqing being a few months older. Like brothers, they three got along pretty well in the school. They all agreed to share one room and study together. Being in the dark about Junqing's true identity, Wei Zhuanzhi and Du Zizhong, as usual, both took Junqing as their best friend.

Wen Junqing had the intention to choose one from these two classmates and get married to him. By comparison, she found Du Zizhong caught more of her fancy, because Du Zizhong, born in the same year with her, appeared to be more similar to her in words and deeds, and moreover, Du was more handsome than Wei.

Du Zizhong was also attracted to Wen Junqing's graceful bearing. One day, Du Zizhong said to Wen Junqing, "It's a pity you and I are men. Suppose I were a woman, I would take you as my husband. Suppose you were a woman, I would definitely take you as my wife." Hearing these remarks, Wei Zhuanzhi ridiculed them, saying, "Gays are now in vogue. You may as well get married." Wen Junqing retorted in a grave tone, "We're all disciples of Confucius. Wouldn't it be nicer if we all observe the rituals and rites and have due respect for each other? It would be a



魏撰之听得，便取笑道：“而今世界盛行男色，久已颠倒阴阳，那见得两男便嫁娶不得？”闻俊卿正色道：“我辈俱是孔门子弟，以文艺相知，彼此爱重，岂不有趣？若想着淫昵，便把面目放在何处？我辈堂堂男子，谁肯把身子做顽童乎？魏兄该罚东道便好。”魏撰之道：“适才听得杜子中爱慕俊卿，恨不得身为女子，故尔取笑。若俊卿不爱此道，子中也就变不及身子了。”杜子中道：“我原是两下的说话，今只说得一半，把我说得失便宜了。”魏撰之道：“三人之中，谁叫你独小些，自然该吃亏些。”大家笑了一回。

俊卿归家来，脱了男服，还是个女人。自家想道：“我久与男人做伴，已是不宜，岂可他日舍此同学之人，另寻配偶不成？毕竟止在二人之内了。虽然杜生更觉可喜，魏兄也自不凡。不知后来还是那个结果好，姻缘还在那个身上？”心中委决不下。他家中一个小楼，可以四望。一个高兴，趁步登楼。见一只乌鸦在楼窗前飞过，却去住在百来步外一株高树上，对着楼窗呀呀的叫。俊卿认得这株树，乃是学中斋前之树，心里道：“叵耐这业畜叫得不好听，我结果他去。”跑下来自己卧房中，取了弓箭；跑上楼来，那乌鸦还在那里狠叫。俊卿道：“我借这业畜卜我一件心事则个。”扯开弓，搭上箭，口里轻轻道：“不要误我！”飏的一声，箭到处，那边乌鸦坠地。这边望去看见，情知中箭了，急急下楼来，仍旧改了男妆，要到学中看那枝箭下落。

且说杜子中在斋前闲步，听得鸦鸣正急，忽然扑的一响，掉下地来。走去看时，鸦头上中了一箭，贯睛而死。子中拔了



shame if we always think of the obscene. We're all men. How should we do such a thing! As a fine for your rude remarks, Brother Wei should play host and treat us to a meal."

Wei Zhuanzhi said, "Just now I heard Du Zizhong said he wished he were a woman so that he could marry Junqing, so I teased him by making these remarks. If Junqing is not interested in being a gay, Zizhong has to turn himself into a woman so as to marry Junqing." Zizhong explained, "I made two suppositions, but you only got one. This is unfair." Wei Zhuanzhi said, "You're the youngest of us three, so you're to get the worst of it." Thus the three laughed and talked.

Arriving at home, Junqing changed into her woman's dress. She calculated in her mind, "I've been living together with Du and Wei for years. There is no reason for me not to make one of them my future husband. But I can't decide which of the two will be my future husband. Though I was more attracted to Du Zizhong, I also found Brother Wei a rather unusual talent." As she hesitated thus, she ascended the multi-storey building and watched into the distance. Just at this instant, a crow flew over her building and landed on a tall tree about a hundred paces away from her home, crying in the direction of her.

Junqing knew this tree. It was just in front of her classroom in the school. She thought to herself, "I hate this horrible cry of this damned crow. Let me kill it. Returning to her bedroom, she took her bow and arrow and then went to the building again. The crow was still crying there on the tree. She thought to herself, "I'll shoot it down. I wish this shot will take off the load on my mind!" With the bow drawn and the arrow set, she let go of the arrow as she whispered to herself, "Don't let me down!" The crow fell off the tree. Quickly she came down the building and changed into a man's dress. Then she set out towards the school to see who would pick up the arrow.

Right at that time Du Zizhong was strolling around in front of the classroom when the crow cried on the tree. To his surprise, he found that the crow fell to the ground with a crash, dead with an arrow right in the head. Taking out the arrow from the head of the crow, Zizhong marveled, "What a dead shot! Right in the middle of the head! Who could be the



箭出来道：“谁有此神手？恰恰贯着他头脑。”仔细看那箭干上，有两行细字道：“矢不虚发，发必应弦。”子中念罢，笑道：“那人好夸口！”魏撰之听得，跳出来急叫道：“拿与我看！”在杜子中手里接了过去。正同着看时，忽然子中家里有人来寻，子中掉箭自去了，魏撰之细看之时，八个字下边，还有“蜚娥记”三小字，想着：“蜚娥乃女人之号，难道女人中有此妙手？这也诧异。适才子中不看见这三个字，若见时必然还要称奇了。”

沉吟间，早有闻俊卿走将来，看见魏撰之捻了这枝箭立在那里，忙问道：“这枝箭是兄拾了么？”撰之道：“箭自何来的，兄却如此盘问？”俊卿道：“箭上有字的么？”撰之道：“因为字，在此念想。”俊卿道：“念想些甚么？”撰之道：“有‘蜚娥记’三字。蜚娥必是女人，故此想着，难道有这般善射的女子不成？”俊卿捣个鬼道：“不敢欺兄，蜚娥即是家姊。”撰之道：“令姊有如此巧艺，曾许聘那家了？”俊卿道：“未曾许人。”撰之道：“模样如何？”俊卿道：“与小弟有些厮像。”撰之道：“这等，必是极美的了。俗语道：‘未看老婆，先看阿舅。’小弟尚未有室，吾兄与小弟做个撮合山何如？”俊卿道：“家下事，多是小弟作主。老父面前，只消小弟一说，无有不依。只未知家姐心下如何。”撰之道：“令姊面前，也在吾兄帮衬，通



shooter?" Upon a closer look on the arrow, he found a line in small characters, reading, "I put my arrow on the bow and not a single arrow is to miss the target." Du Zizhong said, laughing, "What a braggart!"

Hardly had Du finished these words when Wei Zhuanzhi ran over and shouted, "What's in your hand? Let me have a look." Wei took the arrow from Du's hand. While Wei was examining the arrow, a man from Du Zizhong's family came to Du and asked him to go back home to attend to something urgent. Leaving the arrow behind him, Du Zizhong left for home. Wei Zhuanzhi looked at the arrow carefully and found the name "Fei'e" at the end of the line mentioned above. He pondered, "Fei'e is a woman's name. Could there be such a dead shot among women?"

While Wei Zhuanzhi was lost in thought, Wen Junqing rushed over to him in a hurry. Seeing that the arrow was in Wei Zhuanzhi's hand, Junqing asked, "You got this arrow?" Zhuanzhi asked in reply, "Where is this arrow from? Why do you ask?" Junqing said, "There are characters on the arrow, aren't there?" Zhuanzhi answered, "Yes, there are. These characters aroused some thoughts in me and made me doubtful." Junqing asked, "What thoughts?" Zhuanzhi answered, "I noticed a name Fei'e. Fei'e must be a woman. This is what I was thinking. Could it be possible there is such an excellent dead shot among women?"

Junqing said, "To be frank, Fei'e is my elder sister." Zhuanzhi said, "What a superb skill your sister has! Is she engaged?" Junqing said, "Not yet." Zhuanzhi asked, "How does she look like?" Junqing answered, "She looks somewhat like me." Zhuanzhi said, "In this case, she must be very beautiful! Just as the old saying goes, 'if the brother is handsome, the sister must be a beauty too.' I'm still single. Could you act as a matchmaker and make Fei'e my wife?" Junqing said, "Generally speaking, I have the final say in my family. My father will always listen to me. But I have no idea what my elder sister will think of it." Zhuanzhi said joyfully, "Put in a few good words for me before your sister, please. I'm sure she won't turn her back on me." Junqing said, "I'll keep it in mind and do my utmost to help you." Zhuanzhi never expected this arrow would have something to do with his future marriage. So he regarded this arrow as a treasure and put it into a suitcase, hoping it would help bring about his marriage in the



家之雅，料无推拒。”俊卿道：“小弟谨记在心。”撰之喜道：“得兄应承，便十有八九了。谁想姻缘却在此枝箭上，小弟谨当宝此以为后验。”便把箭来收拾在拜匣内了。取出羊脂玉闹妆一个递与俊卿，道：“以此奉令姊，权答此箭，作个信物。”俊卿收来束在腰间。撰之道：“小弟作诗一首，道意于令姊，何如？”俊卿道：“愿闻。”撰之吟道：

闻得罗敷未有夫，支机肯许问津无？

他年得射如皋雉，珍重今朝金仆姑。

俊卿笑道：“诗意最妙，只是兄貌不陋，似太谦了些。”撰之笑道：“小弟虽不便似贾大夫之丑，却与令妹相并，必是不及。”俊卿含笑自去了。

从此撰之胸中痴痴里想着闻俊卿有个姊妹，美貌巧艺，要得为妻。有了这个念头，并不与杜子中知道。因为箭是他拾着的，今自己把做宝贝藏着，恐怕他知因，来要了去。谁想这个箭，元有来历，俊卿学射时节，便怀有择配之心。竹干上刻那二句，固是夸着发矢必中，也暗藏个应弦的哑谜。他射那乌鸦之时，明知在书斋树上，射去这枝箭，心里暗卜一卦，看他两人那个先拾得者，即为夫妻，为此急急来寻下落，不知是杜子中先拾着，后来掉在魏撰之手里。俊卿只见在魏撰之处，以为





future.

Upon hearing Junqing was ready to help him, Zhuanzhi was overwhelmed with joy and thought that he was most likely going to have a beautiful fiancée. Then he took out a white jade ornament, which was supposed to be attached to the waistband, and handed it to Junqing, saying, "Please give it to your elder sister as token of pledge." Junqing accepted it and tied it to her waistband. "Do you mind if I compose a poem to express my feelings towards your sister?" Zhuanzhi asked. "I'm all ears," replied Junqing. Zhuanzhi chanted thus:

Happy I am to learn a beauty has not been engaged.

Could she accept my offer of marriage?

Deeply worried I am if my ugly features could be her match.

I'll take good care of this arrow, whatever the outcome will be.

Upon hearing the poem, Junqing said laughingly, "A wonderful poem! But actually you're not ugly at all. I think you're being too modest." Zhuanzhi said, "I just don't think I can be your sister's match, though I'm not that ugly." With a smile, Junqing left.

From then on, Wei Zhuanzhi was lost in thought that Junqing had a sister who was both beautiful and skillful and was going to be his wife. He deliberately kept Du Zizhong in the dark about this matter, for it was Du who first got the arrow and he was afraid that Du would come to claim the arrow once he knew the truth. Wei Zhuanzhi kept the arrow in his suitcase as a treasure.

Actually when she shot the crow on the tree, Junqing had secretly used it to predict her marriage. Among Zhuanzhi and Zizhong, the one who got the arrow first would be her future husband. So she hurriedly ran to the school to see who had got the arrow. She didn't know it was Du Zizhong who had got the arrow first and later Wei Zhuanzhi got it from Du's hand. As she arrived at the scene and found the arrow was in Wei Zhuanzhi's hand, Junqing thought marriage was predestined and Wei would be her future husband. When she told him Fei'e was her elder sister, she was actually referring to herself. Not knowing the ins and outs of the matter, Wei Zhuanzhi believed her easily.

Though she believed it was fate that she would have Wei Zhuanzhi as

姻缘有定，故假意说是姐姐，其实多暗隐着自己的意思。魏撰之不知其故，凭他捣鬼，只道真有个姐姐罢了。俊卿固然认了魏撰之是天缘，心里却为杜子中十分相爱，好些撇打不下。叹口气道：“一马跨不得双鞍，我又违不得天意。他日别寻件事端，补还他美情罢。”明日来对魏撰之道：“老父与家姊面前，小弟十分撺掇，已有允意，玉闹妆也留在家姊处了。老父的意思，要等秋试过，待兄高捷了方议此事。”魏撰之道：“这个也好，只是一言既定，再无翻变才妙。”俊卿道：“有小弟在，谁翻变得？”魏撰之不胜之喜。

时值秋闹，魏撰之与杜子中、闻俊卿多考在优等，起送乡试。两人来拉了俊卿同去。俊卿与父参将计较道：“女孩儿家只好瞒着人，暂时做秀才耍子，若当真去乡试，一下子中了举人，后边露出真情来，就要关着奏请干系。事体弄大了，不好收场，决使不得。”推了有病不行。魏、杜两生只得撇了，自去赴试。揭晓之日，两生多得中了。

闻俊卿见两家报了捷，也自欢喜。打点等魏撰之迎到家时，方把求亲之话与父亲说知，图成此亲事。不想安绵兵备道与闻参将不合，时值军政考察，在按院处开了款数，递了一个



her husband, Junqing felt she loved Du Zizhong more than Wei Zhuanzhi and found it hard to put Du aside. Heaving a sigh, she said to herself, “I can’t straddle two boats. And the will of Heaven is inviolable. I’ll have to find an opportunity some day to repay Du’s goodwill.”

On the next day Junqing said to Wei Zhuanzhi, “I’ve talked it over with my father and he has almost agreed to your offer of marriage. I’ve also given your white jade ornament to my sister. But my father hoped to make the final decision after you’ve passed the imperial civil examinations held at the provincial capital in the autumn.” Wei Zhuanzhi said, “That’s okay with me. Since it’s been decided thus, we should never go back on our words.” Junqing said, “I can assure you that my family won’t change our mind on this matter.” Hearing these words, Wei Zhuanzhi was very happy.

When it was time for the imperial examinations held at the provincial capital in the autumn, Wei Zhuanzhi and Du Zizhong came to Junqing and asked her to join them and go and sit for the examinations together. Junqing consulted her father. General Wen said, “You’re a girl. It’s okay if you disguise yourself as a man and be a *xiucai* for fun. If you really succeed in passing the imperial examinations at the provincial level and are awarded the title of *juren*, you’ll be suspected of cheating the emperor once someone discloses your true identity to the imperial court. How are you going to end up the matter by then? I don’t think you should go and take part in the examinations with them.” Consequently Junqing declined Wei and Du’s invitation on the pretext of illness.

Wei Zhuanzhi and Du Zizhong took part in the examinations and both successfully passed the examinations held at the provincial capital and were conferred the title of *juren*.

Wen Junqing was very delighted at the news that both Wei and Du had been conferred the title of *juren*. She calculated that after Wei Zhuanzhi returned home from the capital city, she would tell her father about Wei’s proposal and talk her father into bringing about the marriage.

It so happened that General Wen and the Military Defense Circuit of Anmian were not on good terms with each other at that time. While the Imperial Inspector was assessing the performances of the military officers,

揭帖，诬他冒用国课，妄报功绩，侵克军粮，累赃巨万。按院参上一本。奉圣旨，着本处抚院提问。此报一至，闻家合门慌做了一团，也就有许多衙门人寻出事端来缠扰。还亏得闻俊卿是个出名的秀才，众人不敢十分罗唆。过不多时，兵道行个牌到府来，说是奉旨犯人，把闻参将收拾在府狱中去了。闻俊卿自把生员出名，去递投诉，就求保候父亲。府间准了诉词，不肯召保。俊卿就央了同窗新中的两个举人去见府尊。府尊说：“碍上司分付，做不得情。”三人袖手无计。此时魏撰之自揣道：“他家患难之际，料说不得求亲的闲话，只好不提起，且一面去会试再处。”

两人临行之时，又与俊卿作别。撰之道：“我们三人同心之友，我两人喜得侥幸，方恨俊卿因病蹉跎，不得同登，不想又遭此家难。而今我们匆匆进京去了，心下如割，却是事出无奈。多致意尊翁，且自安心听问，我们若少得进步，必当出力



the Military Defense Circuit of Anmian, listing several of General Wen's offences, wrote a memorial to expose and denounce Wen and presented it to the Imperial Inspector in secret, charging him with misusing taxes, making false report of his meritorious deeds, misappropriating army provisions, and the money and goods he had embezzled amounting up to thousands of taels of silver. The Imperial Inspector presented the memorial to the throne. The emperor issued an edict, ordering that the case be investigated and tried by the Governor of the locale. All the family members of Wen were thrown into panic at the news. Some local yamen runners took the opportunity to harass the Wen family. However, as Junqing was a renowned *xiucaï*, the runners didn't dare to go too far. Soon the Military Defense Circuit arrived at General Wen's house with an official warrant and took General Wen to the jail.

Junqing, announcing her *xiucaï* identity, entered the *yamen* and saw the Governor in person and presented an appeal in the hope of bailing out her father. The Governor accepted her appeal but he said was in no position to help her, for General Wen was denounced a criminal by the imperial edict. Having no options, Junqing asked her two new *juren* friends to go and see the Governor. The Governor said, "Sorry I can't help you. I dare not to disobey the instructions from the higher authorities." Thus they three were all at a loss what to do. Wei Zhuanzhi thought to himself, "Her family is now in trouble. I'm afraid I can't bring up the subject of making an offer of marriage. I'll have to drop it for the time being and then bring it up again until after my return from the general examinations held at the capital.

Upon departure for the capital, Wei Zhuanzhi and Du Zizhong came to see Junqing to say goodbye to her. Wei said, "We three are best friends. Zizhong and I were lucky to become *juren*. It's a pity Junqing missed the chance to become a *juren* due to his illness. Unexpectedly, Junqing's father got into such trouble. Now we'll have to leave for in the general examinations held at the capital. We feel as if a knife were piercing our hearts, but we have no other options. Please tell your father to be patient. If we can pass the examinations successfully, we'll definitely do our best to help him address the injustice done to him and get him out of jail."



相助，来白此冤！”子中道：“此间官官相护，做定了圈套陷入。闻兄只在家营救，未必有益。我两人进去，倘得好处，闻兄不若径到京来商量，与尊翁寻个出场。还是那边上流头好辨白冤枉，我辈也好相机助力。切记！切记！”撰之又私自嘱咐道：“令姑之事，万万留心。不论得意不得意，此番回来必求事谐了。”俊卿道：“闹妆现在，料不使兄失望便了。”三人洒泪而别。

闻俊卿自两人去后，一发没有商量可救父亲。亏得官无三日急，到有七日宽，无非凑些银子，上下分派一分派，使用得停当，狱中的也不受苦，官府也不来急急要问，丢在半边，做一件未结公案了。参将与女儿计较道：“这边的官司既未问理，我们正好做手脚。我意要修上一个辨本，做成一个备细揭帖，到京中诉冤。只没个能干的人去得，心下踌躇未定。”闻俊卿道：“这件事须得孩儿自去。前日魏、杜两兄临别时，也教孩儿进京去，可以相机行事。但得两兄有一人得第，也就好做靠傍了。”参将道：“虽然你是个女中丈夫，是你去毕竟停当。只是万里程途，路上恐怕不便。”俊卿道：“自古多称缙紫救父，以为美谈。他也是个女子，况且孩儿男妆已久，游庠已过，一



Zizhong added, “Officials in this place protect each other and some even set traps to frame people. It won’t be of any help for Brother Wen to rescue his father in this region. Once Brother Wei and I get to the capital and succeed in passing the general examinations, Junqing can come to the capital and join us so that we can think of a way together to rescue your father. It should be easier to get a wrong righted in the capital. This is something you must engrave on your mind.” Turning to Junqing, Wei Zhuanzhi urged her in a low voice, “Do keep in mind my proposal to your sister. After the general examinations are over, I’ll have the matter settled as soon as I’m back.” Junqing said, “Since your white jade waistband ornament is now kept in my family, I promise you I won’t let you down.” So saying, Wei and Du parted with Junqing in tears.

After Wei and Du were gone, Junqing found she had no one to turn to to rescue her father. Fortunately, officials who had committed offences were usually given a certain period of grace before they were handed over to court for trial and punished. What she could only do was gather together some silver and gave it to the *yamen* officials at different levels. As a result of this, General Wen avoided torture while he was in jail and all the *yamen* officials put aside General Wen’s case, leaving it an unsettled one.

One day General Wen said to his daughter Junqing, “Since the *yamen* officials now take my case as less urgent, we should take advantage of this opportunity and do something. I was thinking of writing an appeal and present it to the capital. Unfortunately I don’t have such a person around me who is capable of this task. This is what’s worrying me.” Junqing said, “Just leave it to me. When Zhuanzhi and Zizhong were leaving for the capital the other day, they also asked me to go there to join them so that they may assist me to your rescue. If any one of them two succeeds in passing the examinations, he will be of great help for us.”

General Wen said, “You’re a capable woman and I know you can make it. But it’s really too long a journey and I’m afraid there will be lots of inconveniences for you on the road.” Junqing said, “The story about how Ti Ying<sup>3</sup> saves her father has been circulated as an anecdote worthy of emulation. Ti Yi was a girl too. Don’t worry about it. Though I am a



向算在丈失之列，有甚去不得？虽是路途遥远，孩儿弓矢可以防身。倘有甚么人盘问，凭着胸中见识，也支持得过，不足为虑。只是须得个男人随去，这却不便。孩儿想得有个道理，家丁闻龙夫妻多是苗种，多善弓马，孩儿把他妻子也打扮做男人，带着他两个，连孩儿共是三人一起走。既有妇女伏侍，又有男仆跟随，可以放心一直到京了。”参将道：“既然算计得停当，事不宜迟，快打点动身便是。”俊卿依命，一面去收拾。听得街上报进士，说魏、杜两人多中了。俊卿不胜之喜，来对父亲说道：“有他两人在京做主，此去一发不难做事。”就拣定一日，作急起身。在学中动了一个游学呈子，批个文书执照，带在身边了。路经省下来，再察听一察听上司的声口消息。

你道闻小姐怎生打扮？

飘飘巾幘，覆着两鬓青丝；窄窄靴鞋，套着一双玉笋。上马衣裁成短后，蛮狮带妆就偏垂。囊一张玉靶弓，想开时，舒臂扭腰多体态；插几枝雁翎箭，看放处，猿啼雕落逞高强。争羨道能文善武的小郎君，怎知是女扮男妆的乔秀士？

一路来到了成都府中，闻龙先去寻下了一所幽静饭店。闻俊卿





woman, I've been attending school in a man's disguise and for years I've been among men. I'm sure there won't be any inconveniences for me on the road. It is a long way, but I can protect myself with my bow and arrows. If someone happens to question me, with my extensive knowledge and experience, I know how to cope with the situation properly. There is nothing to be worried about. But I guess I should have a man to be my company, and this will make things inconvenient for me. I've got an idea. Our servant Wen Long and his wife are both good at riding and archery. I think I can disguise his wife as a man and ask them two to follow me as my fellow travelers. Thus I'll have a woman servant to look after me and a man servant to follow me. With these two companions attending to me, I'm sure I can get to the capital without any difficulties." General Wen said, "Since it's thus decided, we should not lose a minute. Better get on moving right now." Then Junqing left her father and started to pack up for the journey.

While she was busying preparing for the journey, Junqing suddenly heard people on the street shouting Wei and Du had been conferred the title of *jinsi*. Overcome with joy, Junqing said to her father, "With Wei and Du's assistance in the capital, I think things will be much easier for us." Then she made a petition to the county school requesting to make a tour to the capital. Her petition was approved instantly. She got a traveler's license and kept it with her. She calculated that when she reached Chengdu, the provincial capital, she would make an inquiry about her father's case. Do you know how Junqing was like?

Her long black hair is covered with a man's headdress and her slender feet are in a pair of thin riding boots. Her steed starts to gallop once she gets on it. In her backpack are a jade like bow and a couple of arrows with wild goose feathers. Just imagine her gracefulness when she shoots the arrows, stretching her arms and swaying his hips, and her superb craftsmanship when the arrows hit the preys! Posing as a young man and being well versed both in civilian and military affairs, she is the admiration of all. But who knows she is a woman *xiuca* disguised as man?

Before long they three reached Chengdu. Wen Long found a quiet small inn as their temporary dwelling place. After they settled down in



后到，歇下了行李，叫闻龙妻子取出带来的山菜几件，放在碟内，向店中取了一壶酒，斟着慢吃。又道是无巧不成话，那坐的所在，与隔壁人家窗口相对，只隔得一个小天井。正吃之间，只见那边窗里一个女子，掩着半窗，对着闻俊卿不转眼的看。及至闻俊卿抬起眼来，那边又闪了进去。遮遮掩掩，只不走开。忽地打个照面，乃是个绝色佳人。闻俊卿想道：“原来世间有这样标致的？”看官，你道此时若是个男人，必然动了心，就想妆出些风流家数，两下做起光景来。怎当得闻俊卿自己也是个女身，那里放在心上？一面取饭来吃了，且自衙门前干事去。

到得出去了半日，傍晚转来，俊卿刚得坐下，隔壁听见这里有人声，那个女子又在窗边来看了。俊卿私下自笑道：“看我做甚？岂知我与你是一般样的！”正嗟叹间，只见门外一个老姥走将进来，手中拿着一个小榼儿。见了俊卿，放下榼子，道了万福，对俊卿道：“间壁景家小娘子见舍人独酌，送两件果子，与舍人当茶。”俊卿开看，乃是南充黄柑，顺庆紫梨，各十来枚。俊卿道：“小生在此经过，与娘子非亲非戚，如何承此美意？”老姥道：“小娘子说来，此间来万去千的人，不曾见有似舍人这等丰标的，必定是富贵家的出身。及至问人来，说是参府中小舍人。小娘子说，这俗店无物可口，叫老媳妇送此二物来解渴。”俊卿道：“小娘子何等人家，却居此间壁？”



this small inn, Junqing had Wen Long's wife bring over a few wild herbs they had brought with them and then put them into the dishes. Then they bought a pot of wine. Then they started to enjoy their food and wine. While they were drinking, Junqing noticed that the window next-door was right opposite theirs and a girl behind the half open window was staring at her. Raising her head, Junqing looked at the girl, but the girl got out of her sight and hid herself behind the window. As Junqing lowered her head, the girl emerged again to steal glances at Junqing. Junqing looked up abruptly and they two met face to face. Junqing found that the girl opposite her room was very beautiful. "What a beauty she is!" exclaimed Junqing. Readers, had Junqing been a man, she would be certainly attracted to the girl. But the fact was that Junqing was a woman too. So it was natural she didn't pay much attention to her. After she had finished her dinner, Junqing made her way to the *yamen*.

Dusk found Junqing coming back to the small inn. No sooner had she taken her seat than the beautiful girl living opposite her room came to the window to watch her again. "Why look at me?" Junqing muttered to herself, smiling. "You and I are both women." While Junqing was thus wondering, an old lady came in with a wine container in her hand. Putting it on the table and making a curtsy toward Junqing, the old lady said, "Miss Jing living next-door to you saw you drinking alone. So she asked me to bring you some fruits and she hoped the fruits could be substitutes for your tea." Opening the wine container, Junqing found dozens of oranges and pears in it. "I'm merely a passing traveler," said Junqing, "and I'm no relation of your Miss. How can I accept her presents?"

The old lady said, "Miss Jing told me that thousands of passing travelers come to this place everyday, but she has never seen one who is as handsome and graceful as you. She thought you must be from a wealthy and influential family. We also learned that you're the son of General Wen. My young lady Miss Jing said that you didn't have anything delicious in this small shabby inn, so she asked me to bring you these fruits to quench your thirst." Junqing asked, "Who is this Miss Jing? Why does she live here next to this inn?"

The old lady answered, "Miss Jing is the daughter of Master Jing from



老姥道：“这小娘子是井研景少卿的小姐。只因父母双亡，他依着外婆家住。他家里自有万金家事，只为寻不出中意的丈夫，所以还没嫁人。外公是此间富员外，这城中极兴的客店，多是他家的房子，何止有十来处，进益甚广。只有这里幽静些，却同家小每住在间壁。他也不敢主张把外甥许人，恐怕做了对头，后来怨怅。常对景小娘子道：‘凭你自家看得中意的，实对我说，我就主婚。’这个小娘子也古怪，自来会拣相人物，再不曾说那一个好。方才见了舍人，便十分称赞，敢是与舍人有些姻缘动了？”俊卿不好答应，微微笑道：“小生那有此福？”老姥道：“好说，好说。老媳妇且去着。”俊卿道：“致意小娘子，多承佳惠，客中无可奉答，但有心感盛情。”老姥去了，俊卿自想一想，不觉失笑道：“这小娘子看上了我，却不枉费春心？”吟诗一首，聊寄其意。诗云：

为念相如渴不禁，交梨邛橘出芳林。

却惭未是求凰客，寂莫囊中绿绮琴。

次日早起，老姥又来，手中将着四枚剥净的熟鸡子，做一碗盛着，同了一小壶好茶，送到俊卿面前道：“舍人吃点心。”俊卿道：“多谢妈妈盛情。”老姥道：“这是景小娘子昨夜分付了，老身支持来的。”俊卿道：“又是小娘子美情，小生如何消受？有一诗奉谢，烦妈妈与我带去。”俊卿即把昨夜之诗写在笺纸上，封好了付妈妈。诗中分明是推却之意，妈妈将去与景



Jingyan County. Her father used to be an official too. Her parents passed away some time ago. She is now living with her grandmother's, and her grandmother's is also very wealthy. She wants to find a husband on her own, but she has not come across one who would catch her fancy. So she is still single. Her grandfather, surnamed Fu, is a rich man. Most of the houses that have a brisk business on hotel running are her grandfather's properties. This small inn is located in a quiet place, so she lives here with her servant maids right next-door. Her grandfather often encourages her to find a good match for herself, and tells her that once she has found someone she likes, just tell him and he will surely help her bring about the marriage. Miss Jing had not fallen for anyone before she met you. I guess you're going to have a wonderful marriage."

Being in no position to accept the offer, Junqing said with a smile, "I'm afraid I can't be her match. Please extend my thanks to Miss Jing. Tell her I'm only a passing traveler here and I'm sorry I can't think of my marriage at the moment." After the old lady was gone, Junqing couldn't refrain from laughing. She said to herself, "Isn't she wasting her time to fall in love with me?" On the spur of the moment she wrote an improvisation to express her helpless feelings, which read roughly: Though the pears and oranges taste good, pity it is I'm not in the position to be a husband.

On the next morning the old lady came to Junqing's place again with four boiled eggs and a pot of top quality tea. After placing them in front of Junqing, the old lady said, "These are for you." Junqing said, "Thank you for your kindness." The old lady said, "Last night Miss Jing told me to give them to you." Junqing said, "It's so kind of Miss Jing. I'm afraid I can't accept them. Here are a couple of lines and I'd like to bother you to send this slip of paper to Miss Jing." So saying, Junqing handed the slip of paper to the old lady.

Arriving at home, the old lady gave the slip of paper to Miss Jing. Miss Jing read it. Though Junqing's original intention was to decline Miss Jing's offer, Miss Jing misunderstood it as Junqing was also attracted to her and was just being modest between the lines. As she was deep in love with Junqing, Miss Jing also wrote a few lines to Junqing in reply on a

小姐看了，景小姐一心喜着俊卿，见他以相如自比，反认做有意于文君，后边两句不过是谦让些说话。遂也回他一首，和其末韵。诗云：

宋玉墙东思不禁，愿为比翼止同林。

知音已有新裁句，何用重挑焦尾琴？

吟罢，也写在乌丝茧纸上，教老姥送将来。俊卿看罢，笑道：“元来小姐如此高才！难得，难得！”俊卿见他来缠得紧，生一个计较，对老姥道：“多谢小姐美意，小生不是无情，争奈小生已聘有妻室，不敢欺心妄想。上复小姐，这段姻缘种在来世罢。”老姥道：“既然舍人已有了亲事，老身去回复了小娘子，省得他牵肠挂肚，空想坏了。”老姥去得，俊卿自出门去打点衙门事体，央求宽缓日期。诸色停当，到了天晚才回得下处。是夜无词。

来日天早，这老姥又走将来，笑道：“舍人小小年纪，倒会掉谎，老婆滚到身边，推着不要。昨日回了小娘子，小娘子教我问一问两位管家，多说道舍人并不曾聘娘子过。小娘子喜欢不胜，已对员外说过，少刻员外自来奉拜说亲，好歹要成事了。”俊卿听罢，呆了半晌，道：“这冤家帐那里说起？只索收拾行李起来，趁早去了罢。”分付闻龙与店家会了钞，急待起身。只见店家走进来报道：“主人富员外相拜闻相公。”说罢，一个七十多岁的老人家笑嘻嘻进来。堂中望见了闻俊卿，先自欢喜，问道：“这位小相公，想是闻舍人了么？”老姥还在店内，也跟将来，说道：“正是这位。”富员外把手一拱道：“请过来相见。”闻俊卿见过了礼，整了客座坐了。富员外道：“老汉无事不敢冒叩新客。老汉有一外甥，乃是景少卿之女，未曾许着人家。舍甥立愿不肯轻配凡流，老汉不敢擅做主张，凭他



sheet of paper, which roughly read: I just cannot stop thinking of you my love. Why not build our love nest in one wood? After finishing these lines, she asked the old lady to send it to Junqing.

Having read Miss Jing's message, Junqing was amazed by her literary talent. Turning to the old lady, she said, "Please extend my thanks to Miss Jing. It's not that I'm heartless, but that I've been engaged. Tell your Miss I'll accept her offer in my next life!" The old lady said, "I'll go back and tell her that you've been engaged. Otherwise she'll get ill because of thinking of you in vain."

After the old lady left Junqing's place, Junqing again went to the local *yamen* to attend to her father's case, hoping that the *yamen* could further extend the trial of her father. This being done, she came back to the small inn to rest.

One early morning the old lady again came to Junqing and said, smiling, "You were not telling me the truth the other day. Yesterday Miss Jing asked me to go and ask your two followers whether you're engaged or not. They told me you're not engaged. Miss Jing was very pleased at the news and she has talked her mind to her grandfather. Her grandfather will be here in a moment to talk with you about the marriage." Upon hearing this, Junqing thought, "What should I do about it? Better get my things packed and leave this place immediately." Then she told Wen Long to go and pay the bill.

As they were about to leave the inn, the owner of the inn came forward and said, "Master Fu has come to see Mr. Wen." Then an old man in his seventies, wearing a smile on the face, came in. As his eyes fell on Wen Junqing, the old man asked, "Is this young man Mr. Wen?" The old lady who was then at the inn at the moment also rushed over and replied, "Exactly." Cupping one hand in the other, Master Fu said, "Very pleased to meet you." Junqing greeted him politely and asked him to take a seat. Looking Junqing up and down, Master Fu said, "Excuse me for my rashness. I would not dare to drop in on you, a new comer, if it were not for something urgent. I have a granddaughter and she is still single. She is not willing to get married to an ordinary man and I'm in no position to make a marriage decision on her behalf. I gave her permission that she



意中自择。昨日对老汉说，有个闻舍人下在本店，丰标不凡，愿执箕帚。所以要老汉自来奉拜，说此亲事。老汉今见足下，果然俊雅非常。舍甥也有几分姿容，况且粗通文墨，实是一对佳耦，足下不可错过。”闻俊卿道：“不敢欺老丈，小生过蒙令甥谬爱，岂敢自外？一来令甥是公卿阀阅，小生是武弁门风，恐怕攀高不着；二来老父在难中，小生正要入京辨冤，此事既不曾告过，又不好为此担阁，所以应承不得。”员外道：“舍人是簪缨世胄，况又是黉宫有士，指日飞腾，岂分甚么文武门楣？若为令尊之事，慌速入京，何不把亲事议定了，待归时稟知令尊，方才完娶？既安了舍甥之心，又不误了足下之事，有何不可？”闻俊卿无计推托，心下想道：“他家不晓得我的心病，如此相逼，却又不好十分过却，打破机关。我想魏撰之有竹箭之缘，不必说了。还有杜子中更加相厚，到不得不闪下了他。一向有个主意，要在骨肉女伴里边别寻一段姻缘，发付他去。而今既有此事，我不若权且应承，定下在这里，他日作成了杜子中，岂不为妙？那时晓得我是女身，须怪不得我说谎。





may find a match on her own. Yesterday she told me there lived a handsome young man in this inn and she had fallen in love with you and had the intention to marry you. So I've come here in person to bring about the marriage. Indeed you're a handsome and graceful young man. My granddaughter is also very pretty and has a rudimentary knowledge of letters. You are really a match. Hope you don't let slip the chance."

Upon hearing Master Fu's words, Junqing said, "To be frank, I'm greatly honored. But I'm afraid I won't be a match for your granddaughter, for she is from a civilian high-ranking official's family while I'm of a military man's origin. Secondly, my father is now behind the bars and I'm on my way to the capital to make an appeal for him. I'm sorry I can't accept the marriage, because, on the one hand, I haven't got the chance to talk it over with my parents; on the other hand, I don't think I can extend my time of stay in this place for this matter."

Master Fu said, "You're from a high-ranking military official's family too. Moreover, you're a talented scholar and are sure to have a promising official career in the future. I don't think you two are not well-matched in social status. Since you're now worrying about your father and are anxious to make the trip to the capital, we might as well make the engagement first. After you've talked it over with your parents, you can come back here and fulfill the marriage. If this could be done, my granddaughter will be able to rest assured about her marriage and at the same time you can also continue your journey to rescue your father."

Junqing found it hard to offer an excuse to decline him. She thought to herself, "He has no knowledge of my identity. Though I'm pressed so hard, I can't disclose my true identity. Also it will not be fitting and proper to refuse them firmly. First and foremost, as fate has it, my arrow has connected me with Wei Zhuanzhi. Secondly, Du Zizhong is still in my heart and I feel I can't desert him. As I've been thinking of finding him a wife among my girl companions, wouldn't it be a good idea if I give my consent to this marriage at this moment and then make Miss Jing and Zizhong a couple someday in the future? Later if they get to know I am a woman, I will not be to blame for telling them a lie. If Zizhong and Miss Jing are fated to be a couple, things by then will be easier for me to



万一杜子中也不成，那时也好开交了，不像而今碍手。”算计已定，就对员外说：“既承老丈与令甥如此高情，小生岂敢不受人提掣！只得留下一件信物在此为定。待小生京中回来，上门求娶就是了。”说罢，就在身边解下那个羊脂玉闹妆，双手递与员外道：“奉此与令甥表信。”富员外千欢万喜，接受在手，一同老姥去回复景小姐道：“一言已定了。”员外就叫店中办起酒来，与闻舍人饯行。俊卿推却不得，吃得尽欢而罢，相别了起身上路。

少不得风餐水宿，夜住晓行。不一日，到了京城。叫闻龙先去打听魏、杜两家新进士的下处。问着了杜子中一家。元来那魏撰之已在部给假回去了。杜子中见说闻俊卿来到，不胜之喜，忙差长班来接到下处。两人相见，寒温已毕。俊卿道：“小弟专为老父之事，前日别时，承兄每分付入京图便，切切在心。后闻两兄高发，为此不辞跋涉，特来相托。不想魏撰之已归，今幸吾兄尚在京师，小弟不致失望了。”杜子中道：“仁兄先将老伯被诬事款做一个揭帖，逐一辨明，刊刻起来，在朝门外逢人就送。等公论明白了，然后小弟央个相好的同年在兵部的，条陈别事，带上一段，就好到本籍去生发出脱了。”俊卿道：“老



handle, unlike the present thorny problem.”

With this in mind, Junqing said to Master Fu, “I’m very grateful to your favors. How can I ignore your kindness and turn you down? I think I need to leave a gift to you as a token of engagement. After I return from the capital, I’ll come to fulfill the marriage.” So saying, she untied the white jade ornament from her waistband and handed it to Master Fu with both hands. She said, “This is a token of my pledge of marriage with your granddaughter.” Overjoyed, Master Fu accepted it, and then told the old lady to go and tell Miss Jing the good news. After this, Master Fu ordered that a farewell dinner be given in Junqing’s honor. After the dinner, Junqing resumed her journey to the capital.

Eating in the wind and sleeping in the dew, Junqing and her followers hurried on with their journey and in a few days they reached the capital. Junqing then sent Wen Long out to inquire about Wei Zhuanzhi and Du Zizhong’s whereabouts. Soon they found Du Zizhong in the capital, but Wei Zhuanzhi, being granted a leave, had gone back home. Du Zizhong was carried away with joy as he learned about Junqing’s arrival at capital. Without losing a minute, he sent his head servant to go and bring her to his dwelling place. After exchanging greetings, Junqing said, “When we three parted the other day, you and Zhuanzhi told me to come to the capital to seek assistance from you concerning my old father’s trouble. And I have always kept it in my mind. Some time after you left, I learned that both you two had been conferred the title of jinshi. So I’ve especially come to you to see if you and Brother Wei could help me redress the injustice done to my father. Unfortunately Brother Wei has gone. But I’m happy you’re still in the capital.”

Du Zizhong said. “I suggest that you write down in detail how your father was falsely charged and wronged and then have it block-printed and distribute the leaflets among all the people you come across. When the public views are in our favor, I’ll ask one of my best friends in the Ministry of War to use his good offices to put in a few words on your father’s favor while he reported other affairs. After this is done, you can go back to the local authorities and I think, by then, you’ll be able handle this matter with ease.” “My father had written an appeal. Can we present



父有个本稿，可以上得否？”子中道：“而今重文轻武，老伯是按院题的，若武职官出名自辨，他们不容起来，反致激怒，弄坏了事。不如小弟方才说的为妙，仁兄不要轻率。”俊卿道：“感谢指教。小弟是书生之见，还求仁兄做主行事。”子中道：“异姓兄弟，原是自家身上的事，何劳叮私咿？”俊卿道：“撰之为何回去了？”子中道：“撰之原与小弟同寓了多时，他说有件心事，要归来与仁兄商量。问其何事，又不肯说。小弟说，仁兄见吾二人中了，未必不进京来。他说这是不可期的，况且事体要来家里做的，必要先去，所以告假去了。正不知仁兄却又到此，可不两相左了？敢问仁兄，他果然要商量何等事？”俊卿明知是为婚姻之事，却只做不知，推说道：“连小弟也不晓得他为甚么，想来无非为家里的事。”子中道：“小弟也想他没甚么，为何恁地等不得？”两个说了一回，子中分付治酒接风，就叫闻家家人安顿了行李，不必另寻寓所，只在此间同寓。盖是子中先前与魏家同寓，今魏家去了，房舍尽有，可以下得闻家主仆三人。子中又分付打扫闻舍人的卧房，就移出自己的榻来，相对铺着，说晚间可以联床清话。俊卿看见，心里有些突兀起来。想道：平日与他们同学，不过是日间相与，会文会



it to the government?" asked Junqing.

Zizhong replied, "Nowadays, civil officials are valued and military officials are belittled. It was the Imperial Inspector who had presented a memorial to the emperor. Your father is a military official. If a military official comes up and tries to justify himself, I'm afraid they would become intolerant with it. And what is worse, they might be offended. If so, it will only make things worse that way. Better follow my instructions and don't be rash." Junqing said gratefully, "Thank you for your advice. My ideas are pedantic. I would very much appreciate it if you could make decision for me." "Don't mention it," replied Zizhong, "we're brothers. Your trouble is also mine."

After a while, Junqing asked Zizhong, "Why has Brother Wei gone back home?" Zizhong answered, "He told me he must go back home to talk something over with you. I asked him what it was, but he was not willing to tell it to me. I reminded him that you would possibly come to the capital once you got news of our success at the general examinations. He said he couldn't wait and the matter had to be settled at home. He told me he must go. So he asked for a leave and left. But now you're here in the capital. Could you tell me what he is going to talk with you?" Though she was clear that Zhuanzhi had gone home to fulfill the marriage, Junqing feigned ignorance about it and said, "I don't know why either. Nothing but household affairs." Zizhong said, "I don't think he should have anything else to attend to either. But why was he in such a hurry?"

After Zizhong and Junqing chatted for some time, Zizhong ordered that a welcome dinner be prepared in Junqing's honor. At the same time, Zizhong told Junqing's followers to bring in their luggage to his dwelling place and told them not to go and look for other accommodations. He simply asked them to stay with him. Originally Zizhong shared this house with Zhuanzhi. As Zhuanzhi had gone now, there were plenty of rooms for the three people from the Wen family. Zizhong had a room cleaned for Junqing and then moved his own bed to Junqing's room and put it opposite Junqing's bed so that they could talk with each other at night.

At this point, Junqing was suddenly caught with anxiety, thinking to herself, "Though Wei, Du and I are classmates, we're only together at

酒，并不看见我的卧起，所以不得看破。而今弄在一间房内了，须闪避不得。露出马脚来怎么处？却又没个说话可以推掉得两处宿，只是自己放着精细，遮掩过去便了。

虽是如此说，却是天下的事是真难假，是假难真。亦且终日相处，这些细微举动，水火不便的所在，那里妆饰得许多来？闻俊卿日间虽是长安街上去送揭帖，做着男人的勾当；晚间宿歇之处，有好些破绽现出在杜子中的眼里了。杜子中是个聪明人，有甚省不得的事？晓得有些诧异，越加留心闲觑，越看越是了。

这日，俊卿出去忘锁了拜匣，子中偷揭开来一看，多是些文翰柬帖，内有一幅草稿，写着道：

成都绵竹县信女闻氏，焚香拜告关真君神前：愿保父闻确冤情早白，自身安稳还乡，竹箭之期，闹妆之约，各得如意。谨疏。

子中见了拍手道：“眼见得公案在此了。我枉为男子，被他瞒过了许多时。今不怕他飞上天去。只是后边两句解他不出，莫不许过了人家？怎么处？”心里狂荡不禁。忽见俊卿回来，子中接在房里坐了，看着俊卿只是笑。俊卿疑怪，将自己身上下前后看了又看，问道：“小弟今日有何举动差错了，仁兄见晒之甚？”子中道：“笑你瞒得我好。”俊卿道：“小弟到此做



daytime on ordinary days reading or drinking. We have never shared one room for the night. So they didn't see through I am a woman. Now Zizhong and I are to spend the night in one room. What if I give myself away? But I can't offer an excuse to refuse Zizhong and find a different dwelling place. I'll have to be careful and do my best to cover my true identity up." However, the real can't be sham and the sham can't real. As Junqing lived together with Zizhong all day long, how could she possibly conceal her woman's identity for long? Any of her slight moves might betray herself. At daytime, she distributed the leaflets on the streets. But while she was with Zizhong at night, she gave away the show before Zizhong's eyes. Du Zizhong was a smart man and nothing could escape his eyes. Having realized something unusual in Junqing's movements, Zizhong kept his eyes open more widely on her. The more he watched, the more suspicious he became.

One day, Junqing left for the street, leaving her suitcase unlocked due to her carelessness. Zizhong opened it and found out that it was filled with drafts and letters. On one sheet of paper it was written thus:

I am a woman devotee from Mianzhu County, Chengdu, and my family name is Wen. Now I burn joss sticks and kneel in prayer before the image of Lord Guan Yu: I wish the wrong done to my father Wen Qu can be redressed as soon as possible and I can return home safe and sound. I also wish the pledge of the arrow and the white jade waistband ornament can be fulfilled successfully.

"This is how it is!" shouted Du Zizhong, clapping his hands. "She's kept me in the dark for such a long time. This time she won't slink off in flight. But I can't figure out what she is driving at by the last line. Could it be that she has been betrothed to someone else? If so, what should I do about it?" As he was thus carried away with joy and wild guesses, Junqing came back. After Junqing took her seat, Zizhong fixed his eyes on her, beaming with smiles. Thrown into utter confusion, Junqing looked at herself up and down repeatedly.

Then she asked, "Anything wrong with me? Why are you smiling at me like this?" Zizhong answered, "I smile because you've kept it from me so successfully." Junqing said, "I don't think I kept anything from



的事，不曾瞒仁兄一些。”子中道：“瞒得多哩！俊卿自想么？”俊卿道：“委实没有。”子中道：“俊卿记得当初同斋时言语么？原说弟若为女，必当嫁兄，兄若为女，必当娶兄，可惜弟不能为女，谁知兄果然是女，却瞒了小弟。不然，娶兄多时了。怎么还说不瞒？”俊卿见说着心中病，脸上通红起来道：“谁是这样说？”子中袖中摸出这纸疏头来道：“这须是俊卿的亲笔。”俊卿一时低头无语。子中就挨过来坐在一处了，笑道：“一向只恨两雄不能相配，今却遂了人愿也。”俊卿站了起来道，“行踪为兄识破，抵赖不得了。只有一件，一向承兄过爱，慕兄之心非不有之。争奈有件缘事，已属了撰之，不能再以身事兄，望兄见谅。”子中愕然道：“小弟与撰之同为俊卿窗友，论起相与意气，还觉小弟胜他一分。俊卿何得厚于撰之，薄于小弟？况且撰之又不在此间，现钟不打，反去炼铜，这是何说？”俊卿道：“仁兄有所不知，仁兄可看疏上竹箭之期的说话么？”子中道：“正是不解。”俊卿道：“小弟因为与两兄同学，心中愿卜所从。那日向天暗祷，箭到处，先拾得者即为夫妇。后来这箭却在撰之处。小弟诡说是家姐所射，撰之遂一心想慕，把





you. You know everything I've been doing since I came to the capital." Zizhong said, "You did keep me in the dark on many a thing. Think of it for yourself!" Junqing answered, "No, I didn't." Zizhong said, "Do you still remember what we once talked about when we were in the county school? I said, 'Suppose I were a woman, I would take you as my husband. Suppose you were a woman, I would definitely take you as my wife.' Unfortunately I can't be a woman. But now it turns out you're a woman. You kept this from me. Otherwise I would have made you my wife long before. How could you say you didn't keep anything from me?" Flushing up to her ears, Junqing rebutted, "Who told you about it?" Taking the sheet of paper out of his sleeve, Zizhong said, "This should be your own handwriting." At this point, Junqing became tongue-tied and lowered her head.

Du Zizhong sat down beside Junqing and said, "It's really hateful that two men can not get married. But now my wish has come true." Getting onto her feet, Junqing said, "It's true I'm a woman and you've seen my true colors. I do feel it an honor to be your friend and I'd have to acknowledge my feelings for you. But I've been betrothed with Zhuanzhi. Sorry I can't marry you. Hope you don't mind it." Greatly astounded, Zizhong said, "Zhuanzhi and I are both classmates of yours. As regards our friendship, I think I'm closer to you than he is. I wonder why you favored him and discriminated against me." Moreover, Zhuanzhi is not here at this moment. Why do you take the trouble of waiting to marry him instead of me, since I'm right here in front of you?

Junqing said, "There is something you don't know. Haven't you noticed the words 'the pledge of the arrow?'" Zizhong said, "That is exactly what is puzzling me." Junqing said, "Since both you and Zhuanzhi and I are classmates, I found it hard to make a choice between you two. Therefore I decided to consult the oracle. One day I prayed in secret that I would be the wife of anyone of you who would get the arrow first. As I got to the county school, I found the arrow was in Zhuanzhi's hands. I lied to him that it was my elder sister who had shot down the crow. Then he took a fancy to my sister and gave her a white jade waistband ornament as betrothal gift. So in my mind I'm engaged with him, though I didn't voice



一个玉闹妆为定。此时小弟虽不明言，心已许下了。此天意有属，非小弟有厚薄也。”子中大笑道：“若如此说，俊卿宜为我有无疑了。”俊卿道：“怎么说？”子中道：“前日斋中之箭，原是小弟拾得。看见干上有两行细字，以为奇异，正在念诵，撰之听得走出来，在小弟手里接去看。此时偶然家中接小弟，就把竹箭掉在撰之处，不曾取得。何曾是撰之拾取的？若论俊卿所卜天意，一发正是小弟应占了。撰之他日可问，须混赖不得。”俊卿道：“既是曾见箭上字来，可记得否？”子中道：“虽然看时节仓卒无心，也还记是‘矢不虚发，发必应弦’八个字，小弟须是造不出。”俊卿见说得是真，心里已自软了，说道：“果是如此，乃天意了。只是枉了魏撰之望空想了许多时，而今又赶将回去，日后知道，甚么意思？”子中道：“这个说不得。从来说先下手为强，况且元该是我的。”就拥了俊卿求欢，道：“相好兄弟，而今得同衾枕，天上人间，无此乐矣。”俊卿推拒不得，只得含羞走入帷帐之内，一任子中所为。有一首曲调《山坡羊》，单道其事：

这小秀才有些儿怪样，走到罗帷，忽现了本相。本来是个夤宫里折桂的郎君，改换了章台内司花的主将。金兰契，只觉得肉味馨香；笔砚交，果然是有笔如枪。皱眉头，忍着疼，受的是良朋针砭；趁胸怀，揉着窝，显出那知心酣畅。用一番切切惻惻，来也，哎呀，分明是远方来，乐



my true feelings to him face to face. This should be the will of Heaven, not that I made fish of one and flesh of another.”

Laughing heartily, Zizhong said, “That being the case, you should marry me!” “Why?” asked Junqing. Zizhong answered, “It was I who got the arrow first. I also noticed an inscription of a few words on the arrow. I found it rather odd. As I was pondering over the inscription, Zhuanzhi came over and took the arrow from my hands. Just at that moment I was requested to go back home. Thus I left the arrow to Zhuanzhi. How can you say Zhuanzhi got the arrow first? According to the will of Heaven, as predicted by your arrow, I should be your husband. If you don’t believe me, you may ask Zhuanzhi about it some day.” Junqing asked, “Since you saw the inscription on the arrow, could you recall what it is?”

Zizhong said, “Though I was in a hurry and inadvertent at the moment, I can still remember it. It read ‘I put my arrow on the bow and not a single arrow is to miss the target.’ This should not be my fabrication.” Having heard all these, Junqing instantly relented. She said, “That being the case, it should be the will of Heaven that we two will be a couple. But I do feel sorry for Zhuanzhi. What should I say when I meet him?” Zizhong said, “I’m sorry for him too, but I can’t do anything about it. An old saying goes, ‘The early bird catches the worm.’ Moreover, the fact is that originally I’m fated to be your husband.” So saying, he pulled Junqing into the bed and they made love affectionately.

After it was over, Junqing get dressed and rose out of bed. Heaving a sigh, she said, “Now with you as my fiancé, my affair of lifelong significance has been fulfilled. But I’m really very sorry for Zhuanzhi. What can I do about it?”

All of a sudden, she struck the bed with one hand and said, “I’ve got a good idea!” Greatly surprised, Zizhong asked, “What is it? How are you going to deal with this matter?” said, “There is something I need to tell you. When I arrived in Chengdu the other day, I stopped at a small inn for the night. The niece of the owner of the inn caught a glimpse of me and then she told her grandfather about me and forced me to marry her. I thought of a way out by leaving an object in her place confirming our engagement and offered an excuse that I couldn’t marry her until I was



意洋洋。思量，一棗余，是联句的篇章；慌忙，为云为雨，还错认了龙阳。

事毕，闻小姐整容而起，叹道：“妾一生之事，付之郎君，妾愿遂矣。只是哄了魏撰之，如何回他？”忽然转了一想，将手床上一拍道：“有处法了。”杜子中倒吃了一惊，道：“这事有甚么处法？”小姐道：“好教郎君得知：妻身前日行至成都，在店内安歇，主人有个甥女窥见了妾身，对他外公说了，逼要相许。是妾身想个计较，将信物权定，推说归时完娶。当时妾身意思，道魏撰之有了竹箭之约，恐怕冷淡了郎君，又见那个女子才貌双全，可为君配，故此留下这个姻缘。今妾既归君，他日回去，魏撰之问起所许之言，就把这家的说合与他成了，岂不为妙？况且当时只说是姊姊，他心里并不曾晓得是妾身自己，也不是哄他了。”子中道：“这个最妙。足见小姐为朋友的美情。有了这个出场，就与小姐配合，与撰之也无嫌了。谁晓得途中又有这件奇事？还有一件要问：途中认不出是女容，不必说了，但小姐虽然男扮，同两个男仆行走，好些不便。”小姐笑道：“谁说同来的多是男人？他两个元是一对夫妇，一男一女，打扮做一样的。所以途中好伏侍走动，不必避嫌也。”子中也笑道：“有其主必有其仆，有才思的人做来多是奇怪的事。”小姐就把景家女子所和之诗，拿出来与子中看。子中道：“世间也还有这般的女人！魏撰之得此也好意足了。”

小姐再与子中商量着父亲之事。子中道：“而今说是我丈人，一发好措词出力。我吏部有个相知，先央他把做对头的兵道调了地方，就好营为了。”小姐道：“这个最是要着，郎君在



back from my business trip. I did so at that moment because I've got the pledge of arrow with Zhuanzhi and I was afraid I might leave you out in the cold. Moreover, that girl is really beautiful and talented. I thought she could be a perfect match for you. So I accepted her offer of marriage. Now I'm yours. "Wouldn't it be wonderful if we make Zhuanzhi and Miss Jing a couple when Zhuanzhi comes to me to bring up the pledge of marriage? What's more, I only told him that he was betrothed to my sister. He had no idea that I was referring to myself when I told him it was my sister. If this is to work, he can't say I lied to him."

Zizhong exclaimed excitedly, "Terrific! Obviously you're so kind and considerate to your friend! With this happy encounter of yours, I won't feel ill at ease when I meet Zhuanzhi for my marriage with you. Who could have expected you would come across such a strange event on your way to the capital?" But I still have doubts in my mind. It goes without saying it was hard for people to recognize you're a girl when you're traveling on your way. Though you're in a man's disguise, you've got two man followers with you on the way. There must be some inconveniences."

Junqing answered with a smile, "Who told you my followers are two men? Actually they are a couple, a man and a woman. The wife and I both disguised ourselves as men so that they two can attend to me conveniently and make my travel easier. There is no need for me to stay away from them." Upon hearing this, Zizhong said, laughing, "Like master, like servant. The deeds of talented people are always singular." Junqing then showed Zizhong what Miss Jing had written to her the other day. "What an unusual woman talent Miss Jing is! Wei Zhuanzhi will be perfectly contented if he can have Miss Jing as his wife."

Later Junqing and Zizhong talked about how to rescue her father. Zizhong said, "Your father is now my father-in-law. Then I have a good reason to put in more efforts to help him get out of trouble. I have a friend in the Ministry of War. I'll first go and ask him to use his good offices to have the Military Defense Circuit transferred to another region. Then it will be easier for us to have the matter settled." Junqing said, "That's a good idea. Please keep an eye to the matter."



心则个。”子中果然去央求吏部。数日之间推升本上，已把兵道改升了广西地方。子中来回复小姐道：“对头改去，我今作速讨个差与你回去，救取岳丈了事。此间辨白已透，抚按轻拟上来，无不停当了。”小姐愈加感激，转增恩爱。

子中讨下差来，解饷到山东地方，就便回籍。小姐仍旧扮做男人，一同闻龙夫妻，擎弓带箭，照前妆束，骑了马，傍着子中的官轿。家人原以舍人相呼。行了几日，将过郑州，旷野之中，一枝响箭擦着官轿射来。小姐晓得有歹人来了，分付轿上：“你们只管前走，我在此对付他。”真是忙家不会，会家不忙，扯出囊弓，扣上弦，搭上箭。只见百步之外，一骑马飞也似的跑来。小姐掣开弓，喝声道：“着！”那边人不防备的，早中了一箭，倒撞下马，在地下挣扎。小姐疾鞭着坐马赶上前轿，高声道：“贼人已了当了，放心前去。”一路的人多称赞小舍人好箭，个个忌惮。子中轿里得意，自不必说。

自此完了公事，平平安安到了家中。父亲闻参将已因兵道升去，保候在外了。小姐进见，备说了京中事体及杜子中营为，调去了兵道之事。参将感激不胜，说道：“如此大恩，何以为



Soon Zizhong went to the Ministry of War. Just within a few days the Military Defense Circuit was transferred to Guangxi.

Zizhong came to Junqing and said, "Now the Military Defense Circuit has been transferred. I'll lose no time and get an assignment. Then I'll go back home with you to save your father. Now everything that needs to be done in the capital is done. I'm sure we will be able to rescue your father once we talk it over with the Governor." Upon hearing this, Junqing became even more grateful to Zizhong and her love for him heightened. Zizhong was assigned to Shandong. As he was on his way to assume office, he went back to his native place. Again Junqing dressed herself up as a man and got ready to leave the capital for her hometown along with the Wen Long couple. Carrying her bows and arrows, she set off on her horse and moved side by side with Zizhong's official sedan chair. As usual, the Wen Long couple still called her young master. While they were passing through Maozhou (present day Renqiu city, Hebei Province) after several days of travel, a whistling arrow coming from the wilderness suddenly shaved the official sedan chair. Junqing knew that a robber was coming to them. Turning to the sedan chair, she said, "Just go ahead. Leave this robber to me." Taking her time, she took out a bow and fit the arrow to the bow. At this moment a man on a horse was racing towards her from a hundred paces away. Junqing pulled the bowstring hard and shouted, "There you go!" Totally unprepared, the man was shot and fell off his horse, floundering desperately on the ground. Junqing whipped and spurred her horse and caught up with the sedan chair. She then shouted, "I've got rid of the robber. Now we can set your mind at rest and move forward." Everyone present, dumbstruck, spoke in glowing terms of the young master's superb shooting skill. And Zizhong, of course, sitting in the sedan chair, felt very proud and happy.

Junqing and Zizhong arrived at home smoothly. As the Military Defense Circuit had been transferred to Guangxi some time earlier, Junqing's father was bailed out successfully. As she met with her father, Junqing told him in detail how much Du Zizhong had done to help him get out of jail. Feeling deeply obliged to Zizhong, General Wen said, "I'm really grateful to your great favor. How should I repay it?"



报？”小姐又把被他识破，已将身子嫁他，共他同归的事也说了。参将也自喜欢道：“这也是郎才女貌，配得不枉了。你快改了妆，趁他今日荣归吉日，我送你过门去罢！”小姐道：“妆还不好改得，且等会过了魏撰之着。”参将道：“正要对你说，魏撰之自京中回来，不知为何只管叫人来打听，说我有个女儿，他要求聘。我只说他晓得些风声，是来说你了，及到问时，又说是同窗舍人许他的，仍不知你的事。我不好回得，只是含糊说等你回家。你而今要会他怎的？”小姐道：“其中有许多委曲，一时说不及，父亲日后自明。”

正说话间，魏撰之来相拜。元来魏撰之正为前日婚姻事，在心中放不下，故此就回。不想问着闻舍人，又已往京，叫人探听舍人有个姐姐的说话，一发言三语四，不得明白。有的说：“参将只有两个舍人，一大一小，并无女儿。”又有的说：“参将有个女儿，就是那个舍人。”弄得魏撰之满肚疑心，胡猜乱





Junqing seized the opportunity and told her father how she had been seen through by Du Zizhong that she was a woman and how they had pledged to marry without the permission of their parents. General Wei was very delighted at hearing the news. He said, "A brilliant scholar and a beautiful lady, you are a heaven-made match. Why don't you hurry and change into your woman's dress and get married with him on this auspicious date of his triumphal return to hometown?" Junqing answered, "I'm afraid I can't change my clothes at this moment. I'll have to wait until after I meet Wei Zhuanzhi."

General Wen said, "This is exactly what I'm going to talk to you. After his return from the capital, Zhuanzhi sent people to our family to offer a proposal of marriage, saying that I have a daughter. I thought he might have got wind of something about your gender and was offering to marry you. But as I questioned him further, he told me it was you, his classmate, who had acted as the matchmaker for him. I realized he had no knowledge of the fact that you're a woman in the disguise of a man. Finding it hard to give him an answer, I had to skirt the issue and tell him to wait till you're back home. What's going on after all?" Junqing answered, "It's rather complicated and I can't explain it clearly right now. You will know everything about it some time later."

While they were talking, Wei Zhuanzhi came to visit Junqing. As Zhuanzhi had been much concerned about his marriage with Junqing's sister, he left the capital in advance and returned home. To his great surprise, he learned that the young master of the Wen family had gone to the capital. As he inquired about the young master's sister, he was completely confused by all these different answers. Some said that general Wen only had two young masters, and one was older and the other much younger, and had no daughters at all. Some said that general Wen had a daughter and this daughter of his was none other than the elder young master. All this filled Wei Zhuanzhi with doubts and suspicions and he could do nothing but indulge in wild fancies. Now having learned Junqing was back home, Wei Zhuanzhi immediately came to call at Junqing's family to see what on earth the truth was. After formal greetings, Zhuanzhi said to Junqing impatiently, "I'm especially here to talk with you about



想。见说闻舍人回来了，所以亟亟来拜，要问明白。闻小姐照旧时家数接了进来。寒温已毕，撰之急问道：“仁兄，令姊之说如何？小弟特为此赶回来的。”小姐说：“包管兄有一位好夫人便了。”撰之道：“小弟叫人宅上打听，其言不一，何也？”小姐道：“兄不必疑，玉闹妆已在一个人处，待小弟再略调停，准备迎娶便了。”撰之道：“依兄这等说，不像是令姐了？”小姐道：“杜子中尽知端的，兄去问他就明白。”撰之道：“兄何不就明说了，又要小弟去问？”小姐道：“中多委曲，小弟不好说得，非子中不能详言。”说得魏撰之愈加疑心。

他正要去拜杜子中，就急忙起身来到杜子中家里，不及说别样说话，忙问闻俊卿所言之事。杜子中把京中同寓，识破了他女身，已成夫妇的始末根由说了一遍。魏撰之惊得木呆道：“前日也有人如此说，我却不信，谁晓得闻俊卿果是女身！这分明是我的姻缘，平白错过了。”子中道：“怎见得是兄的？”撰之述当初拾箭时节，就把玉闹妆为定的说话。子中道：“箭本小弟所拾，原系他向天暗卜的，只是小弟当时不知其故，不曾与兄取得此箭在手，今仍归小弟，原是天意。兄前日只认是他令姐，原未尝属意他自身。这个不必追悔，兄只管闹妆之约不脱空罢了。”撰之道：“符已去矣，怎么还说不脱空？难道当



the issue of my marriage with your sister. In the past few days I asked some people to inquire about you and your family. Some told me your father only has two sons, but some told me he does have a daughter. What's all this about? I am completely confused.

Junqing said, "Don't worry about all these things. I can assure you that you will have a perfect wife. Your white jade waistband ornament is now kept in her place. Just be patient a bit and wait for a while before I have it well arranged for you. You may rest assured about the matter, and just get yourself ready for the marriage." Zhuanzhi said, "It sounds like you were not talking about your sister." Junqing said, "Du Zizhong knows the ins and outs of the whole matter. You will know everything about it if you go and ask him." Zhuanzhi asked, "Why don't you tell me about it?" Junqing answered, "It's rather hard for me to explain it. Du Zizhong is the only person who can make it clear to you." These remarks of Junqing aroused even more doubts and suspicions in Wei Zhuanzhi.

Wei Zhuanzhi got to Du Zizhong's home in a rush. Du told him how he met Junqing and found out she was a woman and how they vowed to become husband and wife while they were staying in the capital. Dumbfounded, Wei Zhuanzhi said, "I heard people say she is a woman, but I didn't believe it. Who could have imagined Junqing is really a woman! She should be my wife, but I let the opportunity slip through my fingers for nothing." Zizhong asked, "On what account could you say she should be your wife?" Zhuanzhi told him how he had given Junqing a betrothal gift of the white jade waistband ornament the other day when he got her arrow. Zizhong said, "It was I who got the arrow first. So it's the will of Heaven that she should be my wife. Actually you only had her sister in mind at the moment, not Junqing. You mustn't feel remorse at all. Everything will be okay for you only if your pledge of the white jade waistband ornament comes true." Zhuanzhi asked, "How will it come true since you're going to marry Junqing?"

Zizhong recounted what had happened between Junqing and Miss Jing while Junqing was staying temporarily in Chengdu. Then he added, "Miss Jing is an extremely talented and beautiful girl. When realizing it really too difficult to turn down her offer of marriage, Junqing gave your white



真还有个令姐？”子中又把闻小姐途中所遇景家之事说了一遍，道：“其女才貌非常，那日一时难推，就把兄的闹妆权定在彼。而今想起来，这就有个定数在里边了，岂不是兄的姻缘么？”撰之道：“怪不得闻俊卿道自己不好说，元来有许多委曲。只是一件：虽是闻俊卿已定下在彼，他家又不曾晓得明白，小弟难以自媒，何由得成？”子中道：“小弟与闻氏虽已成夫妇，还未曾见过岳翁。打点就是今日迎娶，少不得还借重一个媒妁，而今就烦兄与小弟做一做。小弟成礼之后，代相恭敬，也只在小弟身上撮合就是了。”撰之大笑道：“当得，当得。只可笑小弟一向在睡梦中，又被兄占了头筹。而今不使小弟脱空，也还算是好了。既是这等，小弟先到闻宅去道意，兄可随后就来。”

魏撰之讨大衣服来换了，竟抬到闻家。此时闻小姐已改了女妆，不出来了，闻参将自己出来接着。魏撰之述了杜子中之言，闻参将道：“小女娇痴慕学，得承高贤不弃。今幸结此良缘，蒹葭倚玉，惶恐，惶恐。”闻参将已见女儿说过，是件整备。门上报说：“杜爷来迎亲了。”鼓乐喧天，杜子中穿了大红衣服，抬将进门。真是少年郎君，人人称羨。走到堂中，站了位次，拜见了闻参将。请出小姐来，又一同行礼。谢了魏撰之，



jade waistband ornament to her as a token of pledge. I think it must be fate that you and Miss Jing will be a couple, am I right?" Upon hearing this, Zhuanzhi said, "No wonder Junqing told me the other day she couldn't explain it to me clearly. It was indeed complicated. But I'm still worried about this matter. Though Junqing has left my white jade waistband ornament to Miss Jing, the Jing family knows nothing about the inside story. Moreover, without the help of a matchmaker, I don't think I can bring about the match on my own."

Zizhong said, "I've got an idea. Junqing and I are going to get married today, but I haven't got a chance to see my would-be father-in-law. I need a matchmaker too. I'd like to bother you to act as my matchmaker. After my marriage, I'll act as your matchmaker and help you complete the fulfillment of your marriage. What do you think?" Zhuanzhi answered, "That would be great! But how ridiculous I am to have been kept in the dark on this matter! And again you got the better of me. It would be nice if I can marry Miss Jing. But how ridiculous I am to have been kept in the dark on this matter! And again you got the better of me. It would be nice if I can marry Miss Jing. I'll call at the Wen family and make the match for you right now."

After changing into his official garment, Wei Zhuanzhi arrived at Wen's home in a sedan chair. Junqing changed into her woman's dress, but she didn't show up to greet Zhuanzhi. General Wen greeted Zhuanzhi warmly. After Zhuanzhi made clear of Zizhong's offer of marriage, General Wen said, "I do feel it an honor for my daughter to get married to Zizhong." As his daughter Junqing had talked about the matter with him previously, General Wen readily accepted the offer.

Within an instant someone came to General Wen, reporting, "Master Du has sent the sedan chair to our home to bring over the bride." Amid the great din of drums and pipes, Du Zizhong, an elegant young man wearing a red silk robe, got out of the sedan chair. Everybody around was filled with admiration at such a sight. After entering the main hall of the house, Du paid his respects to General Wen. Then Junqing, now Miss Wen, was brought over to the main hall. Zizhong and Miss Wen made a bow to her father simultaneously. After they thanked Wei Zhuanzhi for



启轿而行。迎至家里，拜告天地，见了祠堂。杜子中与闻小姐正是新亲旧朋友，喜喜欢欢，一桩事完了。

只是魏撰之有些眼热，心里道：“一样的同窗朋友，偏是他两个成双。平时杜子中分外相爱，常恨不将男作女，好做夫妻。谁知今日竟遂其志，也是一段奇话。只所许我的事，未知果是如何？”次日，就到子中家里贺喜，随问其事。子中道：“昨晚弟妇就和小弟计较，今日专为此要同到成都去。弟妇誓欲以此报兄，全其口信，必得佳音方回来。”撰之道：“多感，多感。一样的同窗，也该记念着我的冷静。但未知其人果是如何？”子中走进去，取出景小姐前日和韵之诗与撰之看了。撰之道：“果得此女，小弟便可以妒兄矣！”子中道：“弟妇赞之不容口，大略不负所举。”撰之道：“这件事做成，真愈出愈奇了。小弟在家颺望。”俱大笑而别。

杜子中把这些说话与闻小姐说了，闻小姐道：“他盼望久了的，也怪他不得。只索作急成都去，周全了这事。”小姐仍旧带了闻龙夫妻跟随，同杜子中到成都来。认着前日饭店，歇在里头了。杜子中叫闻龙拿了帖径去拜富员外。员外见说是新进士来拜，不知是甚么缘故，吃了一惊，慌忙迎接进去，坐下



his serving as their matchmaker, Miss Wen and Du Zizhong ascended the sedan chair together and set out for Zizhong's home. Arriving at home, Du and Miss Wen performed the wedding ceremony and then visited the ancestral hall. Thus a pair of old friends became the newly-weds. Overcome with joy, Du Zizhong and Miss Wen became husband and wife.

Feeling green with envy when he saw Zizhong and Junqing got married, Wei Zhuanzhi thought, "We three used to be intimate classmates, but it turned out they two became husband and wife. In the past Du Zizhong expressed his love for her, wishing he were a woman so that he could marry the Junqing in a man's disguise. Now they did get married and his wish has come true! How amazing! What keeps me in suspense now is that I have no idea if my marriage with Miss Jing is going to come true."

On the next day Wei Zhuanzhi went to Du's family with both congratulations and inquiries about his affair with Miss Jing. Zizhong said to him, "Last night my wife and I decided that we make a special trip to Chengdu today to discuss this matter with Jing's grandparents. My wife said she will repay your kindness and will not return home until she gets a favorable reply from Miss Jing." Zhuanzhi said, "I do appreciate it. We used to be good classmates. Better keep in mind I'm still single. By the way, how does Miss Jing look like?" Zizhong said, "My wife showered praises on her talent and beauty. I don't think Miss Jing will let you down." Zhuanzhi said, "I will not be jealous of you anymore if I can have this girl as my wife! It will be an extraordinarily unusual thing if it really comes true. I'll be looking forward to your early reply." Laughing heartily, Wei and Du bade each other farewell.

Du Zizhong told Miss Wen, now Mrs. Du, about his talk with Wei Zhuanzhi. Miss Wen said, "Du has been expecting to get married for quite a long time. He is not to blame for his impatience. We must make the trip to Chengdu immediately and have this matter settled." Then the Du couple got to Chengdu, followed by Wen Long and his wife. After putting themselves up in the same small inn they accommodated last time, Du Zizhong called at Master Fu's house.

Seeing that a new *jinshi* arrived at his house for a visit, Master Fu got a shock and then showed him into his room immediately. When both

了，道：“不知为何大人贵足赐踹贱地？”子中道：“学生在此经过，闻知有位景小姐，是老丈令甥，才貌出众。有一敝友也叨过甲第了，欲求为夫人，故此特来奉访。”员外道：“老汉有个甥女，他自要择配，前日看上了一个进京的闻舍人，已纳下聘物，大人见教迟了。”子中道：“那闻舍人也是敝友，学生已知他另有所就，不来娶令甥了，所以敢来作伐。”员外道：“闻舍人也是读书君子，既已留下信物，两心相许，怎误得人家儿女？舍甥女也毕竟要等他的回信。”子中将出前日景小姐的诗笺来道：“老丈试看此纸，不是令甥写与闻舍人的么？因为闻舍人无意来娶了，故把与学生做执照，来为敝友求令甥。即此是闻舍人的回信了。”员外接过来看，认得是甥女之笔，沉吟道：“前日闻舍人也曾说道聘过了，不信其言，逼他应承的。元来当真有这话，老汉且与甥女商量一商量，来回复大人。”员外别了，进去了一会，出来道：“适间甥女见说，甚是不快。他也说得是：就是闻舍人负了心，是必等他亲身见一面，还了他玉闹妆，以为诀别，方可别议姻亲。”子中笑道：“不敢欺老丈说，那玉闹妆也即是敝友魏撰之的聘物，非是闻舍人的。闻舍







were seated, Master Fu asked, "Could you be kind enough to tell me what I can do for you?" Zizhong answered, "I'm just passing by this place. I was told you have a beautiful and talented granddaughter Miss Jing. A good friend of mine, who is also a *jinshi*, would like to have her as his wife. I've come to see you to make the match." Master Fu said, "It's true I have a granddaughter and she sets her mind to finding a match on her own. She fell in love with a young man surnamed Wen some time ago and had accepted his betrothal gift. Sorry you're late."

Zizhong said, "Wen is also my friend. I know he's got married with someone else. He can no longer marry your granddaughter. So I dare come to your place to offer a marriage proposal on my friend's behalf." Master Fu said, "Wen should be a refined scholar. Since he has made a pledge with my granddaughter, how could he go back on his word? I guess my granddaughter will have to wait until she gets a reply from him in person." Showing him Miss Jing's handwriting of her poem, Zizhong said, "Look, isn't it the poem your granddaughter wrote to Wen? As Wen is not able to marry Miss Jing, he gave it to me and asked me to use it as a proof when I make an offer of marriage to Miss Jing on my friend's behalf. This handwriting of Miss Jing may serve as Wen's reply to this matter."

Taking a look at the handwriting, Master Fu realized it was his granddaughter's handwriting. He muttered to himself, "Wen told me the other day that he had been betrothed. I didn't believe his words at that time and forced him to accept my granddaughter's marriage proposal. Now it turns out what he said the other day was true! I'll have to consult my granddaughter about this matter before I can give you an answer."

Before long Master Fu returned and said, "My granddaughter was very upset with this matter when I told her about it. She said even though Wen became heartless to her, she would rather see him in person and return the white jade waistband ornament to him as a final parting, and she wouldn't consider any other offer of marriage until this was done."

Zizhong said, smiling, "To be frank with you, the white jade waistband ornament is originally the very betrothal gift of my friend Wei Zhuanzhi. Actually it doesn't belong to Wen. Wen accepted Miss Jing's offer of

人因为自己已有姻亲，不好回得，乃为敝友转定下了。是当日埋伏机关，非今日无因至前也。”员外道：“大人虽如此说，甥女岂肯心伏？必是闻舍人自来说明，方好处分。”子中道：“闻舍人不能复来，有拙荆在此，可以进去一会令甥，等他与令甥说这些备细，令甥必当见信。”员外道：“有尊夫人在此，正好与舍甥面会一会，有言可以尽吐，省得传递消息。最妙，最妙！”就叫前日老姥来接取杜夫人。

老姥一见闻小姐举止形容有些面善，只是改妆过了，一时想不出。一路相看，只管迟疑。接到间壁，里边景小姐出来相接，各叫了万福。闻小姐对景小姐笑道：“认得闻舍人否？”景小姐见模样厮像，还只道或是舍人的妹妹，答道：“夫人与闻舍人何亲？”闻小姐道：“小姐恁等识人，难道这样眼钝？前日到此，过蒙见爱的舍人，即妾身是也。”景小姐吃了一惊，仔细一认，果然一毫不差。连老姥也在旁拍手道：“是呀，是呀。我方才道面庞熟得紧，那知就是前日的舍人。”景小姐道：“请问夫人前日为何这般打扮？”闻小姐道：“老父有难，进京辨冤，故乔妆作男，以便行路。所以前日过蒙见爱，再三不肯应承者，正为此也。后来见难推却，又不敢实说真情，所以代友人纳了聘，以待后来说明。今纳聘之人已登黄甲，年纪也与小姐相当，故此愚夫妇特来奉求，与小姐了此一段姻亲，报答前





marriage on my friend's behalf as he found it too hard to turn her down the other day. The present situation was shadowed at that time. So we're not here today without any reasons." Master Fu said, "I'm afraid my granddaughter won't be convinced by these words. This matter can't be settled unless Wen shows up in person." Zizhong said, "Wen is not coming. But my wife is now with me and I think she can talk it over with your granddaughter. I'm sure your granddaughter will be convinced." Master Fu said, "Great! Your wife and my granddaughter can pour out their hearts to each other so as to avoid passing messages." So saying, Fu told the old lady to bring Mrs. Du over to his home.

As she saw Mrs. Du, the old lady felt that she looked familiar, but was unable to figure out who she was. As she ushered Mrs. Du into the inner room, the old lady kept on sizing her up. Miss Jing came out of her room to meet Mrs. Du. The two made a curtsy to each other as a greeting. Then Mrs. Du said to Miss Jing, smiling, "Do you still remember that Mr. Wen?" Mistaking her for Wen's sister, Miss Jing asked, "How are you related to Wen?" Mrs. Du said, "What a poor eyesight you've got! I'm Wen you fell in love with the other day!" Surprised, Miss Jing looked at Mrs. Du closely and found out she was none other than Wen. The old lady also butted in, "Yes, yes, she is Wen. No wonder she looked familiar!" Feeling rather confused, Miss Jing asked, "Could you tell me why you dressed yourself as a man?"

Mrs. Du then told her how she had been in the disguise of a man, how she had got along with Wei and Du as classmates while she was in the county school and how she made the trip to the capital in the disguise of a man in the hope of righting the wrong done to her father. Mrs. Du also told her these were the reasons why she had repeatedly declined her offer of marriage and, when finding it too hard to turn her down, she had to accept Miss Jing's offer and give her a betrothal gift on her friend's behalf, hoping she could make herself understood in the time to come. Mrs. Du then added, "The original owner of the betrothal gift has now become a *jinshi* too and he is approximately the same age with you. My husband and I have especially come to your family to make the match for you so that I can repay you for the kindness you bestowed on me earlier."



日厚情耳。”景小姐见说，半晌做声不得。老姥在旁道：“多谢夫人美意。只是那位老爷姓甚名谁，夫人如何也叫他是友人？”闻小姐道：“幼年时节曾共学堂，后来同在庠中，与我家相公三人年貌多相似，是异姓骨肉。知他未有亲事，所以前日就有心替他结下了。这人姓魏，好一表人物，就是我相公同年。也不辱没了小姐。小姐一去，也就做夫人了。”景小姐听了这一篇说话，晓得是少年进士，有甚么不喜欢？叫老姥陪住了闻小姐，背地去把这些说话备细告诉员外。员外见说是许个进士，岂有不撺掇之理？真个是一让一个肯，回复了闻小姐，转说与杜子中，一言已定。富员外设起酒来谢媒，外边款待杜子中，内里景小姐作主，款待杜夫人。两个小姐，说得甚是投机，尽欢而散。

约定了回来，先教魏撰之纳币，拣个吉日迎娶回家。花烛之夕，见了模样，如获天人。因说起闻小姐闹妆纳聘之事，撰之道：“那聘物元是我的。”景小姐问：“如何却在他手里？”魏撰之又把先时竹箭题字，杜子中拾得，掉在他手里，认做另有个姐姐，故把玉闹妆为聘的根由，说了一遍。一齐笑道：“彼此夙缘，颠颠倒倒，皆非偶然也。”

明日，魏撰之取出竹箭来与景小姐看，景小姐道：“如今只该还他了。”撰之就提笔写一柬与子中夫妻道：



Having heard Mrs. Du's account of the story, Miss Jing remained silent for quite a while. However, the old lady said to Mrs. Du, "It's so kind of you! But who is that man and how does he look like?" Mrs. Du said, "When I was young, I studied with him and my present husband in the county school. We three were almost of the same age and got along quite well like brothers. As I know he was still single, I decided to make the match for him the other day. Wei is his family name and he is a very handsome young man. He and my husband were conferred the title of *jinshi* at the same year. I'm sure he will be worthy of you. You'll be a lady with a title once you get married to him."

Upon hearing that Wei is also a young *jinshi*, Miss Jing was pleased. Then she quietly told it to her grandfather, Master Fu. Her grandfather was extremely glad to hear the good news and readily consented to Miss Jing's marriage with Zhuanzhi. Then Master Fu entertained the Du couple for their matchmaking with wine and dinner, Master Fu treating Du Zizhong in the main hall while Miss Jing treating Mrs. Du in the inner room. Both Mrs. Du and Miss Jing had a pretty agreeable talk and they didn't part with each other until they had fully enjoyed themselves.

After returning to Mianzhu County, the Du couple told Wei Zhuanzhi to send betrothal gifts to Miss Jing's family and choose an auspicious date for the wedding.

On the wedding night Wei Zhuanzhi was overcome with joy when he saw that Miss Jing was as beautiful as a fairy maiden. At night they happened to bring up the pledge of betrothal of Miss Wen's white jade waistband ornament. Wei Zhuanzhi said, "The pledge of betrothal was originally mine." Miss Jing asked, "But how come it was kept by Miss Wen at the moment?" Wei Zhuanzhi then recounted how he got Miss Wen's arrow from Du Zizhong and how he asked Miss Wen to give the white jade waistband ornament to her sister by mistake. Then both of them laughed heartily, saying, "All marriages are by no means fortuitous. They're actually all predestined by fate."

On the next day Wei showed Miss Jing the arrow. Miss Jing said, "Now it's time to return it to her." Wei wrote a note and sent it to the Du couple along with the arrow. The note read thus:



既归玉环，返卿竹箭。两段姻缘，各从其便。一笑，一笑。

写罢，将竹箭封了，一同送去。杜子中收了，与闻小姐拆开来看，方见八字之下，又有“蜚娥记”三字。问道：“‘蜚娥’怎么解？”闻小姐道：“此妾闺中之名也。”子中道：“魏撰之错认了令姊，就是此二字了。若小生当时曾见此二字，这箭如何肯便与他！”闻小姐道：“他若没有这箭起这些因头，那里又拌得景家这头亲事来？”两人又笑了一回，也题了一柬戏他道：

环为旧物，箭亦归宗。两俱错认，各不落空。一笑，一笑。

从此两家往来，如同亲兄弟姊妹一般。两个甲科合力与闻参将辨白前事，世间情面那里有不让缙绅的？逐件赃罪得以开释，只处得他革任回卫。闻参将也不以为意了。后边魏、杜两人俱为显官，闻、景二小姐各生子女，又结了婚姻，世交不绝。这是蜀多才女，有如此奇奇怪怪的妙话。卓文君成都当垆，黄崇嘏相府掌记，又平平了。诗曰：

世上夸称女丈夫，不闻巾幗竟为儒。  
朝廷若也开科取，未必无人待价沽。



Here I return your arrow to you and please keep it. How amazing it has completed the fulfillment of two happy marriages!

With laughter.

Receiving the arrow and the note, Du Zizhong looked at them and found the name of Fei'e below the line of words on the arrow. Confused, he asked his wife, "Who is Fei'e?" His wife answered, "Fei'e was my maiden name." Zizhong said, "Had I noticed the name Fei'e at that time, how could I have given it to Wei Zhuanzhi?" His wife said, "How could we have incurred the marriage of Miss Jing and Wei if he hadn't got the arrow and developed a fancy to 'Fei'e?'" The Du couple laughed as they chatted. Du Zizhong also wrote Wei Zhuanzhi a few words in reply:

The arrow has been returned to its owner in perfect condition. Though we two failed to recognize Junqing is a woman, each of us has ended up with our felicitous marriages.

With laughter.

From then on the Du couple and the Wei couple got along pretty well like brothers and sisters. The two *jinshis* worked together with one mind to reason things out for General Wen. Due to the concerted efforts made by Du and Wei, each of the charges against General Wen was removed, and General Wen was very satisfied with this result. Later on, both Wei Zhuanzhi and Du Zizhong became high officials in the court. Miss Wen and Miss Jing both gave birth to their children and some children from the two families again got married. Thus a long-standing friendship between the two families lasted for many years.

Too much praise goes to manly women.

Few people know there are also many woman scholars.

If women were allowed to sit for the imperial examination,

The door to scholarship for women would be open.

## 卷 十 八

甄监生浪吞秘药 春花婢误泄风情

诗云：

自古成仙必有缘，仙缘不到总徒然。

世间多少痴心者，日对丹炉取药煎。

话说昔日有一个老翁，极好奉道，见有方外人经过，必厚加礼待，不敢怠慢。一日，有个双髻髻的道人特来访他，身上甚是蓝褛不像，却神色丰满和畅。老翁疑是异人，迎在家中，好生管待。那道人饮酒食肉，且是好量。老翁只是支持与他，并无厌倦。道人来去了几番，老翁相待到底是一样的。道人一日对老翁道：“贫道叨扰吾丈久矣，多蒙老丈再无弃嫌。贫道也要老丈到我山居中，寻几味野蔬，少少酬答厚意一番，未知可否。”老翁道：“一向不曾问得仙庄在何处，有多少远近，老汉可去得否？”道人道：“敝居只在山深处，原无多远。若随着贫道走去，顷刻就到。”老翁道：“这等，必定要奉拜则个。”





## *Tale 18*

### **Academician Zhen Recklessly Takes the Taoist's Medicine Servant Girl Chunhua Divulges the Whole Show by Mistake**

A poem reads thus:

From time immemorial who are to become immortals are fated.  
All their hard labor will turn out fruitless if not destined to.  
Alas, multitudes of people have been infatuated in making elixirs.  
Day in day out, sitting around furnaces, they decoct medicinal herbs.

Once there lived an old man who was a devout believer of Taoism. Each time he came across a Taoist, he would entertain him cordially with a banquet. One day a Taoist wearing two knots of hair on both sides of the head came specially to visit him. In rags as he was, the Taoist looked in ruddy health and fine fettle. Considering the Taoist an exceedingly unusual person, the old man gave him a warm reception and then treated him kindly. Though the Taoist had a good appetite for wine and meat, the old man never got tired of feeding him. Later the Taoist made several visits to the old man and, like always, the old man entertained him with the same hospitality.

One day the Taoist said to the old man, "Sorry to have put you to so much trouble. I feel very much indebted to your kindness and hospitality. I'm thinking of inviting you to my mountain hermitage so that I can reward you for your kindness with some wild herbs. I wonder if you're willing to accept my invitation or not." The old man answered, "I haven't got the chance to ask you where your mountain hermitage is and how far away it is from here. Is it possible for me to make the trip there?" The Taoist said, "My humble hermitage is just in the mountains and it is not far away from here. It won't take us long to get there if we go on foot." The old man said, "That being the case, I'm willing to go with you."



当下道人在前，老翁在后，走离了乡村闹市去处，一步步走到荒田野径中，转入山路里来。境界清幽，林木茂盛，迤迳过了几个山岭，山凹之中露出几间茅舍来。道人用手指道：“此间已是山居了。”不数步，走到面前，道人开了门，拉了老翁一同进去。老翁看那里面光景时：

虽无华屋朱门气，却有琪花瑶草香。

道人请老翁在中间堂屋里坐下，道人自走进里面去了，一回，走出来道：“小蔬已具，老丈且消停坐一会。等贫道去请几个道伴，相陪闲话则个。”老翁喜的是道友，一发欢喜道：“师父自尊便，老汉自当坐等。”道人一径望外去了。

老翁呆呆坐着，等候多时，不见道人回来，老翁有些不耐烦，起来前后走看。此时肚里也有些饿了，想寻些甚么东西吃吃，料道厨房中必有，打从傍门走到厨房中来。谁想厨房中锅灶俱无，止有些椰瓢棘匕之类。又有两个陶器的水缸，用笠篷盖着。老翁走去揭开一个来看，吃了一惊，原来是一盆清水，内浸着一只雪白小狗子，毛多捋干净了的。老翁心里道：“怪道他酒肉不戒，还吃狗肉哩！”再揭开这一缸来看，这一惊更不小。水里浸着一个小小孩童，手足多完全的，只是没气。老



Instantly, with the Taoist leading the way and the old man following right behind, the two left the old man's village. Soon they got into the barren hills and started to climb up the rugged mountain paths. Clothed in luxuriant vegetation, the mountains were chanting and secluded. A couple of thatched-cottages standing in a hollow came into their sight after they had tramped over hill and dale. Pointing towards the mountain cottages, the Taoist said, "My mountain hermitage is right over there." After taking a few steps farther, they arrived at the entrance of the mountain hermitage. The Taoist opened the door and both went in. The old man found out that the rooms were filled with the fragrance of wild flowers and grass, though they were not as imposing and magnificent as those mansions of wealthy families.

The old man was asked to take a seat in the central room of the main wing. The Taoist, having attended to something for a moment in an inner room, came over to the old man and said, "I've got some wild herbs ready. Please excuse me for a minute so that I can invite some fellow Taoists over for a chat." On ordinary days, the old man loved to chat with Taoists, so he was overwhelmed with joy as he heard some Taoists were coming over. "Do it as you please," the old man replied delightedly, "and I'll wait." The Taoist then left.

The old man waited and waited, but the Taoist didn't show up. Growing a bit impatient, the old man started to move around in the rooms, hoping he could find something to fill his stomach, for he was starving at the moment. Thus he got into the kitchen. To his surprise, he found there were no stove and cooking utensils in the kitchen except some gourd ladles and jujube wood spoons and the like. He also found two porcelain water vats which were covered with wide bamboo hats. As he uplifted the bamboo hat off one of the vats, he was shocked to see a hairless baby dog soaked in the water. The old man thought in his mind, "No wonder he ate meat and drank wine while he stayed at my house. He even eats dog meat!"

As he uplifted the bamboo hat off the other vat, he was more surprised at what he saw in it. Soaked in the water was a baby child, with its arms and legs complete, but no breathing. The old man became suspicious,

翁心里才疑道：“此道人未必是好人了，吃酒吃肉，又在此荒山居住，没个人影的所在，却家里放下这两件东西。狗也罢了，如何又有此死孩子？莫非是放火杀人之辈？我一向错与他相处了。今日在此，也多凶少吉。”欲待走了去，又不认得来时的路，只得且耐着。

正疑惑间，道人同了一伙道者走来，多是些庞眉皓发之辈，共有三四个。进草堂中与老翁相见，叙礼坐定。老翁心里怀着鬼胎，看他们怎么样。

只见道人道：“好教列位得知，此间是贫道的主人，一向承其厚款，无以为答。今日恰恰寻得野蔬二味在此，特请列位过来，陪着同享，聊表寸心。”道人说罢，走进里面，将两个瓦盆盛出两件东西来，摆在桌上。就每人面前放一双棘匕。向老翁道：“勿嫌村鄙，略尝些少则个。”老翁看着桌上摆的二物，就是水缸内浸的那一只小狗，一个小孩子。众道流掀髯拍掌道：“老兄何处得此二奇物？”尽打点动手，先向老翁推逊，老翁慌了道：“老汉自小不曾破犬肉之戒，何况人肉！今已暮年，怎敢吃此！”道人道：“此皆素物，但吃不妨。”老翁道：“就是饿死也不敢吃。”众道流多道：“果然立意不吃，也不好相强。”拱一拱手道：“恕无礼了。”四五人攒做一堆，将两件物事吃个罄尽。盆中溅着几点残汁，也把来钵干净了。老翁呆着脸，不敢开言，只是默看。道人道：“老丈既不吃此，枉了下顾这一番。乏物相款，肚里饿了怎好？”又在里面取出些白糕



thinking, “This Taoist may not be a good guy. Apart from eating meat and drinking wine, he keeps these two things in his house in such a desolate place, where not a single soul can be found. It’s passable for him to keep a dog, but how come he should have a dead baby in his cottage? Could he be a bandit who commits murder, arson and every crime imaginable? I’m afraid I got him wrong. Things today bode ill rather than well.” He thought of getting out of this place, but unfortunately he didn’t know his way back. So he had to wait.

As he was thus wondering, the Taoist came back with three to four fellow Taoists with huge eyebrows and white hair. Arriving at the central room, the Taoists greeted the old man and then took their seats. The Taoist said to his fellow Taoists, “I’d like to introduce my benefactor to you. He has been very kind and generous to me. Today I’ve got two medicinal herbs to treat him in return to express my thanks to him, and I’d like you all to share the delicacies.” Having finished these words, the Taoist went into the kitchen and then came out with two things and placed them on the table. After putting two jujube wood spoons in front of each man, he said to the old man, “Hope you like the food. Please help yourself.”

The old man saw that the two things the Taoist placed on the table were exactly the dog and the baby child soaked in the water vats. Clapping their hands with joy, the fellow Taoists said, “Where did you get these two wonderful things?” As they said so, they all started to get ready to eat. Meanwhile they asked the old man to help himself. Panic-stricken, the old man said, “I’ve never touched dog meat, let alone human flesh! Now I’m getting on years. How dare I’m going to eat such things!” The fellow Taoists all said in one voice, “They’re all vegetables. Just help yourself.” The old man said, “I would rather die starving than eat these.” All the fellow Taoists said in one voice, “Since you’re determined not to eat them, we will not make you eat them by force.” They folded their hands together and continued, “Please forgive us. We’ll eat them.” They ate up these two things immediately. They even licked the plates clean.

Dumbfounded, the old man only looked at them silently, not daring to utter a word. The Taoist said, “Your visit to my house will come to nothing if you don’t eat them. What if you go hungry?” He took out some white

来递与老翁道：“此是家制的糕，尽可充饥，请吃一块。”老翁看见是糕，肚里本等又是饿了，只得取来吞嚼，略觉有些涩味，正是饿得荒时，也管不得好歹了。才吃下去，便觉精神陡搜起来。想道：“长安虽好，不是久恋之家。趁肚里不饿了，走回去罢。”来与道人作别，道人也不再留，但说道：“可惜了此会，有慢老丈，反觉不安。贫道原自送老丈回去。”与众道流同出了门。众道流叫声多谢，各自散去。

道人送翁到了相近闹热之处，晓得老翁已认得路，不别而去。老翁独自走了家来。心里只疑心这一干人多不是善男子、好相识，眼见得吃狗肉、吃人肉惯的，是一伙方外采生灵割做歹事的强盗，也不见得。

过了两日，那个双髻髻的道人又到老翁家来，对老翁拱手道：“前日有慢老丈。”老翁道：“见了异样食品，至今心里害怕。”道人笑道：“此乃老丈之无缘也。贫道历劫修来，得遇此二物，不敢私享。念老丈相待厚意，特欲邀至山中，同众道侣食了此味，大家得以长生不老。岂知老丈仙缘尚薄，不得一尝！”老翁道：“此一小犬、小儿，岂是仙味？”道人道：“此是万年灵药，其形相似，非血肉之物也。如小犬者，乃万年枸杞之根，食之可活千岁。如小儿者，乃万年人参成形，食之可





cakes and handed them to the old man, saying, "I made these cakes. You may eat some to appease your hunger." At the moment the old man was really hungry. Seeing that they were cakes, the old man had to eat a cake to starve off his hunger. Though the cake tasted bitter, he didn't care about the taste, for he was starving at the moment. Scarcely had he eaten up a cake when he began to feel much better. He thought in his mind, "Though it's a nice place, it's not my home. Now that I'm full, I'd better go back home." The Taoist said, "What a pity your visit came to nothing. I'm sorry to have been a poor host. I'll see you back home." The old man and the group of Taoists all left the Taoist's cottage after expressing their thanks to him for his kind treatment.

When they reached a bustling place, the Taoist and the old man said goodbye to each other. The old man got back home alone. Meanwhile he was seized with doubts and suspicions, thinking, "This group of Taoists must not be kindhearted men and good acquaintances. Evidently they've got accustomed to eating dog meat and human flesh. Most probably they are a band of evildoing Taoist bandits who dissect human beings alive in order to obtain their ears, eyes, internal organs and the like.

A couple of days later the Taoist again paid a visit to the old man. Folding his hands together, he said, "I'm sorry I was not a good host the other day." The old man answered, "The strange food I saw the other day has made me sick until even today." The Taoist said, "You haven't got the good fortune to eat them. I obtained these two things after years of miseries and hardships. I dared not to eat them all myself. Considering your kindness and generosity to me, I invited you to my place in the mountains and hoped you could share them with me and some other fellow Taoists so that we could all become immortals. But you were not destined to have a taste of them." The old man asked, "How could a little dog and a baby child be the food of immortality?"

The Taoist said, "These two things were miraculous cure. Though they appeared to be in the shapes of a dog and a baby, they were totally lifeless and were not flesh and blood. The one in the shape of a dog was the root of a Chinese wolfberry of more than ten thousand years old, and the person who ate it can live up to one thousand years old. The one in the shape of



活万岁。皆不宜犯烟火，只可生吃。若不然，吾辈皆是人类，岂能如虎狼吃那生犬、生人，又毫无骸骨吐弃乎？”老翁才想着前日吃的光景，果然是大家生啖，不见骨头吐出来，方信其言是真，懊悔道：“老汉前日直如此懵懂，师父何不明言？”道人道：“此乃生成的缘分。没有此缘，岂可泄漏天机？今事已过了，方可说破。”老翁捶胸跌足道：“眼面前错过了仙缘，悔之何及！师父而今还有时，再把一个来老汉吃吃。”道人笑道：“此等灵根，寻常岂能再遇？老丈前日虽不曾尝得二味，也曾吃过千年茯苓。自此也可一生无疫，寿过百岁了。”老翁道：“甚么茯苓？”道人道：“即前日所食白糕便是。老丈的缘分只得如此，非贫道不欲相度也。”道人说罢而去，已后再不来了。自此老翁整整直活到一百馀岁，无疾而终。

可见神仙自有缘分。仙药就在面前，又有人有心指引的，只为无缘，兀自不得到口。却有一等痴心的人，听了方士之言，指望炼那长生不死之药，死砒死汞，弄那金石之毒到了肚里，一发不可复救。古人有言：“服药求神仙，多为药所误。”自晋人作兴那五石散、寒食散之后，不知多少聪明的人被此坏了性





a baby was a ginseng of more than ten thousand years old, and the person who ate it can live up to ten thousand years old. They should not be cooked and must be eaten raw. Otherwise, we are all humans, how could we eat dogs and humans raw like tigers and wolves, without spitting the bones?" The old man recalled that while they ate the two things the other day they did eat them raw without spitting the bones. Then he accepted what the Taoist said as true. Overcome with remorse, he said, "I was muddle-headed the other day. Why didn't you tell me at that time?"

The Taoist said, "This is destiny. If you were not destined for it, how could I possibly divulge the secrets of the heaven? Now I've made it known to you because it is over." Beating his bosom and stamping his feet in agony, the old man said, "What a pity I let slip the chance of becoming an immortal! If you still have some with you, could you give me one so that I can eat it?" The Taoist said, "They are miraculous roots. How can I get them so easily? Though you didn't eat these two things the other day, you ate *fuling* of one thousand years old. You will be free of all diseases throughout your life and will live up to one hundred years old." The old man asked, "What *fuling*?" The Taoist replied, "The white cake. So is your destiny. Not that I was not willing to help you." Finishing these words, the Taoist left and never returned again. As it turned out later, the old man died without any diseases after he lived up to exactly one hundred years old.

This story tells us that it is destined whether a person can become an immortal or not. When a person is not fated to become an immortal, he will not have the chance to take the food of immortality, even though it is right before his eyes and someone has purposely showed it to him. However, there are also some insane ordinary people who follow the Taoists' instructions and willfully long to make elixirs. Once they take the elixirs they've made, they lose their lives. As the ancient saying goes, "Those who wish to become immortals by simply taking elixirs will be ruined by elixirs." Ever since the Five-ore Powder and Pure Brightness Powder<sup>1</sup> became popular among the Jin (265-420) people, countless intelligent people have been killed by elixirs. It was perfectly all right if common people lost their lives by taking elixirs, but there were also several



命。臣子也罢，连皇帝里边药发不救的也有好几个。这迷而不悟，却是为何？只因制造之药，其方未尝不是仙家的遗传。却是神仙制炼此药，须用身心宁静，一毫嗜欲俱无，所以服了此药，身中水火自能匀炼，故能骨力坚强，长生不死。今世制药之人，先是一种贪财好色之念横于胸中，正要借此药力争得寿命，可以恣其所为，意思先错了。又把那耗精劳形的躯壳要降伏他金石熬炼之药。怎当得起？所以十个九个败了。朱文公有《感遇》诗云：

飘摇学仙侣，遗世在云山。  
盗启元命秘，窃当生死关。  
金鼎蟠龙虎，三年养神丹。  
刀圭一入口，白日生羽翰。  
我欲往从之，脱屣谅非难。  
但恐逆天理，偷生讵能安？

看了文公此诗，也道仙药是有的，只是就做得来，也犯造化所忌，所以不愿学他。岂知这些不明道理之人，只要蛮做蛮吃，岂有天上如此没清头，把神仙与你这伙人做了去？落得活活弄杀了。



emperors who lost their lives after taking elixirs. Why were they so perverse?

The way those killing elixirs were made was by no means unorthodox. However, as a matter of fact, while extraordinarily unusual persons make elixirs, they are exceedingly quiet and peaceful both in body and mind and they know no desire or lust of whatever kind. After they take these elixirs, the water and fire within their bodies can keep balance and thus help the elixirs take effect. The elixirs will make their bones strong and make them immortal. However, while people today make elixirs, they are first seized with lust for money and women and, then, they wish to extend their lives with the help of elixirs so that they can have their own ways in everything. They get it wrong completely. How can their energy-consuming and body-tiring outer forms bring into control the power of the miraculous powders and pills? So it is common that nine persons out of ten fail to make elixirs. Zhu Xi (1130-1200, philosopher and scholar) once wrote a poem to depict his personal vicissitudes:

How wonderful to be an immortal and go tossing about in the wind!  
 How wonderful to separate myself from the rest of the world,  
 And go roving over the clouds and mountains!  
 Steal the ultimate secret of life and occupy the pass of life and death.  
 With dragons and tigers curling around the golden tripod,  
 Miraculous pills of immortality can be made in three years.  
 Taking immortality powder, an earthly body will be full of wings.  
 I have a mind to join that pursuit —  
 It may not be difficult to discard my current path.  
 But I fear I may go against the heavenly principles.  
 How can I be so bold as to usurp immortality and rest at ease!

After reading this poem, we know that Zhu Xi also agrees that elixirs can be made, but he thinks such a practice is against the course of Nature even though people can make them. So he is reluctant to follow suit. However, there are some senseless people who have only foolhardiness to their credits in their reckless pursuit for immortality. How could it be possible that the heaven is so muddle-headed that it will allow such people to become immortals? Even though such a person took a pill, he would



而今说一个人，信着方上人，好那丹方鼎器，弄掉了自己性命，又几乎连累出几条人命来。

欲作神仙，先去嗜欲。

愚者贪淫，惟日不足。

借力药饵，取欢枕褥。

一朝药败，金石皆毒。

夸言鼎器，鼎覆其馘。

话说国朝山东曹州，有一个甄廷诏，乃是国子监监生。家业丰厚，有一妻二妾。生来有一件癖性，笃好神仙黄白之术。何谓黄白之术？方上丹客哄人炼丹，说养成黄芽，再生白雪，用药点化为丹，便铅汞之类皆变黄金白银。故此炼丹的叫做黄白之术。有的只贪图银子，指望丹成；有的说丹药服了就可成仙度世，又想长生起来。有的又说内丹成，外丹亦成，却用女子为鼎器，与他交合，采阴补阳，捉坎填离，炼成婴儿姤女，以为内丹，名为采战工夫。乃黄帝、容成公、彭祖御女之术，又可取乐，又可长生。其中有本事不济，等不得女人精至，先自战败了的，只得借助药力，自然坚强耐久，有许多话头做作，哄动这些血气未定的少年，其实有枝有叶，有滋有味。那甄监生心里也要炼银子，也要做神仙，也要女色取乐，无所不好。



most possibly get killed by it.

\* \* \*

Now I'd like to tell you a story about how a man lost his life due to his blind belief in a Taoist's folk prescription and his love of sex. His death, more or less, involved the life or death of a couple of people.

To be an immortal, one has to know no lust.

The foolish are greedy and have an insatiable desire  
for carnal pleasures.

Taking powders and pills, they cling to pillows and quilts  
to seek amusement.

Once the pills and powders fail them, into poison they'll change.

Never brag about your tripod, for its legs can break  
and then bury your food.

During our Ming Dynasty there lived a man named Zhen Tingzhao in Caozhou, Shandong. Zhen Tingzhao was an academician of the Imperial Academy. With a huge family property, he had a wife and two concubines. Being an eccentric man by nature, he loved Taoist alchemy. Taoist alchemists coaxed people to make elixirs, saying that if they kept on practicing, they would be able to make elixirs with a touch of a certain chemical and then they would be able to turn lead and mercury into gold and silver. Some people tried their utmost to make elixirs with the single purpose of seeking silver while others believed that once they ate elixirs they would become immortal. Some believed that men could also gain elixirs and achieve immortality by using women as the tripods for elixir-making or by having sex with them, namely collecting *yin* so as to strengthen *yang*. Huangdi, Rongchenggong and Pengzu<sup>2</sup> followed this practice. By doing so, it was said that men could both get the elixirs and obtain a long life. Those who were likely to have premature ejaculations had to rely on drugs to prolong their lovemaking. Many youths of hot blood were fooled by some Taoist alchemists into believing their embellished and tasty stories.

Zhen Tingzhao was one of the hot-blooded youths. He wished to seek silver, he wanted to become an immortal, and he also desired to have sex so as to gain elixirs in women. He always followed the Taoist's instructions

但是方士所言之事，无所不依，被这些人弄了几番喧头，提了几番罐子，只是不知懊悔，死心塌地在里头，把一个好好的家事弄得七零八落，田产多卖尽，用度渐渐不足了。同乡有个举人朱大经，苦口劝谏了几遭，只是不悟，乃作一首口号嘲他道：

曹州有个甄廷诏，养着一伙真强盗。  
养砂乾汞立投词，采阴补阳去祷告。  
一股青烟不见踪，十顷好地随人要。  
家间妻子低头恼，街上亲朋拍手笑。

又做一首歌警戒他道：

闻君多智兮，何邪正之混施？  
闻君好道兮，何妻子之嗟咨？  
予知君不孝兮，弃祖业而无遗。  
又知君不寿兮，耗元气而难医。

甄监生得知了，心里恼怒，发个冷笑道：“朱举人肉眼凡夫，那里晓得就里！说我弃了祖业，这是他只据目前，怪不得他说，也罢！怎反道我不寿？看你们倒做了仙人不成？”恰像与那个斃气一般的，又把一所房子卖掉了。卖得一二百两银子，就一气讨了四个丫头，要把来采取做鼎器。内中一个唤名春花，独



to the letter. Though the Taoists cheated him of his money several times, he never felt remorseful about it. On the contrary, he was dead set on doing whatever he was told by the Taoists. Due to his pursuit of elixirs, he sold all his land property. Soon his family declined rapidly and he had to live in straitened circumstances.

Zhu Dajing, a juren from the same locality of Zhen, earnestly admonished him several times to give up his pursuit of elixirs. But Zhen simply turned a deaf ear to him. Zhu Dajing then wrote a poem to sneer at him. It read:

In Caozhou there lives a man named Zhen Tingzhao.  
With willingness he supports an army of bandits.  
Blind indulgence in grit and mercury is his sole concern.  
Collecting yin to strengthen yang his only pleasure.  
Like a wisp of smoke from the kitchen chimney,  
    he disappears into thin air.  
A thousand mu of fertile land falls into others' hands.  
Deeply grieved is his wife.

Clapping their hands, relatives and friends shout "Bravo!"

Later Zhu Dajing wrote a lyric to exhort him, which read:

I hear people say you're an intelligent man, but why can't you distinguish the good from the evil? I hear people say you're a devout believer of Taoism, but why does your wife keep on sighing? I know you're not a filial son, for you've lost all your properties handed down by your ancestors. I also know you'll die young, for you've ruined your health and it will be beyond cure.

Zhen was very annoyed at Zhu's lyric. With a faint sneer on the lips, Zhen said in his mind, "Zhu Juren is an ordinary man. How can he tell what I've been doing! According to the present circumstances, it's passable for him to say I've lost my family property handed down from my ancestors. What he said is true and he is not to blame for saying so. But on what account could he assume I'll die young? Could a person like Zhu become an immortal?" As if with a fit of pique, Zhen sold his house for about one or two hundred taels of silver and with this money he bought four servant girls. He wanted to use them as the tripods and have sex with



生得标致出众，甄监生最是喜欢，自不必说。

一日请得一个方士来，没有名姓，道号玄玄子，与甄监生讲着内外丹事，甚是精妙。甄监生说得投机，留在家里多日，把向来弄过旧方请教他。玄玄子道：“方也不甚差，药材不全，所以不成。若要成事，还要养炼药材，这药材须到道口集上去买。”甄监生道：“药材明日我与师父亲自买去，买了来从容养炼。至于内外事口诀，先要求教。”玄玄子先把外丹养砂乾汞许多话头传了，再说到内丹采战抽添转换、升提呼吸要紧关头。甄监生听得津津有味，道：“学生于此事究心已久，行之颇得其法，只是到得没后一着，不能忍耐。有时提得气上，忍得牢了，却又兴趣已过，便自软痿，不能抽送，以此不能如意。”玄玄子道：“此事最难。在此地位，须是形交而神不交，方能守得牢固。然功夫未熟，一个主意要神不交，才付之无心，便自软痿。所以初下手人必须借力于药。有不倒之药，然后可以行久御之术。有久御之功，然后可以收阴精之助。到得后来，收得精多，自然刚柔如意，不必用药了。若不先资药力，竟自讲究其法，便有些说时容易做时难，弄得不尴尬，落得损了元神。”甄监生道：“药不过是春方，有害身子。”玄玄子道：“春





them so as to gain elixirs. Among the four servant girls, the one called Chunhua was out of the common run in appearance, and Zhen liked her the most.

One day, Zhen Tingzhao invited a Taoist to his home to ask him about folk prescriptions and how to make elixirs. The Taoist was nameless, but he styled himself Xuanxuanzi. Seeing that Xuanxuanzi was a congenial person, Zhen had him stay in his home for quite some days, during which he asked for his advice on the folk prescriptions he had used. Xuanxuanzi said, "These prescriptions are not bad, but one medicinal herb is lacking. If you want to make elixirs, you'll have to get that medicinal herb. You can buy it at the Daokou fair." Zhen said, "I'll follow you to the fair to buy that herb tomorrow. Now I'd like you to instruct me the recipe for both making elixirs and having sex."

Xuanxuanzi first passed on to him the secrets of how to make cinnabar and how to dry mercury. Then he turned to the subject of lovemaking. As Xuanxuanzi came to the critical moments like the switch of body-moving and sucking, as well as breathing control, Zhen listened with keen interest. He said, "I've done considerable research on this matter and I can do it quite good. But I can't exercise control over myself when it comes to the final moment of orgasm. When I hold my breath strong, I become soft. So, things do not often turn out as I wish."

Xuanxuanzi said, "This is basically the most difficult thing. When it comes to this point, you have to control yourself by doing it only with your body instead of with your mind. Only in this way can you become perfectly satisfied. He who is not skilful enough in this art will turn soft the moment he sets his mind on not having sex. So beginners usually have to turn to medicines for help. With the help of panacea, you can do it long. When you do it long, you can find help in the sperm. Finally when you have accumulated enough sperm, you will be able to control yourself perfectly, whether it is hard or soft. By then you'll find the medicines totally unnecessary. If you do not rely on medicines and only keep your focus on the skills, you will find the saying "easier said than done" most appropriate for you. Worse still, it will not be good for your health." Zhen said, "The panacea is nothing but aphrodisiac. It's harmful

方乃小家之术，岂是仙家所宜用？小可有炼成秘药，服之久久，便可骨节坚强，长生度世。若试用鼎器，阳道壮伟坚热，可以胶结不解，自能伸缩，女精立至，即夜度十女，金枪不倒。此乃至宝之丹，万金良药也。”甄监生道：“这个就要相求了。”玄玄子便去葫芦内倾出十多丸来，递与甄监生道：“此药每服一丸，然未可轻用，还有解药。那解药合成，尚少一味，须在明日一同这些药料买去。”甄监生接受了丸药，又要玄玄子参酌内丹口诀异同之处。玄玄子道：“此须晚间卧榻之上，才指点得穴道明白，传授得做法手势亲切。”甄监生道：“总是明日要起早到道口集上去买药，今夜学生就同在书房中一处宿了，讲究便是。”当下分付家人：“早起做饭，天未明就要起身，倘或睡着了，饭熟时来叫一声。”家人领命已讫。是夜遂与玄玄子同宿书房，讲论房事，传授口诀。约莫一更多天，然后睡了。

第二日天未明，家人们起来做饭停当，来叫家主起身。连呼数声，不听得甄监生答应，却惊醒了玄玄子。玄玄子摸摸床子，不见主人家。回说道：“昨夜一同睡的，我睡着了，不知何往，今不在床上了。”家人们道：“那有此话！”推门进去，把火一照，只见床上里边玄玄子睡着，外边脱下里衣一件，却不见家主。尽道：想是原到里面睡去了。走到里头敲门问时，



to health.”

Xuanxuanzi said, “Aphrodisiacs are only for laymen. How can we Taoists use them? I’ve got some miraculous medicine with me. If you keep on taking it, it will make your bones strong and help you live a long life. This medicine is an invaluable treasure.” Zhen asked, “Would you be kind enough to give me some pills of this medicine?” Xuanxuanzi poured out some pills from his gourd and handed them to Zhen, saying, “Take one pill each time, but remember you mustn’t use it rashly. There is also a companion rescue remedy for this medicine. But I still need one more medicinal herb to make this companion rescue remedy. Tomorrow I’ll have to go and buy it at the fair together with you.”

After accepting the pills, Zhen again asked Xuanxuanzi to deliberate the differences and similarities between the different recipes of having sex. Xuanxuanzi said, “I think I can only make them clear to you when you lie down on the bed at night.” Zhen said, “As we’re going to get up early tomorrow morning and go to the fair to buy the medicines, I would rather stay together with you in the study for the night so that you can instruct me about them.” Instantly Zhen gave an order to his servants, “Get up early tomorrow morning and prepare breakfast for us. I’ll set out for the fair before daybreak. If I don’t get up, wake me up when breakfast is ready.” His family servants obeyed his order. On that night he stayed in the study with Xuanxuanzi, talking about how to have sex. It was about midnight when they two went to sleep.

The family servants got breakfast ready before daybreak the following day. Then they called their master to wake up. Zhen gave no answer, but the servants’ repeated calls woke up Xuanxuanzi. Xuanxuanzi searched for Zhen on the bed, but found he was not there. Xuanxuanzi answered, “We shared one bed last night. I was sound asleep throughout night. He is not on the bed at the moment. I don’t know where he has gone.” The servants shouted, “What nonsense are you talking about?” So saying, the servants pushed the door open and broke into the study. Under the torchlight, they found Xuanxuanzi still on the bed, but their master was not there. Taking it for granted that their master must be with his concubines or servant girls, they went to the inner rooms and inquired



说道：“昨晚不曾进来。”合家惊起，寻到书房外边一个小室之内，只见甄监生直挺挺眠于地上，看看口鼻时，已是没气的了。大家慌张起来，道：“这死得希奇！”其子甄希贤听得，慌忙走来，仔细看时，口边有血流出。希贤道：“此是中毒而死，必是方士之故。”希贤平日见父亲所为，心中不伏气，怪的是方士。不匡父亲这样死得不明，不恨方士恨谁？领了家人，一头哭，一头走，赶进书房中揪着玄玄子，不管三七二十一，拳头脚尖齐上，先是一顿肥打。玄玄子不知一些头脑，打得口里乱叫：“老爷！相公！亲爹爹！且饶狗命！有话再说。”甄希贤道：“快还我父亲的性命来！”玄玄子慌了道：“老相公怎的了？”家人走上来，一个巴掌打得应声响，道：“怎的了？怎的了？你难道不知道的，假撇清么？”一把抓来，将一条铁链锁住在甄监生尸首边了，一边收拾后事。

待天色大明了，写了一状，送这玄玄子到县间来。知县当堂问其实情；甄希贤道：“此人哄小人父亲炼丹，晚间同宿，就把毒药药死了父亲。口中现有血流，是谋财害命的。”玄玄子诉道：“晚间同宿是真。只是小的睡着了，不知几时走了去，以后又不知怎么样死了。其实一些也不知情。”知县道：“胡说！既是同宿，岂有不知情的？况且你每这些游方光棍有甚么做不



about their master's whereabouts. To their surprise, they were told that the master didn't come. The whole family was taken aback at the news and all got up to hunt for Zhen. As they came to a small room beside the study, they found Zhen lying on the ground, straight and stiff. Feeling about his noses and mouth, they found him breathless. Everybody was seized with panic, saying, "How strange!"

When Zhen's son, Zhen Xixian, heard about it, he came over in a hurry and examined his father's body carefully. He saw stains of blood at the corner of his father's mouth. Xixian said, "His death is caused by poison. It must have something to do with the Taoist." Feeling discontented on ordinary days with his father's conduct, Zhen Xixian poured the blame on the Taoist. He never expected his father would die such a mysterious death. Who else would he resent but the Taoist? He broke into the study with his family servants, weeping sadly, and caught hold of Xuanxuanzi. Casting all caution to the winds, he gave Xuanxuanzi a good beating.

Unable to make head or tail of it, Xuanxuanzi shouted, "My master, sir, my dear father, please spare me! What the hell is the matter?" Zhen Xixian said angrily, "Return me my father's life!" Flurried, Xuanxuanzi asked, "What happened to your father?" The servants slapped Xuanxuanzi on the face and said, "What happened? What happened? Are you saying you don't know what had happened? You liar!" As they said so, they pulled Xuanxuanzi over and tied him up with an iron chain beside Zhen's body. Then they started to make arrangements for Zhen Tingzhao's funeral.

When it was daytime, Zhen Xixian wrote a complaint and brought Xuanxuanzi to the county *yamen*. The County Magistrate asked them at the court what had happened. Zhen Xixian said, "This man coaxed my father into making elixirs. Last night he stayed with my father in one room for the night. He killed my father with poison. You can see blood in my father's mouth. It's a case of murder for money." Xuanxuanzi explained, "It's true we stayed in one room last night. But I was asleep for the whole night and I didn't know when he went out of the room. I really don't know how he died."

The County Magistrate said, "Nonsense! Since you slept in one room, how could you not know how he died? Moreover, is there anything you



出来！”玄玄子道：“小人见这个监生好道，打点哄他些东西，情是有的；至于死事，其实不知。”知县冷笑道：“你难道肯自家说是怎么样死的不成？自然是赖的！”叫左右：“将夹强盗的头号夹棍，把这光棍夹将起来！”可怜那玄玄子：

管什么玄之又玄，只看你熬得不得。吆呵力重，这算做洗髓伐毛；叫喊声高，用不着存神闭气。口中白雪流将尽，谷道黄芽挣出来。

当日把玄玄子夹得一佛出世，二佛生天，又打勾一二百榔头。玄玄子虽然是江湖上油嘴棍徒，却是惯哄人家好酒好饭吃了，叫先生、叫师父尊敬过的，到不曾吃着这样苦楚，好生熬不得。只得招了道：“用药毒死，图取财物是实。”知县叫画了供，问成死罪，把来收了大监，待叠成文案再申上司。乡里人闻知的多说：“甄监生尊信方士，却被方士药死了。虽是甄监生迷而不悟，自取其祸；那些方士这样没天理的，今官府明白，将来抵罪，这才为现报了。”亲戚朋友没个不欢喜的。到于甄家家人，平日多是恨这些方士入骨的，今见家主如此死了，恨不登时咬他一块肉，断送得他在监里问罪，人人称快，不在话下。

岂知天下自有冤屈的事。元来甄监生二妾四婢，惟有春花是他新近宠爱的。终日在闺门之内，轮流侍寝，采战取乐。终久人多耳目众，觉得春花兴趣颇高，碍着同伴窃听，不能尽情，



Taoists and ruffians do not engage in?” Xuanxuanzi said, “I knew Zhen had a keen interest in Taoism, so I planned to cheat him some of his money. This is true. As for his death, I do not have any knowledge about it.” With a sneer on his face, the County Magistrate said, “Obviously you’re telling a lie. How could you admit that you killed him?” So saying, the County Magistrate ordered that Xuanxuanzi be sandwiched between the largest boards which were especially prepared to punish bandits. Oh, poor Xuanxuanzi:

Whoever you are, a mortal or an immortal-to-be, you’ll have to endure this suffering, bearable or unbearable. This torture is called cutting the hair and washing the marrow of the bones. Letting out desperate screams, you don’t need preserve energy and hold breath. Foaming at mouth, shit and piss wetting pants.

Xuanxuanzi was tortured within an inch of his life. After this, one or two hundred hammers also fell on him. Though a glib talker making a living wandering from place to place, he had never suffered such torments. Unable to stand the pains of the torture, he confessed, “It’s true I killed him with poison for his money.” The County Magistrate had him signed his name on his confession and sentenced him to death. After Xuanxuanzi was put behind the bars, the County Magistrate got ready the records and files of the case and presented them to the higher authorities for final judgment.

The local inhabitants all believed the saying that Zhen Tingzhao was killed by the Taoist with poison. They all agreed that, though Zhen was perverse, he got what he deserved, and as to the heartless Taoist, it served him right to give his life for a life. Both Zhen’s relatives and friends were very much pleased at the County Magistrate’s judgment. As regards Zhen’s family members, they all hated Taoists to the marrow of their bones. Now seeing that their master died, they were itching to bite the Taoist. So everyone was overjoyed when the Taoist was put behind the bars and was to be punished with capital punishment.

Injustices do exist in the world. As a matter of fact, among his two concubines and four servant girls, Zhen favored Chunhua the most. He had sex with her for pleasure all day long in his bedroom. Having fears

意思要与他私下在那里弄一个翻天覆地的快活。是夜口说在书房中歇宿，其实暗地里约了春花，晚间开出来，同到侧边小室中行事，春花应允了。甄监生先与玄玄子同宿，教导术法，传授了一更多次，习学得熟。正要思量试用，看见玄玄子睡着，即走下床来，披了衣服，悄悄出来。走到外边，恰好春花也在里面走出来。两相遇着，拽着手，竟到侧边小室中，有一把平日坐着运气的禅椅在内，叫春花脱了下衣，坐好在了上面了，甄监生就舞弄起来。

甄监生极了，猛想道：“日间玄玄子所与秘药，且吃他一丸，必是耐久的。”就在袖里摸出纸包来，取一丸，用唾津咽了下去。才咽得下，就觉一股热气竟趋丹田。两相吸牢，扯拔不出。

甄监生想道：“他日间原说还有解药，不曾合成。方才性急头上，一下子吃了。而今怎得药来解他？”心上一急，便有些口渴气喘起来，对春花道：“怎得口水来吃吃便好！”春花







that the others might hear them while they made love, for Chunhua was always very excited when they did it, they often found it hard to enjoy themselves to the full. Therefore, Zhen considered of changing a place so that he and Chunhua could do it to their hearts' content. When he said the other day he would stay for the night in the study with the Taoist, he had told Chunhua in advance to steal out of her room at night and come to the small room nearby so that he could have sex with her. Chunhua agreed to it.

After Xuanxuanzi had finished instructing Zhen the recipes, it was about midnight. Zhen mastered the skills and was itching to have a try. Seeing that Xuanxuanzi was fast asleep, Zhen stole out of the study. No sooner had he got out of the study than he met Chunhua, who was also stealing out of her room. Hands in hands, they two went into the small room nearby

There was a chair in the small room on which Zhen used to direct his strength through concentration. After Zhen had Chunhua take off her panties, Chunhua sat on the chair. Then they started to have sex. While they were doing it, Zhen suddenly got an idea, "Xuanxuanzi gave me some miraculous pills. Let me take one pill. Sure it will give me strength and help me do it long." He fumbled the paper wrapper out of his sleeve, put one pill into his mouth and gulped it down with saliva. Immediately after he ate the pill, he felt a sudden puff of hot air moving toward his pubic region.

Soon Zhen and Chunhua were drawn to each other strong, and Zhen found that he could no longer get out of her. At this point, Zhen suddenly remembered something, "Xuanxuanzi told me earlier there was a companion rescue remedy for these miraculous pills, but it had not been made due to lack of a certain medicinal herb. Just now I was a bit hot headed and took one pill. What should I do now?" Panic-stricken, he felt thirsty and began to breathe hard. "Get me some water," he said to Chunhua. "Let me free and I'll go and get some water for you," said Chunhua. The effect of the miraculous pill was so powerful that Zhen got drawn to Chunhua too strong, unable to separate himself from her. Becoming flushed with anxiety, he got a fatal attack of the internal heat.



道：“放我去取水来与你吃。”甄监生却被药力涩住。落得头红面热，火气反望上攻。口里哼道：“活活的急死了我！”咬得牙齿格格价响，大喊一声道：“罢了我了！”两手撒放，扑的望地上倒了下来。

春花站起身来道：“这是怎的说？”去扶扶甄监生时，声息俱无，四肢挺直，但身上还是热的，叫问不应了。春花慌了手脚，道：“这事利害。若声张起来，不要说羞人，我这罪过须逃不去。总是夜里没人知道，瞒他娘罢！”且不管家主死活，轻轻的脱了身子，望自己卧房里只一溜，溜进去睡了，并没一个人知觉。到得天明，合家人那查夜来细帐？却把一个甚么玄玄子顶了缸，以消平时恶气，再不说他冤枉的了。只有春花肚里明白，怀着鬼胎，不敢则声，眼盼盼便做这个玄玄子悔气不着也罢。

看官，你道这些方士固然可恨，却是此一件事是甄监生自家误用其药，不知解法，以致药发身死，并非方士下手故杀的。况且平时提了罐、着了道儿的，又别是一伙，与今日这个方士没相干。只为这一路的人，众恶所归，官打见在，正所谓张公吃酒李公醉，又道是拿着黄牛便当马。又是个无根蒂的，没个亲戚朋友与他辨诉一纸状词，活活的顶罪罢了。却是天理难昧，元不是他谋害的，毕竟事久辨白出来。这放着做后话。

且说甄希贤自从把玄玄子送在监里了，归家来成了孝服。把父亲所作所为尽更变过来。将药炉、丹灶之类打得粉碎，一



He groaned, "It's killing me!" Finally he yelled, gritting his teeth, "I'm finished!" So saying, he fell down to the ground, straight and stiff. Getting to her feet, Chunhua murmured, "What's wrong with you?"

Stroking Zhen's body, she found that, though he was breathless, he was still warm. Chunhua called out to him repeatedly, but got no answer. Thrown into utter confusion, Chunhua said to herself, "This is a serious matter. If it is disclosed, I won't be able to shake off my responsibility for such an offence, not to mention the shame on me. Anyway this is nighttime and no one knows what has happened. I'd better keep my mouth shut about this matter!" Leaving her master unattended, Chunhua sneaked away into her own bedroom. When day broke, would the Zhen family bother to probe into what had happened the previous night? Thus the Zhen family, in order to give vent to their anger, made Xuanxuanzi a scapegoat. And none admitted he was wronged. Chunhua was the only person who knew the inside story. With evil designs in her heart, she kept silent over this matter, leaving Xuanxuanzi to his lousy luck.

Readers, it is true Taoists are detestable. But, so far as this matter is concerned, it was Zhen who wrongly took the miraculous pill. In addition to this, he didn't have the companion rescue remedy with him. When the pill worked, it killed him. So it was by no means a case of intentional homicide and this Taoist was in no way the murderer. What's more, it was other Taoists who had cheated him of his money on ordinary days and it had nothing to do with this Taoist. But one thing was sure, many Taoists like this one had aroused public indignation. Officials thought only of the present. Just like one man drinks the wine but the other is taken as the drunkard — they simply called a stag a horse. Moreover, Zhen was a man without backstage supporters. Having neither relatives nor friends who could make an appeal to higher authorities on his behalf, he had to become a scapegoat. However, justice will overtake all crimes. Xuanxuanzi was not a murderer, and he would get himself clear of it sooner or later. I'll come to this later.

After Xuanxuanzi had been put behind the bars, Zhen Xixian returned home and modified the way of life his family used to have while his father was alive, smashing into pieces the medicine containers and the



意做人家。先要卖去这些做鼎器的使女。其时有同里人李宗仁，是个富家子弟，新断了弦，闻得甄家使女多有标致的，不惜重价，来求一看。希贤叫将出来看时，头一名就点中了春花，用掉了六十多两银子，讨了家去。宗仁明晓得春花不是女身，却容貌出众，风情动人，两下多是少年，你贪我爱，甚是过得绸缪。春花心性飘逸，好吃几杯酒，有了酒，其兴愈高，也是甄家家里操炼过，是能征惯战的手段。宗仁肉麻头里，高兴时节，问他甄家这些采战光景。春花不十分肯说，直等有了酒，才略略说些出来。

宗仁一日有亲眷家送得一小坛美酒，夫妻两个将来对酌。宗仁把春花劝得半醉，两个上床，乘着酒兴干起事来。就便问起甄家做作，春花也斜着双眼道：“他家动不动吃了药做事，好不爽利煞人！只有一日正弄得极快活，可惜就收场了。”宗仁道：“怎的就收场了？”春花道：“人多弄杀了，不收场怎的？”宗仁道：“我正见说甄监生被方士药死了的。”春花道：“那里是方士药死？这是一桩冤屈事。其实只是吃了他的药，不解得，自弄死了。”宗仁道：“怎生不解得弄死了？”春花却把前日晚间的事，是长是短，备细说了一遍。宗仁道：“这等说起来，你当时却不该瞒着，急急叫起人来，或者还可有救。”春花道：“我此时慌了，只管着自己身子干净，躲得过便罢了，那



stove for making elixirs. He wanted to direct his family to the normal track of life. First and foremost, he decided to sell the four servant girls. At that time it so happened that Zhen's fellow townsman Li Zongren, a young man from a wealthy family, lost his wife. Knowing that all the servant girls in the Zhen family were beautiful, Li spared no money to ask for a look at the girls. Zhen Xixian brought out the girls, and Li settled on Chunhua at first sight. He bought her for sixty taels of silver and took her to his home. Though he was aware that Chunhua was no more a girl, Li loved her very much for her beauty and charm. Since they were both young, the couple soon grew sentimentally attached to each other.

Endowed with a romantic temperament, Chunhua had a fondness for drinking. Once she had a few cups of wine, her interest in sex would be aroused to the full. While she was in the Zhen's home, she would often drink some wine before he had sex with Zhen Tingzhao.

In the beginning when Li and Chunhua made love, Li would often ask her how Zhen had had sex with her, but Chunhua was always unwilling to talk about it. However, she started to disclose some of it after she had drunk some wine. One day one of Li's relatives gave him a pot of good wine. The couple then started to drink. Li urged Chunhua to wine until she was a bit tipsy. At the height of their drinking bout, the couple started to have sex. Seizing this opportunity Li again inquired her about how she and Zhen made love in the past. Squinting drunkenly, Chunhua said, "Zhen often had sex with me with the help of pills and it was really fun. But one day while we were still in the height of the merriment, it suddenly came to an end."

Li asked, "Why did you put it to an end?" Chunhua answered, "He suddenly died. What else could we do if we didn't end it all?" Li said, "But it's said Zhen was killed by poison by the Taoist." "This is not true," Chunhua said. "The Taoist was wronged. The truth is that Zhen took the pill the Taoist gave him, but the companion rescue remedy was not available at that moment, so Zhen got killed." Then Chunhua gave a full account of what had happened in the small room the other night. Li said, "That being the case, you should not have kept your mouth shut at that moment. Had you called over some people to his rescue, Zhen might as

里还管他死活？”宗仁道：“这等，你也是个没情的。”春花道：“若救活了，今日也没你的分了。”两个一齐笑将起来。虽然是一番取笑说话，自此宗仁心里毕竟有些嫌鄙春花，不足他的意思。

看官听说，大凡人情，专有一件古怪：心里热落时节，便有些缺失之处，只管看出好来；略有些小不像意起头，随你承奉他，多是可嫌的，并那平日见的好处也要拣相出不好来，这多是缘法在里头。有一只小词儿单说那缘法尽了的：

缘法儿尽了，诸般的改变。缘法儿尽了，要好也再难。

缘法儿尽了，恩成怨。缘法儿若尽了，好言当恶言。缘法儿尽了也，动不动变了脸。

今日说起来，也是春花缘法将尽，不该趁酒兴把这些话柄一盘托了出来。男子汉心肠，见说了许多用药淫战之事，先自有些捻酸不耐烦，觉得十分轻贱。又兼说道弄死了在地上，不管好歹，且自躲过，是个无情不晓事的女子，心里淡薄了好些。朝暮情意，渐渐不投。春花看得光景出来，心里老大懊悔。正是一言既出，驷马难追。此时便把舌头剪了下来，嘴唇缝了拢去，也没一毫用处。思量一转，便自捶胸跌足，时刻不安。



well have survived.”

Chunhua said, “I was scared out of my wits and totally at a loss what to do at that moment. I only thought that I must get out of the place immediately and avoid getting involved in the matter. How could I care about him?” Li said, “You were heartless.” “Had he survived, you would not have been able to take me as your wife today,” Chunhua retorted him in reply. So saying, the couple all laughed. Casual remarks as they were, Li, from then on, started to dislike her and give her the cold shoulder

Relationships between people are usually rather strange. While they’re on good terms, both parties always tend to see the advantages in each other even though there are many shortcomings in them. The moment they’re at loggerheads, one party always tends to see the defects in the other instead of seeing their good points, and they always find the other a nuisance even though the other tries to curry favor with them. This is fate. The following is a description especially telling about how things will be like when a predestined relationship has come to an end:

When a predestined relationship has come to an end, everything will change. When a predestined relationship has come to an end, it will be impossible to relive the past. When a predestined relationship has come to an end, gratitude will turn to resentment. When a predestined relationship has come to an end, kind admonition will be regarded as vicious slander. When a predestined relationship has come to an end, people will turn hostile at the slightest provocation.

Fate had it that Chunhua was to fell out with Li. She shouldn’t have told Li everything about it while she was intoxicated with wine. Having a heart of a real man, Li first felt a bit jealous and started to regard her as lowly as she talked about how she had sex with Zhen. As he learned what she did after Zhen fell to the ground, Li found that she was a heartless woman. Then he began to cold-shoulder her. Having realized Li’s state of mind, Chunhua was filled with profound remorse. As the old saying goes, “A word once spoken cannot be overtaken even by a team of four horses.” Chunhua realized everything was too late now even if she cut off her tongue or sowed up her mouth. Beating her bosom and stamping in agony, she was seized with a guilty conscience and started to fell quite uneasy.



也是合当有事。一日，公婆处有甚么不合意，骂了他：“弄死汉子的贱淫妇！”春花听见，恰恰道着心中之事，又气恼，又懊悔。没怨怅处，妇人短见，走到房中，一索吊起。无人防备的，那个来救解？不上一个时辰，早已呜呼哀哉！

只缘身作延年药，一服曾经送主终。

今日投缳殆天意，双双采战夜台中。

却说春花含羞自缢而死，过了好一会，李宗仁才在外厢走到房中。忽见了这件打秋千的物事，吃了一惊，慌忙解放下来，早已气绝的了。宗仁也有些不忍，哭将起来。父母听得，急走来看时，只叫得苦。老公婆两个互相埋怨道：“不合骂了他几句，谁晓得这样心性，就做短见的事！”宗仁明知道是他自怀羞愧之故，不好说将出来。邻里地方闻知了来问的，只含糊回他道：“妻子不孝，毁骂了公婆，惧罪而死。”幸喜春花是甄家远方讨来的，没有亲戚，无人生端告执人命。却自有这伙地方人等要报知官府，投递结状，相验尸伤，许多套数。宗仁也被缠得一个不耐烦，费掉了好些盘费，才得停妥，也算是大悔气。

春花既死，甄监生家里的事越无对证。这方士玄玄子永无





Chunhua was fated to have trouble some day. One day, it so happened that she made her parents-in-law angry. Her parents-in-law scolded her a slut, a murderer, which pinpointed her secret cause of remorse. Feeling very much depressed, she hanged herself in her room. As none had taken any precautions against this sudden incident, who would come over in time to rescue her? Within an instant, she died.

Taking herself as tonics to prolong life,

She causes the death of her master.

It's the will of Heaven she hangs herself today.

The couple now can resume their pursuit in the underworld darkness.

It was a long while after Chunhua hanged herself from shame did Li Zongren come into her room and find her swaying in the air. Greatly startled, Li lost no time in delivering her from the rope, but she was dead. Overcome with compassion, Li burst out crying bitterly. Upon hearing the sad news, Li's parents hurriedly came over for a look. They could do nothing but groan inwardly. Shifting the blame onto each other, they said, "We only shouted a couple of curses on her. Who would have expected she would commit suicide like this!"

Li Zongren knew perfectly well that Chunhua hanged herself from shame, but he considered it would be unfavorable for him to make the true cause of her death known to the public. When his neighbors and the local authorities learned of Chunhua's death and asked him about the matter, Li just gave an equivocal reply, saying, "My unfilial wife hurled some insults upon the parents-in-law. She committed suicide for fear of punishment." Fortunately, the Zhen family had bought Chunhua from a distant place, so she did not have any relatives around her. No one would like to provoke incidents and bring this matter to the court. However, the local authorities at the village level reported it to the county *yamen* and lodged a complaint. Thus a postmortem examination and many other things had to be carried out successively. Being tied up with the affair, Li didn't have it settled until he had spent a lot of silver on it. What rotten luck for Li!

Chunhua was dead. Dead people bear no witness. The Taoist Xuanxuanzi was not likely to get out of the jail for the rest of his life.



出头日子了。谁知天理所在，事到其间，自有机会出来。

其时山东巡按是灵宝许襄毅公，按临曹州，会审重囚。看见了玄玄子这宗案卷，心里疑道：“此辈不良，用药毒人，固然有这等事，只是人既死了，为何不走？”次早提问这事。先叫问甄希贤，希贤把父亲枉死之状说了一遍。许公道：“汝父既与他同宿，被他毒了，想就死在那房里的了。”希贤道：“死在外边小室之中。”许公道：“为何又在外边？”希贤道：“想是药发了，当不得，乱走出来寻人，一时跌倒了的。”许公道：“这等，那方士何不逃了去？”希贤道：“彼时合家惊起，登时拿住，所以不得逃去。”许公道：“死了几时，你家才知道？”希贤道：“约了天早同去买药，因家人叫呼不应，不见踪迹，前后找寻，才看见死了的。”许公道：“这等，他要走时，也去久了。他招上说谋财害命，谋了你家多少财？而今在那里？”希贤道：“止是些买药之本，十分不多，还在父亲身边，不曾拿得去。”许公道：“这等，他毒死你父亲何用？”希贤道：“正是不知为何这等毒害。”

许公就叫玄玄子起来，先把气拍一敲道：“你这伙人死有余辜！你药死甄廷诏，待要怎的？”玄玄子道：“廷诏要小人



However, as Heaven will settle all accounts, everything will come out into the open when the time comes.

At that time, it so happened that Xu Jin, the imperial inspector of Shandong, arrived at Caozhou to handle the cases of criminals who were guilty of serious crimes. After he studied the files concerning Xuanxuanzi's case, Xu Jin felt rather doubtful. He thought, "It's common practice that Taoists poison people. But why didn't he run away after he killed Zhen?" So thinking, he decided to try this case the next day.

On the next day, Xu first questioned Zhen Xixian about the matter. Zhen Xixian recounted how his father had been poisoned by Xuanxuanzi. Xu asked, "Since your father stayed the night in the same room with Xuanxuanzi, he must have been killed in that room, is this true?" Zhen Xixian answered, "He was found dead in a small room next door." Xu asked, "Why he died in another room next door?" Zhen Xixian said, "I guess he must have struggled out of the room to seek help when the poison began to take effect and finally he stumbled down in that small room." Xu asked, "Why didn't the Taoist run away at the moment?" Zhen Xixian answered, "My whole family got up from their beds with a start and caught him right away. That's why he failed to make good of his escape." Xu again asked, "How long had your father been dead before you knew it?"

Zhen Xixian said, "Because my father told my family he was going to buy medicines early the following morning, members of my family called him loudly on the morning, but received no answer. They searched for him everywhere before they finally found him in that small room, dead." Xu said, "That being the case, the Taoist would have gone far, had he wanted to. As recorded in his confession, he said he killed your father for money. How much money did he get from your family? And where is the money now?" Zhen Xixian answered, "My father only had a little money on him and he was to use it to buy the medicines. The Taoist didn't take it. My father still had it with him when he died." Xu asked, "In this case, what did he kill your father for?" Zhen Xixian said, "This is exactly what's puzzling me. I can't figure out why he was so wicked?"

Then Xu Jin ordered that Xuanxuanzi get onto his feet. Striking the piece of board hard on the table, Xu said, "Even death is too good for



与他炼外丹，打点哄他些银子，这心肠是有的。其实药也未曾买。正要同去买了，才弄起头，小人为何先药死他？前日熬刑不过，只得屈招了。”许公道：“与你同宿是真的么？”玄玄子道：“先在一床上宿的，后来睡着了，不知几时走了去。小人睡梦之中，只见许多家人打将进来，拿小人去偿命，小人方知主人死了，其实一些情也不晓得。”许公道：“为甚么与你同宿？”玄玄子道：“要小人传内事功夫。小人传了他些口诀，又与了他些丸药，小人自睡了。”许公道：“丸药是何用的？”玄玄子道：“是房中秘戏之药。”许公点头道：“是了，是了。”又叫甄希贤问道：“你父亲房中有几人？”希贤道：“有二妾四女。”许公道：“既有二妾，焉用四女？”希贤道：“父亲好道，用为鼎器。”许公道：“六人之中，谁为最爱？”希贤道：“二妾已有年纪，四女轮侍，春花最爱。”许公道：“春花在否？”希贤道：“已嫁出去了。”许公道：“嫁在那里？快唤将来！”希贤道：“近日死了。”许公道：“怎样死了？”希贤道：“闻是自缢死的。”许公哈哈大笑道：“即是一桩事一个情也！其夫是何名姓？”希贤道：“是李宗仁。”

许公就掣了一签，差个皂隶去，不一时拘将李宗仁来。许



you! Why did you poison Zhen Tingzhao?" Xuanxuanzi answered, "Zhen Tingzhao asked me to teach him how to make elixirs. It is true I had planned to cheat him of some of his silver when he and I would go to the fair to buy the medicines the next day. But the fact is that we didn't get the chance to go to the fair and buy the medicines. What reasons did I have to poison him in advance? I confessed I killed him the other day because I could no longer stand the torture."

Xu asked, "Did he really stay with you in one room for the night?" Xuanxuanzi answered, "We were on the same bed in the beginning. Later I fell asleep. So I was unaware when he left the room. His whole family broke into my room and started to beat me while I was sleeping. I didn't know Zhen Tingzhao was dead until they shouted to take my life for Zhen's life. Actually I knew nothing about what had happened." Xu asked, "Why did he stay in one room with you for the night?" Xuanxuanzi answered, "Because he wanted me to instruct him how to enjoy sex. I imparted to him some recipes for having sex and gave him some pills. After this I went to sleep." Xu asked, "What pills?" Xuanxuanzi answered, "Aphrodisiacs." Nodding his head, Xu murmured, "I got it, I got it." Turning to Zhen Xixian, Xu asked, "How many women did your father keep?" Zhen Xixian answered, "Two concubines and four servant girls."

Xu asked again, "Since he had two concubines, why did he keep four servant girls?" Zhen Xixian answered, "My father had a keen interest in Taoism. He used the four girls as the tripods for making elixirs." Xu asked, "Among these six women, who was his favorite?" Zhen Xixian answered, "The two concubines were getting on in years. The four servant girls slept with him in turns. Chunhua was his favorite."

Xu asked, "Where is Chunhua now?" Zhen Xixian said, "She left my home and got married again." Xu said, "Where has she been married off? Bring her to me right now!" Zhen Xixian said, "She died just a couple of days ago." Xu asked, "How did she die?" Zhen Xixian answered, "It's said she hanged herself." Laughing heartedly, Xu said, "Her death must have something to do with the death of your father. What's her husband's name?" "Li Zongren," replied Zhen Xixian. Then Xu issued an order that Li be brought to the *yamen* immediately. A runner was sent to fetch Li.



公问道：“你妻子为何缢死的？”宗仁磕头道：“是不孝公姑，惧罪而死。”许公故意作色道：“分明是你致死了他，还要胡说！”宗仁慌了道：“妻子与小人从来好的，并无说话。地方邻里见有干结在官。委是不孝小人的父母，父母要声说，自知不是，缢死了的。”许公道：“你且说他如何不孝？”宗仁一时说不出来，只得支吾道：“毁骂公姑。”许公道：“胡说！既敢毁骂，是个放泼的妇人了，有甚惧怕，就肯自死？”指着宗仁道：“这不是他惧怕，还是你的惧怕。”宗仁道：“小人有甚惧怕？”许公道：“你惧怕甄家丑事彰露出来，乡里间不好听，故此把不孝惧罪之说支吾过了，可是么？”宗仁见许公道着真情，把个脸涨红了，开不得口。许公道：“你若实说，我不打你；若有隐匿，必要问你偿命。”宗仁慌了，只得实实把妻子春花吃酒醉了，说出真情，甄监生如何相约，如何采战，如何吃了药不解得，一口气死了的话，备细述了一遍，道：“自此以后，心里嫌他，委实没有好气相待。妻子自觉失言，悔恨自缢，此是真情。因怕乡亲耻笑，所以只说因骂公姑，惧怕而死。今老爷所言分明如见，小人不敢隐瞒一句。只望老爷超生。”许公道：



Before long Li Zongren was brought to Xu Jin.

Xu Jin asked Li, "Why did your wife hang herself?" Kowtowing repeatedly, Li answered, "She was unfilial to my parents. She committed suicide for fear of punishment." Deliberately flying into a rage, Xu said in a stern voice, "It's obvious you killed her. How dare you talk nonsense!" Anxious and flurried, Li said, "My wife and I were on good terms with each other. I'm not lying. The case involving my wife's death has been settled at the local *yamen* long before and the conclusion was that because she was not filial to my parents, she hanged herself for fear of punishment." Xu then said, "Tell me in what way she was not filial to your parents." Being tongue-tied at the moment, Li had to hum and haw, "She hurled curses upon my parents."

Xu shouted, "Nonsense! If she was bold enough to hurl curses, she must be shrew! What should she fear? How could she possibly hang herself?" Pointing his finger at Li, Xu continued, "It was not she who had fears, but it was you who were afraid." Li asked, "What should I be afraid of?" Xu said, "You were afraid that it would not sound good to your name if Zhen Tingzhao and Chunhua's scandal were disclosed. So you hummed and hawed the matter by saying she was not filial and she committed suicide for fear of punishment. Am I right?"

Realizing Xu had seen through him, Li became tongue-tied, blushing with shame. Xu continued, "If you tell me the truth about it, I will not beat you. If you hold back the facts, I'll surely have you pay for it with your life." Greatly frightened out of his wits, Li Zongren had to confess that his wife Chunhua, in her drunkenness, had told him the truth about how Zhen Tingzhao made an appointment with her, how they had sex, and how Zhen took a pill and then lost his life. Finally Li added, "From then on, I started to loathe her and gave her the cold shoulder. She regretted having told me about it so deeply that she hanged herself. This is the truth. Fearing that my neighbors might laugh at me for having such a wife, I made up the story that after she hurled curses upon her parents-in-law, she committed suicide for fear of punishment. Upon hearing your words, I knew you'd seen through me. So I don't dare to cover up anything in this matter. Hope you have mercy on me, sir." Xu said, "Now you've



“既实说了，你原无罪，我不罪你。”一面录了口词。

就叫玄玄子来道：“我晓得甄廷诏之死与你无干。只是你药如此误事，如何轻自与人？”玄玄子道：“小人之药，原了解法。今甄廷诏自家妄用，丧了性命，非小人之罪也。”许公道：“却也误人不浅。”提笔写道：

审得甄廷诏误用药而死于淫，春花婢醉泄事而死于悔。皆自贻伊戚，无可为抵，两死相偿足矣。玄玄子财未交涉，何遽生谋？死尚身留，必非毒害。但淫药误人，罪亦难免。甄希贤痛父执命，告不为诬。李宗仁无心丧妻，情更可悯。俱免拟释放。

当下将玄玄子打了廿板，引“庸医杀人”之律，问他杖一百，逐出境押回原籍。又行文山东六府：凡军民之家敢有听信术士道人邪说采取炼丹者，一体问罪。发放了毕。

甄希贤回去与合家说了，才晓得当日甄监生死的缘故却因春花，春花又为此缢死，深为骇异。尽道：“虽不干这个方士的事，却也是平日误信此辈，致有此祸也。”





told me the truth. You're innocent and I won't put the blame on you."

Then Xu Jin called Xuanxuanzi forward and said, "I knew Zhen Tingzhao's death had nothing to do with you. But your medicine was so poisonous. How could you give it to others so offhandedly?" Xuanxuanzi said, "There is a companion rescue remedy for my medicine. Zhen Tingzhao lost his life by taking my medicine because he didn't have the companion rescue remedy. I should not be punished for this." Xu said, "But it did no little harm to Zhen Tingzhao!" Taking up his brush, Xu Jin made the following judgment:

Taking the wrong medicine, Zhen Tingzhao died of indulging in sensual pleasures. Divulging the secret in her drunkenness, servant girl Chunhua died of regret. As they made the bed, they had to lie on it.

Xuanxuanzi didn't cheat Zhen of any money, nor did he run away. How could it be possible for him to kill Zhen for money? He was not the murderer. But his aphrodisiacs were really harmful and he should be punished for it. Zhen Xixian be exempted from the crime of false charge against Xuanxuanzi, because he was deeply grieved at that time at his father's sudden death.

Li Zongren was unfortunate to lose his wife and he deserves sympathy.

Zhen Xixian and Li Zongren be released right now.

Instantly Xuanxuanzi got caned twenty times. In accordance with the law relating to quacks' manslaughter, he was punished with a hundred floggings and then deported back to his native place. Then Xu Jin sent an official communication to the six prefectures in Shandong, which read, "Any people, military or civilian, who believe in Taoists' heresy and attempt to seek elixirs and pursue long lives by having sex with woman, will be denounced and punished severely."

After returning home, Zhen Xixian told his family what had truly happened to his father. Everyone was greatly shocked at hearing that Chunhua had been the cause of Zhen Tingzhao's death and that Chunhua had committed suicide because of this matter. They all agreed that Zhen Tingzhao met with such a misfortune because he had wrongly believed such Taoists like Xuanxuanzi on ordinary days, though his death had nothing to do with this Xuanxuanzi.

Seeing the official communication, people from the six prefectures of

六府之人见察院行将文书来，张挂告示，三三两两尽传说甄家这事，乃察院明断，以为新闻。好些好此道的，也不敢妄做了。真足为好内外丹事者之鉴。

从来内外有丹术，不是贪财与好色。  
外丹原在广施济，内丹却用调呼吸。  
而今烧汞要成家，采战无非图救急。  
纵有神仙累劫修，不及庸流眼前力。  
一盆火内炼能成，两片皮中抽得出。



Shandong, in twos and threes, all passed Zhen Tingzhao's story from mouth to mouth and highly praised Xu Jin for his fair judgment. Moreover, they all thought this matter rather novel. Those who were fond of this kind of Taoist practice no longer ventured it. It may well serve as a warning for people who pursue long lives by having sex with women and for people who devote themselves to making elixirs as well.

Both making powders or pills and using women can  
lead to immortality.

But neither should be done to covet for fortune  
and sensual pleasures.

The original intent of making powders  
and pills is for treatment,

While the fundamental objective of using women  
for adjusting breathing.

But today some smelt mercury with the aim of getting  
quick results and instant benefit,

While some use women as a shortcut.

Is celestial beings' thousand-year cultivation not as good  
as temporary effort of the mediocrity?

How can immortality come out of a basin of fire  
and two pieces of flesh?



## 卷 十 九

### 田舍翁时时经理 牧童儿夜夜尊荣

词云：

扰扰劳生，待足何时足？据见定、随家丰俭，便堪龟缩。得意浓时休进步，须防世事多翻覆。枉教人白了少年头，空碌碌。

此词乃是宋朝诗僧晦庵所作《满江红》前阕，说人生富贵荣华，常防翻覆，不足凭恃。劳生扰扰，巴前算后，每怀不足之心，空白了头没用处，不如随缘过日的好。

只看宋时嘉祐年间，有一个宣义郎万延之，乃是钱塘南新人，曾中乙科出仕。性素刚直，做了两三处地方州县官，不能屈曲，中年拂衣而归。徙居余杭，见水乡陂泽，可以耕种作田



## Tale 19

### An Old Farmer Constantly Keeps Himself Busy with His Farm Work A Shepherd Boy Enjoys Dignity and Prestige Every Night

As a *ci* poem goes:

Life is full of wearies and disturbances. None will stop for a rest until they have had enough. But when will they have enough? It is advisable to take the world as it is, living a better life if well-off, living a frugal life if hard-up. Never be insatiable when riding on the crest of success. Be fully prepared for unfavorable turns of events. Don't keep busying about in vain over worldly matters, for it will turn your youthful head grey.

This is the upper stanza of *Manjianghong*, a *ci* poem by the Song Dynasty poet Hui'an. While enjoying all the comforts of wealth and power, you should take precautions against the chop and change of worldly affairs instead of entirely relying on your present wealth and power. It's useless to work hard throughout your life to accumulate wealth, for all people are insatiable and will never get enough. It will result in nothing but turning your youthful head grey. Why not take the world as it is and live a life of your own? This is basically what the poet is driving at in this *ci* poem.

During the Jiayou reign (1056-1063) of emperor Zhao Zhen of the Song Dynasty, there lived a civilian official of the lowest rank named Wan Yanzhi, who was a native of Nanxin County in Qiantang. He took up an official career after he passed the imperial examinations at the county level. Being an upright and outspoken character, he resigned from office at middle age and settled down in Hangzhou after he had served as county magistrate at a couple of different counties.

Located at a low-lying region full of rivers and lakes, the farmland in Hangzhou was rather inexpensive, for it was often inundated by water.



的，因为低洼，有水即没，其价甚贱。万氏费不多些本钱，买了无数。也是人家该兴，连年亢旱，是处低田大熟，岁收租米万石有余。万宣义喜欢，每对人道：“吾以万为姓，今岁收万石，也勾了我了。”自此营建第宅，置买田园，扳结婚姻。有人来献勤作媒，第三个公子说合驸马都尉王晋卿家孙女为室，约费用二万缗钱，才结得这头亲事。儿子因是驸马孙婿，得补三班借职。一时富贵熏人，诈民无算。

他家有一个瓦盆，是希世的宝物。乃是初选官时，在都下，为铜禁甚严，将十个钱市上买这瓦盆来盥洗。其时天气凝寒，注汤沃面过了，将残汤倾去，还有倾不了的，多少留些在盆内。过了一夜，凝结成冰，看来竟是桃花一枝。人来见了，多以为奇，说与宣义。宣义看见道：“冰结拢来，原是花的，偶像桃花，不是奇事。”不以为意。明日又复剩些残水在内，过了一会看时，另结一枝开头牡丹，花朵丰满，枝叶繁茂，人工做不来的。报知宣义来看，道：“今日又换了一样，难道也是偶然？”宣义方才有些惊异道：“这也奇了，且待我再试一试。”亲自把



Wan bought a huge piece of farmland with very little capital. Wan was destined to get rich. Years of drought followed after Wan bought the huge piece of low-lying farmland, giving him extremely high yields. Thus he would harvest over ten thousand *dans* of grains each year. Overwhelmed with joy, Wan would often say to everyone he met, "My family name is Wan, and now it happens that I harvest *wan dans* (literally ten thousand *dans*) of grains each year. "It is really enough for my entire life."

From then on he started to build up more houses, buy more farmland and seek opportunities to get united with wealthy and influential families in wedlock. One person curried favor with him and acted as matchmaker for his third son and the granddaughter of Wang Jinqing, the emperor's son-in-law. This cost him about twenty thousand strings of cash to bring about this marriage. After his third son became the grandson-in-law of the emperor's son-in-law, Wan was assigned to the post of a military official of the lowest rank. Soon after this, he became overwhelmingly wealthy and powerful and went about swindling countless people.

There was an earthen basin in Wan's home, and it was a rare treasure. As copper ware was being banned at the time, Wan Yanzhi bought this earthen basin for ten copper coins and used it for washing years ago when he first took part in the imperial examinations. One cold winter day, one of his family members poured some hot water into the basin and washed his face. Having finished washing, he dumped the used water. However, some water was left behind in the basin. Surprisingly, the leftover water got iced up overnight, taking the shape of a spray of peach blossoms. Considering it to be quite astonishing, those who saw it all reported the matter to Wan. Wan took a look at it and said, "Water freezes up into ice flowers. Now it happens to take the form of a spray of peach blossoms. There is nothing strange about it."

One the next day, again some water was left in the basin, not emptied. As they came to see it after a while, they found the ice to be like a spray of a large peony with a mass of branches and leaves, definitely not made by hand. Again they invited Wan over to have a look, saying, "Now it changed into another kind of flower. Could it be accidental too?" Being a bit surprised, Wan said, "How strange! Let me have a try." After he cleaned



瓦盆拭净，另洒些水在里头。次日再看，一发结得奇异了，乃是一带寒林，水村竹屋，断鸿翔鹭，远近烟峦，宛如图画。宣义大骇，晓得是件奇宝，唤将银匠来，把白金铸了外层，将锦绣做了包袱，十袭珍藏。但遇凝寒之日，先期约客，张筵置酒，赏那盆中之景。是一番另结一样，再没一次相同的。虽是名家画手，见了远愧不及。前后色样甚多，不能悉纪。只有一遭最奇异的，乃是上皇登极，恩典下颁，致仕官皆得迁授一级，宣义郎加迁宣德郎。敕下之日，正遇着他的生辰，亲戚朋友来贺喜的，满坐堂中。是日天气大寒，酒席中放下此盆，洒水在内，须臾凝结成像。却是一块山石上坐着一个老人，左边一龟，右边一鹤，俨然是一幅“寿星图”。满堂饮酒的无不喜跃赞叹。内中有知今识古的士人议论道：“此是瓦器，无非凡火烧成，不是甚么天地精华五行间气结就的。有此异样，理不可晓，诚然是件罕物！”又有小人辈胁肩谄笑，掇臀捧屁，称道：“分明万寿无疆之兆，不是天下大福人，也不能勾有此异宝。”当下尽欢而散。

此时万氏又富又贵，又与皇亲国戚联姻，豪华无比，势焰非常。尽道是用不尽的金银，享不完的福禄了。谁知过眼云烟，





the basin personally, he put some water in it.

On the next day the ice in the basin formed a bamboo cottage with swan geese, egrets and cooking smokes against the backdrop of a winter forest, just like a landscape painting. Greatly amazed at such a sight, Wan knew that it was indeed a rare treasure. He asked a silversmith to have the outer side of the basin mounted with silver. Then he had it wrapped up with layers of silk and treasured it up.

On cold winter days he would invite his friends over to enjoy the wonderful views in the basin and at the same time entertain them with banquets. The ice views formed in the basin always appeared to be different from one another. Even accomplished painters felt inadequate. The ice views were too many to depict.

But one view appeared to be extraordinarily uncommon. It happened that on the occasion of the emperor's ascending the throne, His Majesty endowed his royal favors on the civilian officials by promoting them by one grade. Naturally Wan got a promotion too. It was Wan's birthday when the imperial edict of promotion reached him. Relatives and friends all called at his house with congratulations. It was awfully frigid that day. In the middle of the dinner the earthen basin was placed on the table and some water was sprinkled within it. The water froze up in an instant and a spectacular sight came into their view. It was an elderly man sitting on a rock, with a turtle on his left and a crane on his right, absolutely a picture expressing the wishes for a long life. Jumping with joy, all the people at the dinner table gasped in admiration.

A scholar conversant with both ancient and modern learning remarked, "It's merely an earthen ware made by humans. It's not made from the cream of the heaven and the earth, nor from the vital energy of the five elements. I just can't see why it produces such an uncommon sight. It must be a rare treasure." Trying to soft-soap Wan, a young man said, "Undoubtedly, it's a sign of longevity. None but those who have the good fortune can have such a rare treasure." All the visitors left after they had thoroughly enjoyed themselves.

As he was now rich and powerful, and was related by marriage with the imperial family, Wan appeared to be swollen with overbearing



容易消歇。宣德郎万延之死后，第三儿子补三班的也死了。驸马家里见女婿既死，来接他郡主回去，说道万家家资多是都尉府中带来的，伙着二三十男妇，内外一抢，席卷而去。万家两个大儿子只好眼睁睁看他使势行凶，不敢相争，内财一空。所有低洼田千顷，每遭大水淹没，反要赔粮，巴不得推与人了倒干净，凭人占去。家事尽消，两子寄食亲友，流落而终。此宝盆被驸马家取去，后来归了蔡京太师。

识者道：“此盆结冰成花，应着万氏之富，犹如冰花一般，原非坚久之象，乃是不祥之兆。”然也是事后如此猜度。当他盛时，那个肯是这样想？敢是这样说？直待后边看来，真个是如同一番春梦。所以古人寓言，做着《邯郸梦记》、《樱桃梦记》，尽是说那富贵繁华直同梦境。却是一个人做得一个梦了却一生，不如庄子所说那牧童做梦，日里是本相，夜里做王公，如此一世，更为奇特。听小子敷衍来看：



arrogance, taking it for granted that he would have gold and silver more than needed and endless good fortune and honor to enjoy. But all this was to vanish like a fleeting cloud. After the death of Wan Yanzhi, the third son died too. After the death of the third son, the granddaughter of the emperor's son-in-law was brought back to her own home. The family of the emperor's son-in-law announced that all the Wan family properties had been brought over by the granddaughter. So saying, twenty to thirty servants from the family of the emperor's son-in-law sacked Wan's house and made off with everything they could lay hands on. The two elder sons of Wan Yanzhi had to watch them looting their family properties, helplessly. All of his boundless expanse of low-lying farmland was flooded, incurring heavy losses. The Wan family was only too anxious to give it to anyone who wished to get it. Thus the Wan family declined. The two elder sons had to live with their relatives and friends. Finally they died homeless. The treasured basin was also taken away by the family of the emperor's son-in-law. Later it fell into the hands of Cai Jing, the most powerful minister during the last years of the Northern Song Dynasty (960-1127).

The one in the know commented thus, "When the water in this basin freezes up, forming flowers, it signifies that Wan's wealth is just like ice flowers, which are by no means signs of solidarity and durability. Absolutely an ill omen." Of course, this is after-the-fact wisdom. While Wan was on the rise, who could have thought so, who could have dared to say so? As it turned out later, it was just like a spring dream.

*The Dream of Handan* and *The Dream of Cherry Orchard* are works of parables written by the ancients, which give a full interpretation of the idea that all riches and prosperity are nothing but a dream. However, it is not quite fascinating for a person to live in one dream throughout his or her life, as the heroes and heroines do in the aforementioned two works. Zhuangzi<sup>1</sup> elaborated an anecdote of a shepherd, who, presenting his true features, lives his own life at daytime, but lives the life of a high-ranking official in his dream at night. There must be a peculiar charm in such a life. Here I'd like to develop this anecdote into a story.

Life is nothing but a dream.



人世原同一梦，梦中何异醒中？  
若果夜间富贵，只算半世贫穷。

话说春秋时鲁国曹州有座南华山，是宋国商丘小蒙城庄子休流寓来此，隐居著书，得道成仙之处。后人称庄子为南华老仙，所著书就名为《南华经》，皆因此起。彼时山畔有一田舍翁，姓莫名广，专以耕种为业。家有肥田数十亩，耕牛数头，工作农夫数人。茆檐草屋，衣食丰足，算做山边一个土财主。他并无子嗣，与庄家老姥夫妻两个早夜算计思量，无非只是耕田锄地、养牛牧猪之事。有几句诗单道田舍翁的行径：

田舍老翁性夷逸，僻向小山结幽室。  
生意不满百亩田，力耕水耨艰为食。  
春晚喧喧布谷鸣，春云霭霭檐溜滴。  
呼童载犁躬负锄，手牵黄犍头戴笠。  
一耕不自己，再耕还自力。  
三耕且插苗，看看秀而硕。



What's the difference between being asleep and being awake?

If one can enjoy riches and honor in his dream,

He lives in poverty only half of his life.

\* \* \*

During the Spring and Autumn and Warring States period, there was a Nanhua Mountain in Caozhou in the State of Lu. Zhuangzi from Xiaomengcheng, Shangqiu in the State of Song moved to this mountain and began to live in seclusion, where he wrote a book to expound his doctrines. He attained the highest state of spiritual enlightenment and became a perfect man in this mountain. For this reason, later generations addressed Zhuangzi as Perfect Man Nanhua and named the book he wrote *Book of Perfect Man Nanhua*.

At the time there was an old farmer at the foot of Nanhua Mountain by the name of Mo Guang, who lived on farming. He had dozens mu of fertile land, several oxen used in farming, several farmhands as well as a thatched cottage. Well-fed and well-clad, he was presumably regarded as a rich man by the local inhabitants. Having no son, the old farmer Mo Guang and his wife, also a farmer, cared about nothing all day long but plowing and weeding and raising more cattle and pigs. The following poem is a portrait of the old farmer:

An old farmer, completely at ease and carefree,  
Lives in a secluded mountain cottage.  
Working hard in his field which is less than  
a hundred *mu*,  
He earns his own bread.  
Cuckoos sing in spring evenings.  
Above his cottage eaves float white spring clouds.  
Calling out his farmhands to carry the ploughs and the hoes,  
He puts his straw hat on the head and leads the yellow cattle  
to the field.  
Plough and plough, he is beside himself with joy and happiness.  
Next comes the sowing and rice transplanting.  
Look, how nice the crops are growing!  
Continuous weeding follows in summer.



夏耘勤勤秋复来，禾黍如云堪刈铨。  
担箩负囊纷敛归，仓盈困满居无隙。  
教妻囊酒赛田神，烹羊宰豚享亲戚。  
击鼓咚咚乐未央，忽看玉兔东方白。

那个莫翁勤心苦抵，牛畜渐多。庄农不足，要寻一个童儿专管牧养。其时本处有一个小厮儿，祖家姓言。因是父母双亡，寄养在人家，就叫名寄儿。生来愚蠢，不识一字，也没本事做别件生理，只好出力做工度活。一日在山边拔草，忽见一个双丫髻的道人走过，把他来端相了一回，道“好个童儿！尽有道骨，可惜痴性颇重，苦障未除。肯跟我出家么？”寄儿道：“跟了你，怎受得清淡过？”道人道：“不跟我，怎受得烦恼过？也罢，我有个法儿，教你夜夜快活，你可要学么？”寄儿道：“夜里快活，也是好的，怎不要学？师傅可指教我。”道人道：“你识字么？”寄儿道：“一字也不识。”道人道：“不识也罢。



Then a bumper harvest comes in autumn,  
And the grains are carried home in large bamboo  
baskets and sacks.  
The granaries are full and he can scarcely find room  
to move about in his room.  
Telling his wife to prepare wine and food to offer sacrifices  
to the God of Field,  
He entertains his relatives with mutton and pork.  
While the drum beating is bringing him to the height  
of his enthusiasm,  
Suddenly he finds the moon is rising in the east, full and bright.

Working hard on his fields with intensive cultivation, the old farmer  
Mo reaped bumper harvests for years running and earned a huge income.  
As he got more and more cattle later, he found that he was short of  
farmhands. So he planned to employ a shepherd boy to tend his oxen.

Meanwhile, there was a boy in the locality by the family name of Yan.  
As he had lost his parents when he was young, Yan was brought up by a  
relative and was named Ji'er. Slow-witted from his childhood, Yan Ji'er  
was illiterate. He had no options but to earn a living by doing manual  
labor. One day while he was pulling up weeds at the foot of the mountain,  
a Taoist with two twisted hair knots on either side of his head came over  
towards him. Looking at him up and down, the Taoist said, "You have  
sage-like features. But it's a pity you're rather stupid and dumb, so you  
have to suffer. Are you willing to be a Taoist and go with me?" Ji'er said,  
"How can I endure the simple life with very little comforts if I go with  
you?" The Taoist said, "How can you stand all the annoyances if you  
don't go with me? Well, I've got an idea. I'll teach you how to have a  
good time every night. Are you interested in it?" Ji'er answered, "Of  
course I am. It's also fun to have a good time at night. Go ahead, I'm all  
ears!"

The Taoist asked, "Can you read or write?" Ji'er answered, "No, not  
even one word." The Taoist said, "Never mind. Here is a five-character  
incantation. It's very easy to bear it in mind." Calling Ji'er closer to him,  
the Taoist continued, "Give me your ears and I'll tell you what it is. Do

我有一句真言，只有五个字，既不识字，口传心授，也容易记得。”遂叫他将耳朵来：“说与你听，你牢记着！”是那五个字？乃是：

婆珊婆演底。

道人道：“临睡时，将此句念上百遍，管你有好处。”寄儿谨记在心。道人道：“你只依着我，后会有期。”捻着渔鼓筒板，口唱道情，飘然而去。

是夜寄儿果依其言，整整念了一百遍，然后睡下。才睡得着，就入梦境。正是：

人生劳扰多辛苦，已逊山间枕石眠。

况是梦中游乐地，何妨一觉睡千年！

看官牢记话头，这回书，一段说梦，一段说真，不要认错了。却说寄儿睡去，梦见身为儒生，粗知文义，正在街上斯文气象，摇来摆去。忽然见个人来说道：“华胥国王黄榜招贤，何不去求取功名，图个出身？”寄儿听见，急取官名寄华，恍恍惚惚，不知涂抹了些甚么东西，叫做万言长策，将去献与国王。国王发与那掌文衡看阅。寄华使用了些衰蹄金作为贽礼。掌文衡的大悦，说这个文字乃惊天动地之才，古今罕有。加上批点，呈与国王。国王授为著作郎，主天下文章之事。旗帜鼓





keep it in your mind.” Which five characters? They turned out to be: *po shan po yan di*. The Taoist continued, “It will surely do you good if you read it in you mind a hundred times before you go to sleep.” Ji’er kept it in his mind. The Taoist said, “Just do it as I’ve told you. Till we meet again.” Finishing these words, the Taoist left gracefully, as if treading on air, chanting folk tales to the accompaniment of percussion instruments like a fisherman’s drum and two flat bamboo pieces.

Night fell and, as was told by the Taoist, Ji’er read it in mind a hundred times and then went to sleep. No sooner had he fallen asleep than he entered a dreamland. It was exactly like:

Compared with the sleeping rocks in the mountains  
 Much inferior is human life which is full  
 of disturbances and hardship.  
 Once fallen into the dreamland of happiness and pleasure,  
 Alas, why not sleep a thousand years?

Readers, please keep firmly in mind that half of this tale goes in dream and half in reality. Don’t get confused. The moment he fell asleep, Yan Ji’er dreamed that he became a learned scholar and was strolling around on the street with refined manners. Suddenly a man came over to him and said, “The king of the Huaxu Kingdom has put up posters recruiting talents. Why don’t you go and seek an official position?” Hearing this news, Ji’er hastily chose a formal name, Jihua, for himself. Instantly, as if in a trance, he scribbled something, even he himself had the least knowledge of what it was all about, and called it “A Ten-thousand-word Long-term Strategy for Running a State,” and then presented it to the king. The king then handed it to the official in charge of writings for perusal.

Jihua offered bribes to the official in charge of writings by giving him some gold, who was greatly delighted, saying that the author of this writing must be an earthshaking talent, seldom seen from the ancient times to the present. After writing down some notes and commentary on Jihua’s article, the official in charge of writings returned it to the king. The king appointed Jihua the Secretary of Literature, taking charge of all the literary works produced in the Kingdom. Amid crescendos of music, Jihua, riding a big strong horse, headed for the *yamen* to assume office. He felt as if he was

乐，高头骏马，送入衙门到任。寄华此时身子如在云里雾里，好不风骚！正是：

电光石火梦中身，白马红缨衫色新。

我贵我荣君莫羨，做官何必读书人？

寄华跳下得马，一个虚跌，惊将醒来。擦擦眼，看一看，仍睡在草铺里面，叫道：“呸，呸！作他娘的怪！我一字也不识的，却梦见献甚么策，得做了官，管甚么天下文章。你道是真梦么？且看他怎生应验？”嗤嗤的还定着性想那光景。只见平日往来的邻里沙三走将来，叫寄儿道：“寄哥，前村莫老官家寻人牧牛，你何不投与他家了？省得短趁，闲了一日便待嚼本。”寄儿道：“投在他家，可知好哩，只是没人引我去。”沙三道：“我昨日已与他家说过你了，今日我与你同去，只要写下文券就成了。”寄儿道：“多谢美情指点则个。”

两个说说话话，一同投到莫家来。莫翁问其来意，沙三把寄儿勤谨过人，愿投门下牧养说了一遍。莫翁看寄儿模样老实，气力粗夯，也自欢喜，情愿雇倩，叫他写下文卷。寄儿道：“我须不识字，写不得。”沙三道：“我写了，你画个押罢。”沙三曾在村学中读过两年书，尽写得几个字，便写了一张“情愿受雇，专管牧畜”的文书。虽有几个不成的字儿，意会得去也便是了。后来年月之下要画个押字，沙三画了，寄儿拿了一管笔，不知左画是、右画是，自想了暗笑道：“不知昨夜怎的献



just among clouds and mists. What a happy occasion it was! It is just like:

Riding on a white horse with red tassel decoration,

I'm just in a transient dream.

Envy me not, my riches and honor.

But why officials must be scholars?

However, as he alighted from the horse, Jihua tumbled down and woke up from his dream. Rubbing his eyes and looking around, he found he was still in the thatched hut. He shouted, "Bah! Bah! What mischief! I'm totally illiterate, but I dreamed I presented a long-term strategy and became a high-ranking official taking charge of all the literary works produced in the Kingdom. How could such a dream come true? I'll just wait and see how it will work!" So saying, he was immersed in reveries of the dream.

At daytime, Ji'er's neighbor Shasan came over and said to him, "Brother Ji, Old Farmer Mo is looking for a farmhand to tend his cattle. Why don't you turn to him as a long-term hired hand? It will be better than working as a casual laborer." Ji'er said, "Of course it would be wonderful if I can work for him as a long-term hired hand! But I don't have anyone to recommend me." Shasan said, "I recommended you to him yesterday. Now I'll take you to his home. Everything will be settled if you just sign an agreement with him." "Thank you for your kindness," Ji'er said.

Before long Ji'er and Shasan arrived at Mo's home. Mo asked them their purpose for coming. Shasan told him that Ji'er was an unusually industrious boy and was willing to tend his cattle. Seeing that Ji'er was an honest and strong boy, Mo was very much delighted and agreed to hire him. As Mo asked Ji'er to draw up the agreement, Ji'er said, "I can't read and write." Shasan said, "I'll do it for you. Then you make your mark on it." As he had studied for two years in the village school, Shasan could write a few characters. He wrote a few lines, roughly reading, "I'm willing to be hired to tend the farm animals." Shasan signed Ji'er's name on Ji'er's behalf below the line of the year and month. When it was Ji'er's turn to make a mark on the agreement, Ji'er took up a brush, but he had no idea whether the first stroke of the mark should start from the left or the right. "I just can't imagine how I wrote a ten-thousand-word long-term strategy last night!" he thought in his mind, smiling in secret glee.



了万言长策来！”捻着笔千斤来重，沙三把定了手，才画得一个十字。莫翁当下发了一季工食，着他在山边草房中住宿，专管牧养。寄儿领了钥匙，与沙三同到草房中。

寄儿谢了沙三些常例媒钱。是夜就在草房中宿歇，依着道人念过五字真言百遍，倒翻身便睡。看官，你道从来只是说书的续上前因，那有做梦的接着前事？而今煞是古怪，寄儿一觉睡去，仍旧是昨夜言寄华的身分，顶冠束带，新到著作郎衙门升堂理事。只见踉踉跄跄，一群儒生将着文卷，多来请教。寄华一一批答，好的歹的，圈的抹的，发将下去，纷纷争看。众人也有服的，也有不服的，喧哗闹嚷起来。寄华发出规条，吩咐多要遵绳束，如不伏者，定加鞭笞。众儒方弭耳拱听，不敢放肆，俱各从容雅步，逡巡而退。是日，同衙门官摆着公会筵席，特贺到任。美酒嘉肴，珍羞百味，歌的歌，舞的舞，大家尽欢。直吃到斗转参横，才得席散，回转衙门里来。

那边就寝，这边方醒，想着明明白白记得的，不觉失笑道：



The brush in his hand seemed to weigh a thousand *jin*. Taking Ji'er's hand in his own, Shasan helped him make a cross as a mark.

This being done, Mo first gave Ji'er some food which was enough to last for an entire season and put him up in a thatched hut at the foot of the mountain. Ji'er's duty was to take care of Mo's farm animals. After taking the key, Ji'er and Shasan both went to the thatched hut. Ji'er gave Shasan some money as a token of thanks for his help. That night Ji'er stayed in this thatched hut. After reading in his mind the five-character incantation a hundred times, he fell asleep.

Readers, it is common that storytellers can always resume their stories. But how could it be possible for a person to make a sequel to his dream? Strange enough, the moment he fell asleep, Ji'er again resumed his dream of the previous night and became Yan Jihua. Dressing up as a high-ranking official, the new Secretary of Literature started to work in his office. A group of neatly dressed refined scholars, taking their writings with them, all came to Yan Jihua and asked him modestly for advice. Jihua answered them one after another by making comments on their writings, some being praises and some censures. After receiving their writings, the scholars all raced against time to read the comments. Some were convinced while some were not. Within an instant, they raised a clamor.

At such a sight, Jihua issued some rules and regulations and ordered that they abide by them to the letter. Those who were bold enough to go against the rules and regulations would definitely be punished by flogging. All the scholars immediately calmed down and listened to him with respectful attention. Then they withdrew from his office in order with all respect. On the same day the *yamen* officials gave a banquet in honor of his taking office. Enjoying vintage wine and choice food to the accompaniment of singing and dancing, everybody at the banquet had a wonderful time. The banquet didn't come to a close until day broke. Then Yan Jihua returned to his residence in the *yamen*. Still in his dream he went to bed.

At daybreak Ji'er woke up. Remembering his dream clearly, he couldn't help laughing. "How strange it is!" he murmured. "It was a sequel of last night's dream. I became a high-ranking official taking care of the writings



“好怪么！那里说起？又接着昨日的梦，身做高官，管着一班士子，看甚么文字，我晓得文字中吃的不中吃的？落得吃了些酒席，倒是快活。”起来抖抖衣服，看见褴褛，叹道：“不知昨夜的袍带，多在那里去了？”将破布袄穿着停当，走下得床来。只见一个庄家老苍头，奉着主人莫翁之命，特来交盘牛畜与他。一群牛共有八九只，寄儿逐只看相，用手去牵他鼻子。那些牛不曾认得寄儿，是个面生的，有几只驯扰不动，有几只奔突起来。老苍头将一条皮鞭付与寄儿，寄儿赶去，将那奔突的牛两三鞭打去。那些牛不敢违拗，顺顺被寄儿牵来一处拴着，寄儿慢慢喂放。

老苍头道：“你新到我主翁家来，我们该请你吃三杯。昨日已约下沙三哥了，这早晚他敢就来。”说未毕，沙三提了一壶酒、一个篮，篮里一碗肉，一碗芋头，一碟豆，走将来。老苍头道：“正等沙三哥来商量吃三杯，你早已办下了，我补你分罢。”寄儿道：“甚么道理要你们破钞？我又没得回答处，我也出个分在内罢了。”老苍头道：“甚么大事直得这个商量？我们尽个意思儿罢。”三人席地而坐，吃将起来。寄儿想道：“我昨夜梦里的筵席，好不齐整。今却受用得这些东西，岂不天地悬绝！”却是怕人笑他，也不敢把梦中事告诉与人。正是：

对人说梦，说听皆痴。

如鱼饮水，冷暖自知。



by scholars! Could writings starve off hunger? Anyway, I enjoyed the banquet very much.” He got onto his feet and flicked his tattered clothes. Heaving a sigh, he said, “I wonder where the official robe I wore last night has gone!”

The moment Ji'er was out of bed, an old farmhand came over and brought the cattle over to him under the order Old Farmer Mo. There were altogether eight to nine cattle. Ji'er sized the cattle up one by one and moved over to pull them by their noses. As the cattle had never seen Ji'er before, some of the cattle started to dash about, though some remained tame and gentle. The old farmhand gave Ji'er a whip and Ji'er gave the untamed cattle a couple of whips. Not daring to disobey, the untamed cattle were lead over and tied to a certain place along with the other ones. Then Ji'er started to graze the cattle.

Turning to Ji'er, the old farmhand said, “You're a newcomer. We must entertain you with some wine. I talked about it with Brother Shasan yesterday. He's coming soon.” Hardly had the old farmhand finished these words when Shasan arrived with a pot of wine and a basket containing a bowl of meat, a bowl of taro and a dish of beans. At the sight of Shasan, the old farmhand said, “I'm awaiting your arrival so that I can consult you about buying some wine and dishes to treat Ji'er. But you've already bought them. I'll give my share of expenses.”

Ji'er butted in, “How can I make you spend so much money for me? Since I'm in no position to give you a dinner in return, I'll give my share of expenses too.” The old farmhand said, “Is it necessary for us to talk over such a trifle? This wine is just a token of our greetings to your arrival.” Sitting down on the ground, the three started drinking and eating. Ji'er thought in his mind, “The banquet I enjoyed in my last night's dream was really beyond words. But now I'm eating such stuff. What a sharp contrast?” Fearing that he might be laughed at, Ji'er didn't disclose his dream to the old farmhand and Shasan. It is exactly like:

Many people love to talk about their dreams,  
But he who talks about his dream and  
he who listens should be of their mind.  
Just like a fish drinking water knows perfectly



寄儿酒量原浅，不十分吃得，多饮了一杯，有些醺意，两人别去。寄儿就在草地上一眠，身子又到华胥国中去。国王传下令旨，访得著作郎能统率多士，绳束严整，特赐锦衣冠带一袭，黄盖一顶，导从鼓吹一部。出入鸣驺，前呼后拥，好不兴头。忽见四下火起，忽然惊觉。身子在地上睡着，东方大明，日轮红焰焰钻将出来了。起来吃些点心，就骑着牛，四下里放草。那日色在身上晒得热不过，走来莫翁面前告诉。莫翁道：“我这里原有蓑笠一副，是牧养的人一向穿的；又有短笛一管，也是牧童的本等。今拿出来交付与你，你好好去看养，若瘦了牛畜，要与你说话的。”牧童道：“再与我把伞遮遮身便好。若只是笠儿，只遮得头，身子须晒不过。”莫翁道：“那里有得伞？池内有的是大荷叶，你日日摘将来遮身不得？”寄儿唯唯，受了蓑笠、短笛，果在池内摘张大荷叶擎着，骑牛前去。牛背上自想道：“我在华胥国里是个贵人，今要一把日照也不能勾了，却叫我擎着荷叶遮身。”猛然想道：“这就是梦里的黄盖了，蓑与笠就是锦袍官帽了。”横了笛，吹了两声，笑道：“这可不是一部鼓吹么？我而今想来，只是睡的快活。”有诗为证：





the temperature of the water,

Only the dreamer himself well knows his dream.

Unable to hold much wine, Ji'er didn't drink much. He became a bit tipsy immediately after he drank one cup of wine. No sooner had the old farmhand and Shasan left him than he fell on the meadow and went to sleep. He found that he was again in the Huaxu Kingdom. The king of the Huaxu Kingdom pronounced an imperial edict: I was told the Secretary of Literature is capable of leading a large number of scholars under strict discipline. Here I bestow on him a silken robe, a hat, a yellow canopy and a group of *yamen* trumpeters riding on horses who will shout out to pedestrians to make way for him when he goes out. Accompanied by a host of retainers making way for him, Jihua was carried away with happiness. All of a sudden a fire broke out around him, and he was awakened from his sleep. Still lying on the meadow, he realized that day was breaking and the bright red sun was rising in the east.

After a simple breakfast, Ji'er got onto an ox and began to herd the cattle. Unable to stand the heat of the sunshine, Ji'er came to Old Farmer Mo to vent his grievances. Old Farmer Mo said, "Here are a large straw hat and a bamboo flute, and they are the necessities for a shepherd boy. Now take them with you and take good care of my cattle. You're to blame if my cattle lose weight." Ji'er said, "Better give me an umbrella to keep me from the scorching sunshine. This straw hat can only give shelter to my head, but not my whole body." Old Farmer Mo said, "Where can I get you an umbrella? There are countless large lotus leaves in the pool. Couldn't you get some lotus leaves to keep you from the sunlight everyday?" Having no option, Ji'er had to accept the straw hat and the bamboo flute. As was told, he picked up a large lotus leaf and, carrying it in his hand, left on the ox.

While riding on the ox, Ji'er pondered, "I'm a high-ranking official in the Huaxu Kingdom. But now I can't even get an umbrella and have to carry a lotus leaf to keep off the sunshine!" However, he remembered something in a flash and said, "The lotus leaf is the very canopy and the large straw hat the official hat in my dream!" Playing the bamboo flute, he said, laughing, "Isn't it like a trumpeter? Now I got it, but I still feel

草铺横野六七里，笛弄晚风三四声。

归来饱饭黄昏后，不脱蓑衣卧月明。

自此之后，但是睡去，就在华胥国去受用富贵，醒来只在山坡去处做牧童。无日不如此，无梦不如此。不必逐日逐夜，件件细述，但只拣有些光景的，才把来做话头。

一日梦中，国王有个公主要招赘驸马，有人启奏：“著作郎言寄华才貌出众，文彩过人，允称此选。”国王准奏，就着传旨：“钦取著作郎为驸马都尉，尚范阳公主。”迎入驸马府中成亲。灯烛辉煌，仪文璀璨，好不富贵！有《贺新郎》词为证：

瑞气笼清晓。卷珠帘、次第笙歌，一时齐奏，无限神仙离蓬岛。凤驾鸾车初到，见拥个、仙娥窈窕。玉佩叮珰风缥缈，娇姿一似垂杨袅。天上有，世间少。



much better in the dream.” The following poems can serve as a proof for Ji’er’s current situation:

For several miles the grassland extends.  
The beautiful melody of the bamboo flute echoes  
in the evening wind.  
Having eaten his fill, the shepherd boy returns  
after dusk.  
Not taking off his straw hat and cape,  
he falls asleep in the moonlight.

Ever since then Ji’er enjoyed riches and honor in the Huaxu Kingdom once he fell asleep and worked as a shepherd boy at the foot of the mountain after he woke up. Each day and each night were no different than the other. So there is no need to describe them one by one in full detail. Here I will choose a couple of major events to tell you.

One day Ji’er dreamed that the king of the Huaxu Kingdom was looking for a husband for his daughter Princess Fanyang. A certain official presented his views to the king, “The Secretary of Literature Yan Jihua has remarkable literary talent and good looks. He should be the right choice.” The king expressed his agreement and made the Secretary of Literature his son-in-law. Accordingly Yan Jihua was brought into the Mansion of the King’s Son-in-law to get married with Princess Fanyang. Brightly lit and dazzlingly magnificent, the Mansion was incomparably beautiful. A splendid wedding ceremony was performed. The following *ci* poem Hexinlang (literally *Ode to Wedding Celebrations*) perfectly describes this happy occasion:

A clear morning is shrouded in auspicious atmosphere. Rolling up the bead curtain, music and singing start in unison. Like fairies from the fabled abode of the immortals, the bride and bridegroom in their sedans arrive. Like a celestial being, a fair young lady gets out of the sedan, thronged by a crowd of people. Her jade pendants clattering in the light breeze, her tender and graceful bearing resembles weeping willows. Such a figure could be seen in Heaven, but rare on the earth.

Princess Fanyang had a long face and a pair of large ears. Her voice was always long-drawn-out when she spoke. Moreover, she always

那范阳公主生得面长耳大，曼声善啸，规行矩步，颇会周旋。寄华身为王婿，日夕公主之前对案而食，比前受用更加贵盛。

明日睡醒，主人莫翁来唤，因为家中有一匹拽磨的牝驴儿，一并交与他牵去喂养。寄儿牵了暗笑道：“我夜间配了公主，怎生烜赫！却今日来弄这个买卖，伴这个众生。”跨在背上，打点也似骑牛的骑了到山边去，谁知骑上了背，那驴儿只是团团而走，并不前进。盖因是平日拽的磨盘走惯了。寄儿没奈何，只得跳下来，打着两鞭，牵着前进。从此又添了牲口，恐怕走失，饮食无暇，只得备着干粮，随着四处放牧。莫翁又时时来稽查，不敢怠慢一些儿。辛苦一日，只图得晚间好睡。

是夜又梦见在驸马府里，正同着公主欢乐，有邻邦玄菟、乐浪二国前来相犯。华胥国王传旨：命驸马都尉言寄华讨议退兵之策。言寄华聚着旧日著作衙门一千文士到来，也不讲求如何备御，也不商量如何格斗，只高谈“正心诚意，强邻必然自服”。诸生中也有情愿对敌的，多退着不用。只有两生献策，他



followed the beaten track, cautious in behavior and composed in manners. Now being the son-in-law of the king, Jihua stayed with the princess day and night and sat at the same table with her for dinner. Consequently he became a bigwig in the imperial court.

On the next morning Ji'er woke up from his dream. Old Farmer Mo came to him, leading behind him a jenny that had been pulling a hand mill of the millstone at his home, and told him to take care of the jenny. Leading the jenny away, Ji'er murmured in secret glee, "I got married with the princess last night. What an eminent personage I was! But now I've got a jenny as my company!" He jumped onto the jenny's back, hoping that it would take him to the meadows at the foot of the mountain. But the jenny only moved around in circles, probably because it had been accustomed to pulling the hand mill of the millstone.

Unable to make it go straightforward, Ji'er had to get off the jenny. Whipping it hard, he lead it forward. Now with more farm animal under his care and fearing that they might get lost, he was so fully occupied that he scarcely had any time to drink and eat. For this reason, he had to take enough food with him while he was out on the meadows herding the farm animals. As Old Farmer Mo often checked his work, he stood fast at his post and never slacked off for a minute. He only hoped that he could have a good dream at night after a whole day's hard labor.

On that night Ji'er dreamed that he was again in the Mansion of the King's Son-in-law, seeking pleasure and making merry with the princess. All of a sudden, two neighboring states, Xuantu and Yuelang, invaded the Huaxu Kingdom. The king pronounced an imperial edict, ordering his son-in-law Yan Jihua to discuss plans with the scholars for repulsing the enemies. Yan Jihua gathered together all the scholars and civilian officials around him. However, instead of discussing plans of how to defend the state and how to fight against the enemies, they just indulged in loud talks about sincerity and devotion and believed without a shadow of doubt that the enemies would withdraw on their own initiative.

A few scholars and civilian officials advocated a military settlement, but Yan Jihua ignored their offers. On the contrary, he accepted the suggestion offered by two scholars. These two scholars offered to sacrifice



一个到玄菟，一个到乐浪，舍身往质，以图讲和。言寄华大喜，重发金帛，遣两生前往。两生屈己听命，饱其所欲，果然那两国不来。言寄华夸张功绩，奏上国王。国王大悦，叙录军功，封言寄华为黑甜乡侯，加以九锡。身居百僚之上，富贵已极。有诗为证：

当时魏绛主和戎，岂是全将金币供？

厥后宋人偏得意，一班道学自雍容。

言寄华受了封侯锡命，绿鞞袞冕，鸾辂乘马，彤弓卢矢，左建朱钺，右建金戚，手执圭瓚，道路辉煌。自朝归第，有一个书生叩马上言，道：“日中必昃，月满必亏。明公功名到此，已无可加。急流勇退，此其时矣。直待福过灾生，只恐悔之无



themselves to go to the States of Xuantu and Yuelang respectively as hostages to make peace. Upon hearing this, Yan Jihua was overcome with joy. Awarding them with gold and silks, he dispatched the two scholars to the two states on the mission. It turned out that the two scholars gratified all the wishes of the two states, and the two states withdrew their forces. Overstating his achievements, Yan Jihua presented a memorial of his success to the king.

Feeling very much pleased, the king awarded Yan Jihua a citation for his meritorious service, granted him the title of Duke of the Land of Dark Sweetness along with nine kinds of valuable gifts. Thus Yan Jihua became the most powerful official in the imperial court, surpassing all the others. The following poem may serve as a proof:

Wei Jiang once favored a peaceful settlement  
with the Rong Ethnic Groups.

But the peace was undoubtedly not won by paying tribute of gold  
to the Rong Ethnic Groups.

Proud and happy were the Song Dynasty rulers  
with their peaceful coexistence with the Jin Dynasty,

While graceful and poised the Confucian moralists remained  
with their pedantic reasoning.

At the title-conferring and gift-awarding ceremony, Yan Jihua got the official seal which was tied to a green silk ribbon and put on an imperial ceremonial robe. When he was on a horse, he carried a red-painted bow and black arrows, one red and one golden axe-shaped weapon on each of his shoulders and held a tapering jade tablet in his hand. The road under his feet was brilliantly illuminated.

While Yan Jihua was riding on his carriage to his residence after he left the court, a young scholar stopped him and said, "The sun declines after reaching the zenith; the moon wanes after waxing to the full. Your present fame and fortune have reached the zenith. Now it's the right time for you to retire resolutely. I'm afraid it will be too late to repent when good fortune is over and misfortune is imminent." Being complacent, how would Yan Jihua listen to him? Laughing heartedly, he said, "I was born under a lucky star and, of course, riches and honor are always after



及！”言寄华此时志得意满，那里听他？笑道：“我命中生得好，自然富贵逼人，有福消受，何须过虑。只管目前享用勾了。寒酸见识，晓得什么？”大笑坠车。

吃了一惊，醒将起来。点一点牛数，只叫得苦，内中不见了二只。山前山后，到处寻访踪迹，元来一只被虎咬伤，死在坡前；一只在河中吃水，浪涌将来，没在河里。寄儿看见，急得乱跳道：“梦中甚么两国来侵，谁知倒了我两头牲口！”急去报与莫翁，莫翁听见大怒道：“此乃你的典守，人多说你只是贪睡，眼见得坑了我头口！”取过匾担来要打。寄儿负极，辩道：“虎来时，牛尚不敢敌，况我敢与他争夺救得转来的？那水中是牛常住之所，波浪涌来，一时不测，也不是我力挡得住的。”莫翁虽见他辩得也有些理，却是做家心重的人，那里舍得两头牛死？怒哞哞不息，定要打匾担十下。寄儿哀告讨饶，才饶得一下，打到九下住了手。寄儿泪汪汪的走到草房中，摸摸臀上痛处道：“甚么九锡九锡，倒打了九下屁股！”想道：“梦中书生劝我歇手，难道教我不要看牛不成？从来说梦是反的，梦福得祸，梦笑得哭。我自念了此咒，夜夜做富贵的梦，所以日里到吃亏。我如今不念他了，看待怎的！”





me. There is no need for me to be over-anxious about it. All I have to do is to enjoy myself. You're short-sighted!" Bursting into laughter as he said so, he fell off his carriage. The fall came to him as a big surprise and thus he woke up from his dream.

Ji'er counted his cattle and found out that two were missing. He looked high and low for the missing cattle. But it turned out that one was killed by a tiger and the other was drowned in the river. Panic-stricken, Ji'er shouted, stamping his feet, "To hell with the invasion of the two states in my dream! The fact is that I lost two cattle!" Hurriedly he went to Old Farmer Mo with the bad news. Flying into a rage, Old Farmer Mo shouted, "You should be responsible for the loss of my cattle! You cared nothing but sleeping!" So saying, Old Farmer Mo got hold of a shoulder pole and was about to beat Ji'er. Tormented by a guilty conscience, Ji'er explained, "Even the cattle was not strong enough to beat the tiger. How could I venture to fight against it so as to save the cattle? The waterside is the place where cattle frequently visit. The abrupt blows of big waves were also beyond my power."

Though Ji'er sounded plausible, Old Farmer Mo, being a frugal man, still could not bear the pain of losing two cattle. Foaming with anger, Mo resolved to give Ji'er ten floggings with the shoulder pole. Ji'er begged for forgiveness repeatedly, but Mo didn't stop beating him until he had given him nine floggings. Ji'er returned to his thatched hut in tears. Stroking the tender spot on the bottom, he murmured, "Damn the nine kinds of valuable gifts! I got nine floggings on the bottom!" Then he thought better of it, "In my dream the young scholar advised me to retire resolutely. Was he saying I should give up the job of tending the cattle? It is generally believed that dreams always turn out to be the opposite of reality. He who dreams of good fortune will suffer adversity and he who dreams of laughing will be reduced to painful weeping. I've been dreaming of being a rich and high-ranking official ever since I began to read this five-character incantation. This must be the reason why I suffered losses at daytime. From now on I'll just stop reading it and see what will happen to me."

Strangely, terror struck him after he stopped reading the incantation.



谁知这样作怪，此咒不念，恐怖就来。是夜梦境，范阳公主疽发于背，偃蹇不起，寄华尽心调治未痊。国中二三新进小臣，逆料公主必危，寄华势焰将败，捱拾前过，纠弹一本，说他御敌无策、冒滥居功、欺君误国许多事件。国王览奏大怒，将言寄华削去封爵，不许他重登著作堂，锁去大窖边听罪，公主另选良才别降。令旨已下，随有两个力士，将银铛锁了言寄华，到那大粪窖边墩着。寄华看那粪秽狼藉，臭不堪闻，叹道：“我只道到底富贵，岂知有此恶境乎？书生之言，今日验矣！”不觉号咷恸哭起来。

这边噙泪而醒，啐了两声道：“作你娘的怪，这番做这样恶梦！”看视牲口，那匹驴子蹇卧地下，打也打不起来。看他背项之间，乃是绳损处烂了老大一片跣踏。寄儿慌了道：“前番倒失了两头牛，打得苦恼。今这众生又病害起来，万一死了，又是我的罪过。”忙去打些水来，替他渗洗腐肉，再去拔些新鲜好草来喂他。拿着楔刀，望山前地上下手斫时，有一科草甚韧，刀斫不断。寄儿性起，连根一拔，拔出泥来。泥松之处，



In that night's dream Princess Fanyang got skin ulcers on the back and was unable to get out of bed. Yan Jihua took care of her with all his heart, but Princess Fanyang didn't recover from the illness. Considering that Yan Jihua would definitely decline and fall due to the imminent death of the princess, a couple of newly-appointed court officials listed all of his blunders and presented a memorial to the king with the accusations that he was inept in resisting the enemies, he lied about his military exploits, he hoodwinked the sovereign and damaged the national interests and so on so forth.

Boiling with rage, the king got rid of his title and removed him from office. This being done, another marriage was arranged for Princess Fanyang. Then the king ordered that Yan Jihua be chained up and tied to a certain place beside a manure pit to await punishment. This being done, another marriage was arranged for Princess Fanyang. Receiving the king's edict, two strong men tied Yan Jihua with iron chains beside a manure pit. The unbearable stink made him sick. Heaving a sigh, he said to himself, "I thought I would be rich and powerful to the end of my life. I never expected I would come to such a miserable plight! Finally that young scholar's predictions have come true." So saying, he gave in to wailing.

His eyes still brimming with tears, Ji'er woke up from his dream. Spitting, he said, "Damn it! What a nightmare!" Making a survey at the farm animals, he found that the jenny was lying on the ground. Although Ji'er whipped it a couple of times, the jenny didn't get onto its feet. Looking closely at it, Ji'er was shocked to see that the jenny had got many swellings on the back and neck. Greatly frightened out of his wits, he said, "Last time I was punished with a good beating for the loss of two cattle. Now this jenny is sick again. It will be my fault if it dies." He brought over some water in a hurry and washed the swellings for the jenny. Then he set out to get some green grass to feed it.

With a sickle in his hand, Ji'er got to the hill and began cutting green grass. One grass turned out to be extremely strong. He failed to cut it off. Becoming a bit hotheaded, he tore it up by the roots together with some mud and earth. Right at the place where the mud and earth had become loose, a slab stone came into his sight, with the roots of the grass still



露出石板，那草根还缠缠绕绕绊在石板缝内。

寄儿将楔刀撬将开来，板底下是个周围石砌就的大窖，里头多是金银。寄儿看见，慌了手脚，擦擦眼道：“难道白日里又做梦么？”定睛一看，草木树石，天光云影，眼前历历可数。料道非梦，便把楔刀草薶一撩道：“还干那营生么？”取起五十多两一大锭在手，权把石板盖上，仍将泥草遮覆，竟望莫翁家里来见莫翁。未敢竟说出来，先对莫翁道：“寄儿蒙公公相托，一向看牛不差。近来时运不济，前日失了两牛，今蹇驴又生病，寄儿看管不来。今有大银一锭，纳与公公，凭公公除了原发工银，余者给还寄儿为度日之用，放了寄儿，另着人牧放罢。”莫翁看见是锭大银，吃惊道：“我田家人苦积勤赧了一世，只有些零星碎银，自不见这样大锭，你却从何处得来？莫非你合着外人做那不公不法的歹事？你快说个明白，若说得来历不明，我须把你送出官府，究问下落。”寄儿道：“好教公公得知，这东西多哩。我只拿得他一件来看样。”莫翁骇道：“在那里？”寄儿道：“在山边一个所在，我因斫草掘着的，今石板盖着哩。”

莫翁情知是藏物，急叫他不要声张，悄悄同寄儿到那所在来。寄儿指与莫翁，揭开石板来看，果是一窖金银，不计其数。莫翁喜得打跌，拊着寄儿背道：“我的儿，偌多金银东西，我



winding around the cracks of the slab stone. He prized the slab stone open with his sickle and found that below the slab stone was a large pit built up with stones, and within the large pit were gold and silver. Getting flustered and not knowing what to do, Ji'er rubbed his eyes and said, "Am I daydreaming?" Calming himself down, he looked around him. The grass and the trees and the stones were all real, and the sky and the clouds were all above him. He knew he was not dreaming. Throwing away his sickle and basket, he said, "To hell with you!" He took a silver ingot weighing more than fifty taels from the pit. Then he covered the pit again with the same slab stone and placed the grass with mud and earth back onto the slab stone. This being done, he came to Old Farmer Mo's home.

Not making a clear breast of everything, Ji'er said to Mo as he arrived at Mo's home, "I think I did a good job taking care of your cattle. But recently it seems to me I'm running out of luck. Two cattle got killed the other day and now the jenny is sick too. I'm afraid I can't look after them anymore. Here is a large ingot of silver for you. Take as much silver as you had given me and I'll keep the rest of it to make a living. I hope you can grant my request and ask someone else to take care of your cattle."

Seeing such a large ingot of silver, Old Farmer Mo was taken aback. "I've never seen such a huge ingot of silver before," remarked Mo, "though I've saved a little silver bit by bit in my life. Where did you get it? Did you engage in any illegal activities with outsiders? Tell me the truth! If you can't make it clear to me, I'll send you to the *yamen* to be questioned." Ji'er said, "Actually there are quite a lot of silver ingots. I only took one with me." Surprised, Mo asked, "Where are they?" Ji'er answered, "In a place at the foot of the mountain. I discovered them while I was cutting grass there. They're now under the cover of a slab stone." Knowing this large sum of silver was hidden treasure, Mo told Ji'er to keep his mouth shut about the matter. After inquiring Ji'er about the whereabouts of the silver, Old Farmer Mo was led to the place by Ji'er. A huge amount of silver came into their view after they uplifted the slab stone.

Overwhelmed with joy, Mo patted Ji'er on the back and said, "My goodness, my child! So much silver! You and I won't spend it throughout



与你两人一生受用不尽！今番不要看牛了，只在我庄上吃些安乐茶饭，掌管帐目。这些牛只，另自雇人看管罢。”两人商量，把个草蓐来里外用乱草补塞，中间藏着窖中物事。莫翁前走，寄儿驼了后随。运到家中放好，仍旧又用前法去取。不则一遭，把石窖来运空了。

莫翁到家，欢喜无量，另叫一个苍头去收拾牛只，是夜就留寄儿在家中宿歇。寄儿的床铺，多换齐整了。寄儿想道：“昨夜梦中吃苦，谁想粪窖正应着发财，今日反得好处。果然，梦是反的，我要那梦中富贵则甚？那五字真言，不要念他了。”

其夜睡去，梦见国王将言寄华家产抄没，发在养济院中度日。只见前日的扣马书生高歌将来道：

落叶辞柯，人生几何！六战国而漫流人血，三神山而杳隔鲸波。任夸百斛明珠，虚延遐算；若有一卮芳酒，且共高歌。

寄华闻歌，认得此人，邀住他道：“前日承先生之教，不能依从，今日至于此地。先生有何高见可以救我？”那书生不慌不忙，说出四句来道：

颠颠倒倒，何时局了？遇着漆园，还汝分晓。

说罢，书生飘然而去。寄华扯住不放，被他袍袖一摔，闪得一跌，即时惊醒。张目道：“还好，还好。一发没出息，弄到养济院里去了。”

须臾，莫翁走出堂中。元来莫翁因得了金银，晚间对老姥说道：“此皆寄儿的造化掘着的，功不可忘。我与你没有儿女，



our life! Forget about grazing my cattle. You may just stay in my home and have free meals apart from taking care of my accounts. I'll hire someone else to take my cattle to pasture." So saying, Mo and Ji'er carried all the silver in the pit to Mo's home. Mo then sent an old farmhand out to the pasture to take care of the cattle. That night Mo had a bed properly arranged right at his home for Ji'er to stay for the night. Ji'er calculated in his mind, "I had a nightmare last night. However, the manure pit was prophetic of riches and I was awarded with profit today. Indeed, dreams always turn out to be the opposite of reality. What's the good of the riches and honor in dreams? I'll abandon the five-character incantation."

That night Ji'er dreamed that the king of the Huaxu Kingdom ransacked Yan Jihua's home and banished him into a house for refugees. All of a sudden, the young scholar he had come across the other day came towards him, singing with a resounding voice.

All leaves will fall from their branches. Oh life is so short! During the Warring States Period, countless men died and perished. The Three Fairy Islands<sup>2</sup> on the sea are the only world of peace. What's there to brag about your thousands of pearls? Nothingness is everything. A cup of good wine is enough! Come on and join me in my singing!"

As the young scholar was familiar to him, Yan Jihua stopped him and said, "I didn't follow your instructions, so I've come to such a miserable plight. I wonder if you would be kind enough to enlighten me on this matter." Calmly, the young scholar answered, "When will everything come to an end if they're always in disorder? The final outcome will be clear to you when you meet Zhuangzi." Having finished these words, the young scholar left gracefully. Yan Jihua strongly pulled the young scholar by the sleeve, but was thrown away by the young scholar with a wave of his sleeve. Jihua stumbled and fell. Thus he woke up with a start from his dream. With his eyes wide open, Ji'er said, "Well, well, what a good-for-nothing I've been! To be banished into the house for refugees!"

After a short while Old Farmer Mo got out of his room. Originally, after he had got such a huge amount of silver, Old Farmer Mo said to his wife, "We've got so much silver. The credit should go to Ji'er for his virtue and luck. We've got no children of our own to inherit our family



家事无传。今平空地得来许多金银，虽道好没取得他的。不如认义他做个儿子，把家事付与他，做了一家一计，等他养老了我们。这也是我们知恩报恩处。”老姥道：“说得有理。我们眼前没个传家的人，别处平日地寻将来，要承当家事，我们也气不干。今这个寄儿，他见有着许多金银付在我家，就认他做了儿子，传我家事，也还是他多似我们的，不叫得过分。”商量已定，莫翁就走出来，把这意思说与寄儿。寄儿道：“这个折杀小人，怎么敢当！”莫翁道：“若不如此，这些东西，我也何名享受你的？我们两老口议了一夜，主意已定，不可推辞。”寄儿没得说，当下纳头拜了四拜，又进去把老姥也拜了。自此改姓名为莫继，在莫家庄上做了干儿子。

本是驴前厮养，今为舍内螟蛉。

何缘分外亲热？只看黄金满籝。

却是此番之后，晚间睡去，就做那险恶之梦。不是被火烧水没，便是被盗劫官刑。初时心里道：“梦虽不妙，日里落得好处，不像前番做快活梦时日里受辛苦。”以为得意。后来得到得夜夜如此，每每惊魇不醒，才有些慌张，认旧念取那五字真言，却不甚灵了。你道何故？只因财利迷心，身家念重，时时





property. How should we get so much silver with his guidance for no apparent reason at all? Why don't we take him as an adopted son and make him a member of our family? By doing so, we'll be able to repay him for his kindness."

Mo's wife answered, "It sounds reasonable. We don't have a son to carry on our family line. It's certain we won't be contented if we casually find a stranger to inherit our family property. Now that Ji'er has left all his silver in our charge, which is much more than our own silver, I don't think we're giving him undue treatment if we take him as our adopted son and have him inherit our family property." Having made this decision, Old Farmer Mo got out of his room and talked about this matter with Ji'er. Ji'er said, "You're flattering me. I do not deserve such an honor!" Mo said, "If you turn me down, on what account do I have the right to share your silver? My wife and I talked it over for the whole night and we've thus decided. I must have your consent." Having no option, Ji'er went down on his knees and made four kowtows to Mo. Then he went inside and made four kowtows to Mo's wife too. From then on, he changed his name to Mo Ji and became the adopted son of Old Farmer Mo.

A farmhand once,

But now he has become the adopted son of the master.

What has brought about this change?

Nothing but the amount of gold so huge.

From then on, however, each night he went to sleep, Mo Ji would have nightmares, either being set to fire or drowned in water, or being robbed or tortured. Formerly, he thought in his mind, "Although I have terrible dreams at night, I have a very good time at daytime. This is much better than the past when I had good dreams at night but suffered pains during day." Thus he was very pleased with himself. But it turned out later that he had nightmares every night and always woke up from his sleep with a start. Terribly scared, he started to read the five-character incantation. But it refused to work. Do you know why? Because he was seized with worries of making money and seeking profits, and also because he was always keeping a close lookout on robbery and fire, he would inevitably become upset and have nightmares. How could it compare



防贼发火起，自然梦魂颠倒。怎如得做牧童时无忧无虑，饱食安眠，夜夜梦里逍遥，享那王公之乐？莫继要寻前番梦境，再不能勾，心里鹮突，如醉如痴，生出病来。

莫翁见他如此，要寻个医人来医治他。只见门前有一个双丫髻的道人走将来，口称善治人间恍惚之症。莫翁接到厅上，教莫继出来相见。元来正是昔日传与真言的那个道人。见了莫继道：“你的梦还未醒么？”莫继道：“师父，你前者教我真言，我不曾忘了。只是前日念了，夜夜受用。后来因夜里好处，多应着日里歹处，一程儿不敢念，便再没快活的梦了。而今就念煞也无用了，不知何故。”道人道：“我这五字真言，乃是主夜神咒。《华严经》云：

善财童子参善知识，至阎浮提摩竭提国迦毗罗城，见主夜神，名曰婆珊婆演底。神言：我得菩萨破一切生痴暗法，光明解脱。

所以持念百遍，能生欢喜之梦。前见汝苦恼不过，故使汝梦中快活。汝今日间要享富厚，晚间宜受恐怖，此乃一定之理。人世有好必有歉，有荣华必有销歇，汝前日梦中岂不见过了么？”莫继言下大悟，倒身下拜道：“师父，弟子而今晓得世上没有



with the period of time when he was a shepherd boy, free from worries and well fed, who used to have pleasant and wonderful dreams every night? Mo Ji tried hard to resume his previous dreams, but in vain. Becoming confused and infatuated, he got a disease.

While Old Farmer Mo was thinking of sending for a doctor to cure Mo Ji of his disease, a Taoist with two twisted hair knots came to him, saying that he was good at curing the disease of infatuation and being ignorant. Old Farmer Mo showed the Taoist to Mo Ji. Actually this Taoist was none other than the Taoist who had instructed Ji'er the five-character incantation. The moment he saw Mo Ji, the Taoist asked, "Are you still in your dreams?" Mo Ji answered, "Master, I haven't forgotten the incantation you taught me. It worked perfectly well in the beginning and I had wonderful dreams every night. But, as the wonderful moments at night always turned out to be the prediction of the tragic outcome at daytime, I gave up reading it and, from then on, wonderful dreams never returned. Now no matter how hard I read it, it never worked. Could you be kind enough to enlighten me on this?"

The Taoist said, "These five characters, *po shan po yan di*, are the name of the God of Darkness, The Garland Sutra reads:

Sudhana paid respects to fifty-three Great Masters of Buddhism. When he came to Kapilavastu, he paid respects to the God of Darkness, namely *po shan po yan di*. The God of Darkness said, 'I've attained the dharma of doing away ignorance and darkness. Grand illuminating brilliance brings deliverance.'

So you could have pleasant dreams after you read it a hundred times. When I met you at the first time, I found out you were in a great distress. Therefore I helped you have a wonderful time in your dreams. Now that you wanted to enjoy riches at daytime, definitely you would be attacked by terror at night. This is a set rule. In this human world, the good and the bad are inseparable, and glory and splendor are always followed by decline and fall. Haven't you witnessed it in your dreams?"

Upon hearing this, Mo Ji was abruptly enlightened. Throwing himself on his knees and kowtowing, he said, "Master, now I know there is nothing perfect in this world. Riches and honor are nothing. In the end they will

十全的事，要那富贵无干，总来与我前日封侯拜将一般，不如跟的师父出家去罢！”道人道：“吾乃南华老仙漆园中高足弟子。老仙道汝有道骨，特遣我来度汝的。汝既见了境头，宜早早回首。”莫继遂是长是短述与莫翁、莫姥。两人见是真仙来度他，不好相留。况他身子去了，遗下了无数金银，两人尽好受用，有何不可？只得听他自行。

莫继随也披头发，挽做两丫髻，跟着道人云游去了。后来不知所终，想必成仙了道去了。看官不信，只看《南华真经》，有此一段因果。话本说彻，权作散场。

总因一片婆心，日向痴人说梦。

此中打破关头，棒喝何须拈弄？



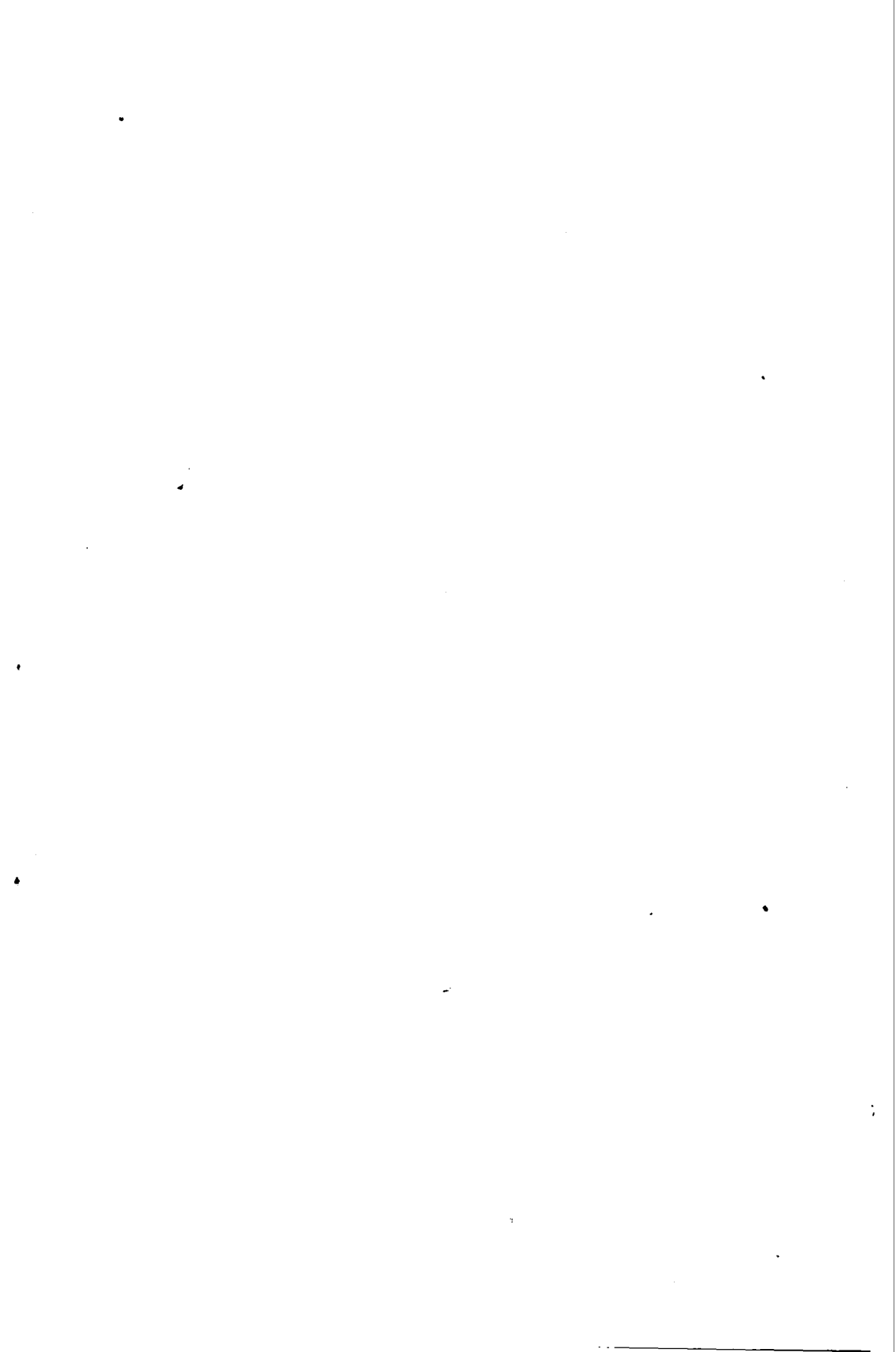


be no different from my being conferred the title and receiving enormous wealth. I would rather go with you and be a Taoist.” The Taoist said, “I’m a disciple of Zhuangzi, Perfect Man of Nanhua. Perfect Man of Nanhua said you have sage-like features and he specially sent me here to deliver you from suffering. Now that you’ve been enlightened, you’d better go with me as soon as possible.”

Mo Ji gave Old Farmer Mo and his wife a detailed account of the matter. Knowing that Perfect Man Nanhua had sent for Mo Ji, the old couple thought it improper to keep him at their home any longer. Besides, as Mo Ji would leave his huge fortune behind him if he went away with the Taoist, the old couple would naturally keep it to themselves. Wouldn’t it be a nice thing for the couple? Gladly Mo and his wife told Mo Ji to act on his own.

Draping his hair over his shoulders, Mo Ji made two twisted knots in the hair and started to wander about the world over. No one knew what had become of him. But it was generally believed that he must have become an immortal or a perfect man. Readers, if you’re doubtful about this, you may turn to *The Book of Perfect Man Nanhua* and find the records this very cause and effect. The following lines can serve as the ending of this tale.

Ernest words with the best intentions  
Are always no more or no less than a tale told by an idiot.  
Once being enlightened with a sudden blow on the head,  
There will be no need to reach the realm of truth by meditation.





## NOTES

### Tale 11

<sup>1</sup>A scholar of the Jin Dynasty (265-420), who advocates the nonexistence of ghosts.

### Tale 12

<sup>1</sup>according to legend the Cowherd and the Weaver Maid meet on that evening every year in Heaven, and the magpies spread their wings to form a bridge for them to meet, namely Magpie Bridge.

### Tale 13

<sup>1</sup>Wang Huizhi (?-388), alias Ziyou, was a painter and calligrapher from the Eastern Jin Dynasty (317-420). Dai Kui (?-396), alias Andao, was a scholar, a painter and a sculptor from the Eastern Jin Dynasty. While he was living in Huiji Prefecture, Wang Huizhi went to Shanxili to pay a visit to Dai Kui on a snowy night. But Wang stopped when he arrived at the entrance of Dai's house and returned home. When being asked why he did so, Wang answered, "I was in ebullient good spirits when I was on my way to Dai Kui's house. I stopped at the entrance of Dai's house and returned home because I'd thoroughly enjoyed myself when I arrived there. Why must I see Andao in person then and there?"

### Tale 15

<sup>1</sup>Guan Yu (160-219), a general in the period of the Three Kingdoms, renowned for his loyalty and later deified as Guandi.

### Tale 17

<sup>1</sup>A distinguished woman scholar in ancient times.

<sup>2</sup>A poetic play set to music.

<sup>3</sup>Ti Ying was the youngest daughter of Chun Yuyi, an official of the Western Han Dynasty (206 BC-25 AD). When she heard that her father Chun Yuyi, who was then in prison, was subject to cruel torture, Ting Ying submitted a written statement to Emperor Wendi, saying that she would be willing to work as a serving maid in the imperial court so as to atone for her father's crime. And for this reason Emperor Wendi pardoned Chun Yuyi's crime.

### Tale 18

<sup>1</sup>Five-ore Powder and Pure Brightness Powder are powders made by ancient Taoists to be taken orally to achieve immortality. Five-ore Powder is made from smelting five minerals: cinnabar, red orpiment, white alum stone, magnetite and zengqing. Pure Brightness Powder is made from cinnabar, red orpiment and arsenic.

<sup>2</sup>Legend has it Huangdi was ancestor of the Chinese people living in central China. Later, he was regarded by Taoists as one of the five Heavenly Gods revered in Taoism. Rongchenggong, also one of the Gods in Taoism, was said to be Huangdi's instructor. Pengzu, noted for his longevity, was an immortal in Chinese mythology, and was worshipped by Taoists.



## Tale 19

<sup>1</sup>369-286 BC, Chinese philosopher and writer during the Warring States period.

<sup>2</sup>According to the legend, they are the Penglai Island, Fangzhang Island and Yingzhou Island, the fabled abodes of the immortals on the East Sea.



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封面

书名

目录

卷之十

赵五虎合计挑家衅

莫大郎立地散神奸

卷十一

满少卿饥附饱颡

焦文姬生仇死报

卷十二

硬勘案大儒争闲气

甘受刑侠女著芳名

卷十三

鹿胎庵客人作寺主

剡溪里 1 日鬼借新尸

卷十四

赵县君乔送黄柑

吴宣教干偿白镬

卷十五

韩侍郎婢作夫人

顾提控掾居郎署

卷十六

迟取券毛烈赖原钱

失还魂牙僧索剩命

卷十七

同窗友认假作

真女秀才移花接木

卷十八

甄监生浪吞秘药

春花婢误泄风情

卷十九

田舍翁时时经理

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