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## 二刻拍案惊奇

AMAZING TALES

Second Series

IV



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Chinese-English

# 二刻拍案惊奇

## Amazing Tales

Second Series

IV



凌濛初 著

李子亮 译

*Attributed to Ling Mengchu*

*Translated by Li Ziliang*



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## 目 录

卷三十 1412

瘞遗骸王玉英配夫 偿聘金韩秀才赎子

卷三十一 1458

行孝子到底不简尸 殉节妇留待双出柩

卷三十二 1502

张福娘一心贞守 朱天锡万里符名

卷三十三 1538

杨抽马甘请杖 富家郎浪受惊

卷三十四 1576

任君用恣乐深闺 杨太尉戏官馆客

卷三十五 1628

错调情贾母詈女 误告状孙郎得妻

卷三十六 1668

王渔翁舍镜崇三宝 白水僧盗物丧双生



## CONTENTS

*Tale 30* 1413

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

*Tale 31* 1459

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

*Tale 32* 1503

Zhang Funiang Resolves to Stay Unmarried  
for Integrity

Zhu Tianxi Takes a Long Journey to Identify  
a Name

*Tale 33* 1539

Yang Chouma Asks to Be Thrashed  
A Rich Man Is Frightened

*Tale 34* 1577

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

*Tale 35* 1629

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

*Tale 36* 1669

Fisherman Wang Donates a Mirror in Worship  
of Buddha  
Two Monks Lose Their Lives for Stealing  
the Treasure



卷三十七 1712

叠居奇程客得助 三救厄海神显灵

卷三十八 1754

两错认莫大姐私奔 再成交杨二郎正本

卷三十九 1796

神偷寄兴一枝梅 侠盗惯行三昧戏



*Tale 37* 1713

Cheng Zai Tides over Difficulties by Repeated  
Hoarding and Profiteering

The Sea-goddess Manifests Her Power by  
Rescuing Cheng Zai from Three Dangers

*Tale 38* 1755

Sister Mo Elopes with the Wrong Lover

Second Brother Yang Marries His Former  
Mistress

*Tale 39* 1797

An Ingenious Thief Conveys His Sentiment  
with a Plum

A Gallant Burglar Plays His Game  
with Adroitness

*Notes* 1863

*Glossary* 1864



## 卷三十

瘞遗骸王玉英配夫 偿聘金韩秀才赎子

诗云：

晋世曾闻有鬼子，今知鬼子乃其常。

既能成得雌雄配，也会生儿在冥壤。

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

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





## *Tale 30*

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

A poem reads thus:

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

During the Longqing reign of emperor Muzong, Zhu Zaihou (1567-1572), in our Ming Dynasty, there was a Brigade Commander<sup>1</sup> surnamed Yi in Xi'an Prefecture, Shaanxi. While he was holding office in the capital, he was charged with the task of garrisoning the capital. The current minister of the Ministry of Public Works Zhu, his fellow townsman, was on close terms with him. At that time, both Yi and Zhu's wives were expecting.

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

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

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

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

朱易两姓，情既断金，家皆种玉。得雄者为婿，必谐百年。背盟者天厌之！天厌之！



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

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

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

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



隆庆某年月日，朱某、易某书。坐客某某为证。

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

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



Signature: Zhu and Yi

Witness: Mr. So and so

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

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

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



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

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



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

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

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

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



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

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





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

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

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

\* \* \*

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

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