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AMAZING TALES

Second Series

II



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Chinese-English

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Amazing Tales

Second Series

II



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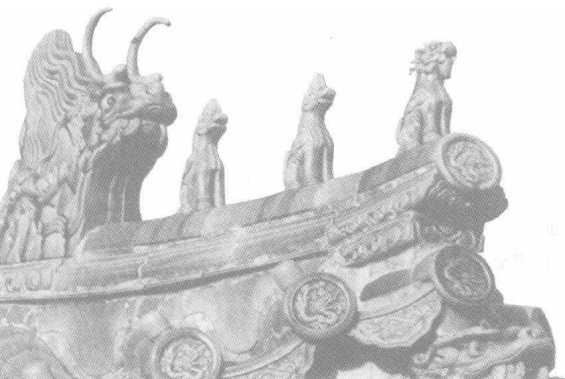
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卷之十

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，没有一会清静的。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：“似此清静，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。那门桯脱了，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，乃是宋贤范杓所作，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。”只管埋着根脚漏洞，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 bribes. 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：搥腮是皱面颊，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