

***The Legend of Purple Hairpin***  
**紫釵記**

Libretti by Tong Dik Sang  
唐滌生粵劇作品

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**THE LEGEND OF PURPLE HAIRPIN**  
A Cantonese Opera by Tong Dik Sang  
Translated by Wong Chuen Fung

**Cast of Characters**

(in order of appearance)

Wun Sa	maid of Fok Siu Yuk
Fok Siu Yuk	princess of Luoyang, daughter of Prince Fok, a.k.a. Siu Yuk
Lei Yik	styled Gwan Yu, a.k.a. Sap Long (lit., the tenth son), a talented scholar from an eminent family in Longxi
Chui Wan Ming	acquaintance of Lei Yik; a poor, old scholar with an unsuccessful career
Wai Ha Hing	acquaintance of Lei Yik; a young scholar, a.k.a. Ha Hing
Marshal Lou	Grand Marshal of the military; father of Lou Yin Jing
Lou Yin Jing	daughter of Marshal Lou
Wong Saau Yi	attendant to Marshal Lou
Madam Fok	mother of Fok Siu Yuk
Lau Gung Jai	governor of Yangguan Pass
Hau Ging Sin	jewelry dealer and craftsman, a.k.a. Ging Sin
Third Lady Bao	sister of Fourth Lady Bao, a matchmaker
Fellow in Yellow	Fourth Prince disguised, to inspect the town in secret
Master Mo Seung	Buddhist master of Ci'en Temple

**ACT 1**

*Wun Sa:* (enters first and speaks) Lady, come on, hurry up!

*Siu Yuk:* (enters and, deep in thought, recites)  
The curtains were opened; the wind moved the bamboo.  
An old acquaintance has come, I suspect.  
The curtains were opened; the wind moved the bamboo.  
An old acquaintance has come, I suspect.

(sings) Line after line, this new poem reads like lovers' words.  
Year after year, I regret, the moon and lanterns reveal my loneliness,  
and my flowery years that have vainly faded.  
Where to find my dream lover?  
When I first put on the purple hairpin,  
My pink face blushed with sunset red.  
I linger, with regret, under the unwitting moon and lanterns;  
For whom I turn gaunt and quietly bite my silver teeth?

(speaks) Fourth Lady Bao recently said,  
Tonight at the Lantern Festival, a miracle would certainly happen.  
It must be that my dream lover has arrived in Chang'an.

*Wun Sa:* (steps forward and speaks) Why are you pondering alone?

*Siu Yuk:* (as if awakening from dream, speaks)  
Ah, how dazzling are the lanterns and the moon here in Weicheng.  
I just keep having this feeling that things won't be any different from previous years!

*Wun Sa:* (laughs and speaks) Lady, don't fool me. I already know it.

(Recites) Don't you sorrow and shed your tears towards the lanterns;  
This is no better for us than going to Chang'an, to enjoy the restaurants there.  
Who doesn't know how the brilliance of Sap Long has amazed the world,  
And made everyone fall for his charm?

(Sings) Only because this year's moon and lanterns aren't the same as last year's?  
Don't blame me for saying outright what's on your mind.

*Siu Yuk:* (embarrassingly, speaks) Wun Sa.

*Wun Sa:* (speaks) Don't speak too much. The night has fallen. If kismet is with you, you'll definitely meet him tonight under the beautiful moon. Let's go!

*Siu Yuk:* (sings) Should a joined branch between two trees break into two,  
Let Cowherd and Weaving Maiden sail across the galaxy with a wooden raft.

(Enter *Lei Yik, Chui Wan Ming, and Wai Ha Hing*)

*Lei Yik:* (sings) With books and swords, I'm stuck in the capital.  
Along the streets, there're recruitment notices and imperial announcements.  
Drifting aimlessly is a waste of my talents.

*Wan Ming:* (continues singing) An aged student, I'm full of grumbles.  
Failing every exam; living in dismal.  
I eat and drink on credit;  
I wonder when my writings will be valuable.

*Ha Hing:* (continues sings) Dragons and snakes; real or fake?  
Once the exam is over, the candidates join the Lantern Festival,  
To get drunk and have fun.  
Fritter away not my youth;  
Fail not the years of hard work.

*Lei Yik:* (looks around and sings)  
Under moonlight and lanterns, why don't I see any purple orchid on Wei Bridge?

*Wan Ming:* (speaks) Sap Long, lanterns are the same every year. Why care for another look?

*Lei Yik:* (speaks) I'm here tonight not for the lanterns, but for a beauty.

*Wan Ming and Ha Hing:* (speaks) For a beauty?

*Lei Yik:* (laughs and speaks) Let me tell you,

(sings) I happened to have a conversation with Fourth Lady Bao.  
We had a talk about the amusements of Chang'an the other day.  
She mentioned that there's a graceful young woman from the Fok Family called  
Siu Yuk, whose beauty and talent have earned praises.  
This pretty woman admires me and always has my poems on her lips.  
For me she would give up her glamour.

(sings) Tonight I'm going to find her traces in every corner and alley.  
Let the Wei Bridge be the passage of love.

*Wan Ming:* (smiles and sings) The lanterns are incapable of drawing the butterflies,  
Who come for their desire of the flowers.  
Why not fly to the pollen chamber,  
Rather than meandering under shadow of the lanterns?

*Lei Yik:* (shakes his head and sighs with regret, speaks)  
I desire to find the fragrance, yet I don't know where her residence is.

*Wan Ming:* (laughs) How are you going to find her if you don't know where she lives?

*Lei Yik:* (speaks) Now I recall Fourth Lady Bao once said that Siu Yuk likes to wear purple  
dresses. Let's pay special attention to women wearing purple dresses while the  
lanterns are bright tonight.

*Ha Hing:* (sings) Gwan Yu intends to visit the refined jade.  
Yet he didn't ask the exact corner and alley of her residence.  
To identify her in a blink, only by color,  
It's not easy to tell the right one from the wrong.

*Wan Ming:* (speaks) Let's move our steps to Wei Bridge and enjoy the Lantern Festival.

*A shout from the backstage:* Yield!

*(Eight military generals hold white wooden sticks. Two porters carry a scented carriage. Lou Yin Jing carries a red veil. Wong Saau Yi accompanies the carriage. Marshal Lou spansks the horse.)*

*(Lei Yik and Ha Hing hide behind a door; Wan Ming hides behind a tree.)*

*Marshal Lou: (sings)* The red mansion stirs the rosy clouds.  
I accompany the carriage myself hurrying the horses in the city.  
Who cares the hooves shatter the flowers.  
The wind sweeps the trees at the first watch.

*(Sound effects of wind blowing)*

*Yin Jing: (speaks)* Slow down! Slow Down! Where did the strong wind come from? It blew away my crimson veil. *(Looks around.)*

*(Seeing the veil land on his face, Lei Yik picks it up embarrassingly, returns it to the carriage.)*

*Lei Yik: (speaks)* A brisk of fragrant wind blew this red veil abruptly on my face.  
I guess this veil must be yours. Let me return it to you.

*Yin Jing: (charmed by Lei Yik's disposition, Yin Jing receives the veil shyly and speaks)*  
Young scholar, your manner is extraordinary; your eloquence is refined. May I ask for your esteemed name? Let me write it down on this thin veil.

*Lei Yik: (speaks)* I don't deserve it.  
We've never met; how dare I blemish your fragrant and colorful veil with my name? Besides, it was already disgraceful for me to pick up the veil and return it to you. I have to bid farewell. Ha Hing, let's walk over there. *(Exits with Ha Hing.)*

*Marshal Lou: (sees Lei Yik leaving and speaks)* What a handsome and talented young scholar!

*Yin Jing: (disappointedlly speaks)*  
Father, the wind brought him this colorful veil; it must be destiny.  
*(Embarrassingly)* From now on, I won't have other partners; he's the only one.

*Marshal Lou: (laughs and speaks)* I don't even know his name, how can I match you two?

*Yin Jing: (suddenly sees Wan Ming under the tree, speaks to Marshal Lou)*  
Father, the young scholar is not there. But you may ask the old scholar who came with him.

*Marshal Lou: (speaks)* Wong Saau Yi, send him here.

*Wong Saau Yi: (speaks)* Old scholar, please come over. The marshal has questions for you.

*Wan Ming:* (speaks) Ah, Marshal Lou.  
(Overwhelmed by Marshal Lou's favor, speaks) Your Highness, student Chui Wan Ming from Longxi salutes.

*Marshal Lou:* (speaks) Alright! Stand up to speak.

(*Wan Ming thanks Marshal Lou*)

*Marshal Lou:* (speaks)  
Old Scholar Chui, do you know the man who just picked up the veil? What is his name and where is he from?

*Wan Ming:* (speaks) Aha! Not only do I know the man who picked up the veil.  
We wake up together every morning and sleep together every night. We also eat at the same table and read the same books.

(sings) Our friendship is as close as that of Fan and Zhang.  
Our affection is as deep as that of Guan and Bao.  
We share the same value, just like Ziqi and Boya.  
I'm such an old poor scholar, who's studied the classics for a decade.  
The talented are often despised; so it's of no use to be sad.  
Even though I've studied tens of thousands of books,  
I still fail the imperial exam every year.  
I'm aging with years.  
Looks of disdain are everywhere.  
(sings) My life is poor and despicable.  
Sadness makes me grumble.

*Marshal Lou:* (enraged and speaks)  
Hey, I only asked for the name of the young scholar, and am not interested in making acquaintance with you. Tell me his name immediately.

*Wan Ming:* (speaks) Your Highness, please listen.  
He resides near the Xia River of Longxi.  
He is descended from the family of the Prime Minister of the preceding dynasty.  
His name is Lei Yik, also known the Sap Long. He's full of charm.  
He has vision and strategy for a high office.  
After taking the imperial exam in Chang'an, he temporarily stays at Ci'en Temple.  
If he's picked to come first in the exam,  
Then it will let the scholar be free of worries about food and drinks.

*Marshal Lou:* (speaks) Step away. Saau Yi, come over here.

Send a message to the Ministry of Rites that the candidates who passed the exam may only register after they pay me a visit.

*Wong Saau Yi: (speaks)* Will do.

*Marshal Lou: (speaks)* Terrace and pavilion that are close to water get to see the moon first. The talented Xiao Shi does not need to worry about not having a home. Flowers and trees that face the sun get to meet spring first; Let's wait and see how Lei Yik's talent will surprise the world.

*(announces to followers)* Proceed!

*(Exits Marshal Lou, Yin Jing, and Saau Yi)*

*Wan Ming: (seeing the departure of Marshal Lou, mutters under the tree)*  
He asked so many questions and left without thanking me. It's not uncommon for the mood of these powerful people to change all the time. I'm not surprised.

*Lei Yik and Ha Hing: (enter and run forth to Wan Ming, speak)*  
Brother Wan Ming! Brother Wan Ming!

*Lei Yik: (speaks)* Brother Wan Ming, why are you alone muttering?

*Wan Ming: (speaks)* Gwan Yu, Ha Hing,  
For the past thirty years my civil career has led me to nowhere. Yet I'm quite sure I'll pass the exam this time. The white-hair official is the incumbent marshal. The esteemed marshal chatted with me. Now my career is bound to be different.

*Lei Yik: (smiles and speaks)*  
Brother Wan Ming, I wish you be blessed by the God of Civility and win a flower from the emperor at the Imperial Garden.

*Ha Hing: (pointing at a woman, speaks)*  
Gwan Yu, look, there's a woman dressed in purple over there.

*(Three of them look in the same direction.)*

*Wan Ming: (stares and speaks)* Wow, she's even bigger than me.

*Lei Yik: (smirks and speaks)* Those who wear white aren't necessarily the Bodhisattva. Likewise, the one who wears purple isn't necessarily Siu Yuk. How could a talented lady not have good look?

*Wan Ming: (suddenly elated, speaks)* Sap Long, the good-looking one is over there.

*(Siu Yuk calls Wun Sa in the backstage.)*

*(Enter Siu Yuk and Wun Sa.)*

Lei Yik: *(obsessed by the beauty and speaks)* Ah!

*(Siu Yuk feels that she is being watched. She walks faster and bumps into something.)*

Siu Yuk: *(speaks)* Ouch!

*(Siu Yuk drops her hairpin and exits with Wun Sa)*

Lei Yik: *(picks up the purple hairpin and sings)*  
She looked back and almost hurt her back;  
Like willows in the wind and flowers in the fog.  
She dropped her purple hairpin under the plum tree.  
Is it intentional, or by accident? *(Contemplates.)*

Wan Ming: *(speaks)* Gwan Yu, stay for a while to find out if it's Fok Siu Yuk who dropped the hairpin. Ha Hing and I will go elsewhere for a quick walk now and meet you back.

Ha Hing: *(speaks)* I wish you meet the one in your heart. Wan Ming and I go see lanterns again. *(Exits with Wan Ming.)*

*(Lei Yik fondles the hairpin admiringly.)*

*(Wun Sa enters with a lantern in hand.)*

*(Lei Yik notices that it's not Siu Yuk and hides the hairpin.)*

Wun Sa: *(looks for the hairpin with a lantern in her hand, bumps into Lei Yik, speaks)*  
Ouch! Sir, may I ask if you have seen a purple hairpin on the ground?

Lei Yik: *(pretending to be stunned, speaks)* Purple hairpin? What does it look like?

Wun Sa: *(immediately with a less courteous tone, speaks)*  
Well, if you don't know how the purple hairpin looks like, I bet you haven't seen it. Sir, please stay away.

Lei Yik: *(playfully, speaks)* Oh! Oh! Now I remember. Just a moment ago in the alley, I vaguely heard some noise. It must be someone who found the hairpin.

Wun Sa: *(anxiously asks)* Sir, which alley?



*Lei Yik:* (pointing recklessly, speaks) Over there.

*Wun Sa:* (anxiously speaks) Thank you, Sir. (Exits the stage in hurry.)

*Siu Yuk:* (enters and speaks) Wun Sa, Wun Sa.  
(*Siu Yuk ponders where her lost hairpin might be.*)

*Lei Yik:* (awestruck by *Siu Yuk's* beauty when looking at her up-close, speaks) Aha!

(Upon hearing and seeing *Lei Yik*, *Siu Yuk* covers her face with sleeves. She lowers her head, and tries to turn back on him.)

*Lei Yik:* (looks at the ground on purpose and speaks)  
Ah, this isn't a fallen lantern. How come there's glistening light on the streets? It looks reddish, too.

(sings) If you want to find the hairpin, then look carefully on the ground.  
The flowery street is filled with reflecting colors and lights,  
Which look velvety red and like a jade swallow.  
Oh! It's only a reflection on the fallen leaves. (*Picks up a leaf.*)

*Siu Yuk:* (*hates his teases and sings*) Shy and timid, I'm about to frown.  
Your red leaf trick is deceiving.  
You're only losing your elegance.  
I won't be fooled again by the flirt of the crazy bees and butterflies.

*Lei Yik:* (*continues singing*) Surprised by the dim light reflected by the hairpin;  
Under such flowery tree and cold moon;  
Like an upside down cicada.

*Siu Yuk:* (*not to be fooled again, sings*) Hairpin lost; I'm tired of being fooled.  
It's like the moon fears the evening glow.  
Using the hairpin as an excuse to talk to me,  
It's like pointing at a deer and calling it a horse. (*Turns her back on Lei Yik.*)

*Lei Yik:* (*speaks*) Madam, look at what I'm holding here. Is it the purple hairpin?

(*Siu Yuk* turns around and sees the hairpin. Amazed, she wants to take it but is embarrassed.)

*Wun Sa:* (*holding a lantern, runs towards the hairpin and gasps, speaks*)  
Hey, you apparently had the hairpin in your hands, but lied and said it's in the alley. You made me run around exhaustingly. It seems that you, a poor scholar, wanted to use the hairpin to reap some benefits. Stand aside!

*(Pushes Lei Yik away and stands with her arms akimbo.)*

*Siu Yuk:* *(speaks)* Wun Sa!  
*(sings)* This scholar is as charming as Pan An.  
Yet he's not as eloquent as Song Yu.  
Please ask him to return the hairpin to the one who dropped it.  
But be careful of his demands.

*Wun Sa:* *(speaks)* Scholar, hand me back the hairpin!

*Lei Yik:* *(speaks)* Hairpin? It's not yours! It belongs to your lady.  
Could you please tell me the elegant name of your lady?

*Wun Sa:* *(speaks)* Daughter of Prince Fok, she's the princess of Luoyang.

*Lei Yik:* *(speaks)*  
I already guessed that your lady must be the daughter of Prince Fok. Miss, I know that it's a virtue not to pick up what someone has dropped. Why don't you ask the honorable name of the person who picked the hairpin?

*Wun Sa:* *(speaks)* I won't ask.

*Siu Yuk:* *(speaks softly)* Wun Sa, there's no harm in asking.

*Wun Sa:* *(speaks)* There's no harm in asking? Alright, Scholar, tell us your name.

*Lei Yik:* *(sings)* I'm originally from Longxi. Now I happen to be in Chang'an.  
I'm willing to pluck a cinnamon flower from the moon  
(successful in the civil exam)  
in order to accompany the beautiful flower in the jade vase.  
"The curtains were opened; the wind moved the bamboo.  
An old acquaintance has come, I suspect." I'm the author of this poem.

*(Siu Yuk's shocked to find out that the person in front of her is the one she likes.)*

*Lei Yik:* *(sings)* I can't believe that my dream-lover,  
Resides not in the fairyland of immortal cave,  
But the first house in this crooked alley.  
*(sings)* My name is Lei Yik, styled Gwan Yu.  
I'm the tenth child in my family, which is in Jiangxia.

*Siu Yuk:* *(sings)* I've never met the person in the poem.  
Yet I love to linger in the lines of the poem.  
It's difficult to choose between him and the poem. But I love his beauty.

Before I set the hairpin on my hair, I recite the poem word by word.  
I see the saddle and miss the horse.  
Lanterns cover the dusk, clouds hide the moon.  
Who would expect the swallow on the hairpin falls in love with lanterns?

*(sings)* The person who found the hairpin is Lei the Sap Long.  
This hairpin is fortunate enough to fall before such a talented person.

*Wun Sa:* *(speaks)* Lady, good fortune or not, we need to get this hairpin back.

*Siu Yuk:* *(speaks)* Wun Sa, I'll take care of this hairpin myself.

*Wun Sa:* *(speaks)* Alright then, lady will take care of this. *(Chuckles.)*  
It looks like you don't need me to serve you now. *(Chuckles.)*

*Lei Yik:* *(speaks)* Madam.

*Siu Yuk:* *(sings)* My blushed face in half hidden; my red veil pulled.  
Petals fly, filling the red sky at dawn.  
The one who picked the hairpin meets a tragic lady.  
Yet hairpin has become worthless, like the prices in Luoyang.  
The flying petals and the flowers have disgraced your elegance.

*(speaks)* Scholar, please return my hairpin.

*Lei Yik:* *(sings)* We're made for each other; really made for each other.  
Let me borrow this hairpin as a matchmaker.  
I'm disposed to bend my knee in front of your pomegranate dress,  
And send this hairpin as a token gift for my marriage.

*Siu Yuk:* *(sings)* A marriage proposal on our first encounter;  
I feel both frightened and embarrassed.  
Having experienced so much hardships,  
I'm no longer worth much;  
A loser isn't good enough to match a high officer.  
I may not receive wedding gifts until I pay my filial duties.

*Lei Yik:* *(sings)* Please don't let my talent slip away.  
I've experienced much hardship, and haven't married yet.  
I admire that your talent was once top of the town in Hengyang.

*Siu Yuk:* *(sings)* I memorize the poems privately.  
In my dream I stand next to a row of willows.  
I fall in love with him secretly in my heart.

Perhaps we're really made for each other.  
After such a bitter life, I feel banished like an unwanted flower,  
And not suited to speak with you.

*Lei Yik:* *(sings)* Don't say you're like an unwanted flower.  
One day you'll be looked upon because of your husband's fame,  
And speak to raise people's eyebrows.

*Siu Yuk:* *(sings)* Amidst the misty rain in beautiful times,  
I have nothing to match your talent.  
I'm afraid that my bitter life,  
Like the autumn frost and the windy rain, will break the sprouts of love.  
I'm worried that my downhearted songs are empty and bland.  
Oh, that's too embarrassing.

*Lei Yik:* *(sings)* I've endured so much.  
Just like a pearl that's not afraid of the sand in the wave.  
Marry me, will you?

*Siu Yuk:* *(sings)* I have to serve my mother at home. How can I get married so easily?  
*(Smiles shyly; covering her face, Siu Yuk steps inside the house and looks back at Lei Yik before turning away from him completely.)*

*Lei Yik:* *(stunned and speechless, staring at the door and drawing a long breath)*  
*(sings)* The graceful moon is hidden behind a heavy door.  
How can I ask the goddess of the moon to return to the rows of willows?  
I'll find a good matchmaker after I return the hairpin to you.  
Yet in such a short time it's hard to gather enough money for wedding.  
  
*(speaks in low voice)* The beautiful lady has returned home, yet the hairpin is still  
in my hand. What should I do?

*Wan Ming:* *(sees Lei Yik and speaks)* Gwan Yu, you found the beauty and returned the  
hairpin. Is it love on a crush? Or is it just a trick on the hairpin?

*Lei Yik:* *(speaks)* Brother Wan Ming, the flower of Luoyang is both fragrant and enticing.  
The man of Longxi should therefore live a harmonious family life.

*Wan Ming:* *(speaks)* Wonderful, Gwan Yu! It's your will to protect the flower. But do you  
know how flowers should be nurtured? A husband treats fidelity and integrity as  
the foundation of his career; a wife treats chastity as her lifelong honor. If you  
owe someone a dollar, the debt won't end until you pay it back. If you owe  
someone a life, you'll never feel relieved until you pay your debt of love. If you  
understand it, you will win the beautiful lady. But if you don't, then ...

*Lei Yik:* (speaks) Then what?

*Wan Ming:* (speaks) Stop before it's too late.

*Lei Yik:* (speaks) Brother Wan Ming, I understand it thoroughly. Otherwise, I wouldn't think of choosing a good matchmaker for this marriage.

*Wan Ming:* (speaks) Gwan Yu, if you understand it thoroughly, why hire a matchmaker?

(sings) Lantern watching is over.  
If the person who found the hairpin is not a cheater,  
Then lotus root must've already been planted and sprouted.  
The weaving lady married herself off.  
No matchmaker was needed.  
Don't let the beautiful goddess wait for her lover.  
Send a lantern, and go soon the shadow of the locust tree.

(speaks) Gwan Yu, just go! Go!

*Lei Yik:* (hesitantly, speaks) Brother Wan Ming, look, the door is heavily locked.

*Wan Ming:* (teases) Hey, perhaps it's a deception. Just come forward and try to open it.

*Lei Yik:* (pushes the door open yet feels embarrassed and speaks)  
Brother Wan Ming, I'm only worried that it's too late and she's already slept.

*Wan Ming:* (speaks) What a fool!  
I'm sure she's now standing by the red curtain peeking! Gwan Yu, go!

(*Lei Yik enters the house while Wan Ming teases and exits.*)

*Lei Yik:* (sings) Stepping into Begonia room,  
Walk towards the rack of rose leaf raspberry.  
Who's burning incense to worship the moon?  
The smoke from the censer faintly cuts through the light haze.

(Sees Madam Fok, frightened, continues to sing)  
I see only Mother Queen striking the woodblock to recite sutras.  
But I don't see the grandchildren around her.  
The sound of the red woodblock turns solemn in the night.  
I dare not intervene with a marriage proposal.

(Speaks) I'm intending to ask for a partner,

But I lack the courage to knock at the gate of the zen.  
Perhaps I should just go back.

*Madam Fok:* *(speaks)* Sap Long, you're already here. Just stay calm. Why are you so hesitant?

*Lei Yik:* *(speaks)* Well, I feel awkward. *(Embarrassed, courageously, greets Madam Fok)*  
Lei Gwan Yu salutes Madam Fok.

*Madam Fok:* *(speaks)* Sap Long.  
Is it because it's too late at night and you can't find a good matchmaker so that  
you come to propose a marriage?

*Lei Yik:* *(embarrassed and speaks)* Uh...  
*(makes a bow, sings)* I climbed over the high bridge to reach the beauty's home.  
I'm fearless to ask the goddess to marry me.  
Thousands of gold and gifts, I don't mind.

*Madam Fok:* *(speaks)* This isn't necessary.  
*(Sings)* My little girl doesn't deserve such money.  
Matching couples in the marriage is all about talents.  
The mother and the daughter have been deprived,  
And abandoned to stay in the old lord's house.  
I hope to acquire a good son-in-law,  
In order to honor our family and gain good reputation.

*Lei Yik:* *(speaks)* Please be assured.  
*(sings)* I swear, if I, Lei Sap Long, were ever unfaithful to my beloved,  
I'd be stricken to death by thunder.  
I'll cherish her like protecting a young sprout.

*Madam Fok:* *(speaks)* That's good.  
*(Smiles and sings)* No wonder my poor daughter secretly admires your talent.  
Let me announce to her that the person who found the hairpin is here.  
*(When music stopped, shouts)* Siu Yuk!

*(Enters Wun Sa holding a lantern, escorting Siu Yuk.)*

*Siu Yuk:* *(sings)* Lifting up the curtain and dropping the veil,  
I quietly peek at the jade mirror and put on light make-up.  
The parrot on the fence is sneakily surprised,  
At the jade hairpin I just put on.  
Never have I been as graceful as tonight.

*(Shyly leans behind Madam Fok and looks at Lei Yik lovingly)*

*Lei Yik:* (sings) Your serene fragrance penetrates the veil;  
Your waist is as slender as willow and silk.  
If the brush is destined to encounter the ink,  
Then the sprouts and leaves of love will grow soon.  
The thrifty homeless man and the unmarried woman,  
Pray to the Queen Mother of the Yao pond,  
For becoming the colorful phoenix and her escorting crow.  
We look at each other speechless and bewitched.  
We can't help but are wildly restless and whimsical.  
(His eyes locked with Siu Yuk's.)

*Madam Fok:* (acknowledging, smiles and speaks) Siu Yuk,  
(sings) My daughter, I regret there is no fine wine to serve our guest,  
Do you have any lovers' tea in your room?  
Sap Long is a good-hearted man,  
Who may certainly chat with you overnight by the fire.  
(speaks) Wun Sa, it's cold and windy outside. Hurry up! Welcome the gentlemen  
into the lady's room and serve them tea.

*Wun Sa:* (laughs secretly and sings)  
Lady, such a romantic night has always been priceless.  
Let me hold this silver lantern high up to make you shine.

(Siu Yuk is extremely embarrassed.)

*Wun Sa:* (speaks) Master, please.  
(holds a lantern and leads Siu Yuk and Lei Yik into the room and exits.)

*Siu Yuk:* (wakes up and picks up the hairpin with an embarrassed smile and sings)  
Behind the candle stand, I secretly cursed the hairpin.  
What a rascal I was to grudge the candle flame.  
This hairpin turned out to be the matchmaker.  
I almost ruined the flames; what an embarrassment.

*Lei Yik:* (wakes up and sings) The debt of love will be returned one day.  
Until then I'll make the most of my gentleness.  
Your flirtatious glance is still drowsy.  
Yet for whom your hair looks messy over the hairpin.

*Siu Yuk:* (lowers her hair, sighs, and speaks) Alas ...

*Lei Yik:* (surprised and speaks) My wife, Siu Yuk, didn't I ...

*Siu Yuk:* (tears roll down and speaks) My husband, Sap Long.

*Lei Yik:* (shocked and speaks) My wife, we had a happy wedding. The quilt and pillow are still warm. Why do you shed tears for no reason?

*Siu Yuk:* (speaks) My husband, your wife is insignificant. I know I don't match up. Today you love me for my beauty, and I'm entrusted with kindness and integrity. (With sorrow) But I'm afraid that one morning when my beauty fades, gratitude and love will both be gone. My love will have nothing to cling to, like an abandoned fan in autumn. At the time of extreme pleasure, sadness came unaware.

*Lei Yik:* (consoles and speaks) My wife, I'm not a fickle lover. Why did you bother to utter such mistrustful words? Lovers in the ancient time presented vows to have their hearts united. Let me borrow a plain satin of three feet long to write down my oath of love.

*Siu Yuk:* (secretly elated and speaks) Wun Sa! Wun Sa!

*Wun Sa:* (enters and speaks) Congratulations, lady and master!

*Siu Yuk:* (speaks) Wun Sa, go to the chest and bring me three feet of white silk ruled with fine black lines, as well as the stationery for your master to write ...

*Wun Sa:* (speaks) My master, what do you want to write so early in the morning?

*Siu Yuk:* (embarrassed and speaks) I want write ...

*Wun Sa:* (continues to ask, speaks) What to write?

*Siu Yuk:* (speaks) I want to write ... an oath of love.

*Wun Sa:* (teases and speaks) Oh, an oath of love is well deserved.  
(sets up the stationery on the table, speaks)  
Master, before you write your oath, have your conscience. I wish, my master, you'll write as deeply as you feel, and as truthful as you will.

*Siu Yuk:* (grinds the ink, speaks) Sap Long, please write.

*Lei Yik:* (takes the brush, rolls up the sleeves, and recites) Before I write my oath of love,  
Let me use the hairpin of purple jade,  
To prick my finger and draw the blood of longing, and  
To blend with the ink to prove my love.

(pricks finger with the hairpin and stirs the ink and sings)



With this oath of love, there shouldn't be any doubt.  
Our love, as persistent as gold, is hard to wreck.  
Time shall pass,  
Yet this hairpin shall not break.  
This lovesickness is bitter;  
It can be bought but can't be sold.

*Siu Yuk:* (*touched, weeps, and sings*) Like a pair of fairies who meet at the sky palace.  
Never shall we separate.  
Remember that I've given myself to you,  
And my reputation is ruined.

*Lei Yik:* (*sings*) I wish we're clung together like a pair of lovebirds;  
Never tired of loving each other.  
The hairpin marks the unique evening of gratitude.  
A red string has already tied our feet together.  
There's no way to deny it.

(*Raises his arm to finish off the oath, speaks*) May I present this to you, my wife,  
Siu Yuk, for your gracious perusal? (*Presents the white silk.*)

*Siu Yuk:* (*receives the satin, wipes off tears, and speaks*) Thank you, my husband Sap Long.  
(*recites*) The mandarin ducks in the water;  
The lovebirds in the clouds;  
Go after each other nights and days.  
No regrets, alive or dead.  
Let mountains and rivers be the metaphor,  
And sun and moon be the witnesses to my faith.  
Share the same blanket when we live;  
Buried in the same cave when we die.  
(*Repeats the last two lines.*)  
(*Sings*) The oath reveals our true love line after line.  
Now all the guts entwined in grief are untied.

*Voice calls from backstage:* Announcement: Lei Yik of Longxi is ranked in the first class of the imperial exam and appointed the title of Top Scholar.

*Madam Fok:* (*excited, enters and speaks*) Siu Yuk, we are blessed by the Heaven. Sap Long is the champion in the imperial exam. You really have picked the right one. I'm relieved and happy for you.

*Siu Yuk:* (*excited and speaks*) Ah, such a good news. Wun Sa, be quick, burn incense and candles for the gods. Dear mother, please handsomely reward the messenger.

*(Exit Madam Fok and Wun Sa.)*

*Lei Yik:* *(elated and speaks)* My wife, Siu Yuk.

*Siu Yuk:* *(speaks)* Sap Long, my husband. Hurry up!  
Step to the front of the hall to pay our gratitude to the gods.  
*(The two of them step out of the rooms hand in hand.)*

*Wong Saau Yi:* *(enters and speaks)* Please listen to an order from the Ministry of Rites:  
Anyone who received the first place in the imperial exam needs to immediately  
pay a visit to the marshal before he may register. Absolutely no delay!

*Lei Yik:* *(speaks)* Honored Sir, I've just fulfilled my dream and am about to pay gratitude  
to the God for my wife's family. May I bother you to ask the Marshal for an  
extension to visit him?

*Wong Saau Yi:* *(speaks)* What?! The Heaven is ruled by the God of Thunder, and the Earth is  
ruled by the Three Lords. You wait and see what the marshal would do to you.

*Siu Yuk:* *(speaks)* Sap Long, My husband.

*(sings)* No wonder, last night, the lanterns sent good news to me in my dream,  
that you would wear a blue gown and jade belt, walking up the golden steps.

*(In the hall of the residence of Marshal Lou.)*

*Wong Saau Yi:* *(speaks)* May I report to Your Highness: The scholar who just received the first  
rank in exam is now at the performing house, indulged in a courtesan's lust. He  
refuses to come for registration despite my repeated calls.

*Marshal Lou:* *(enraged and speaks)* Well, poor Lei Yik. He didn't know how much I'd helped  
him in secret. How dare was he to ignore my invitation? Now that Lau Gung Jai  
just returned from the frontier of Yumen Pass, asking for military officials. I'm  
going to recommend Lei Yik to go with him, and let him suffer through the wind  
and frost outside the frontier, so as to release my anger. *(Still angry, speaks)* Tut!  
Lei Yik, let's see how many more days are left in your garden of lust.

*Curtain*

## **ACT 2**

### **Breaking the Willow Branch at the Yangguan Pass**

*(Enter Wun Sa carrying wine and cups, accompanying Siu Yuk)*

*Siu Yuk:* (sings) Alas, walking down the street of lanterns, a miserable lady,  
Who earned the scholar's gown, newly tinted with royal glamour.  
The warmth of the wedding quilt remains,  
Yet departure dawns in a blink of time,  
And you're on the way to the Yangguan Pass.

*Wun Sa:* (sobs and speaks) Lady, you and Master met in a hurry; now you also separate in  
a hurry. Once apart, when will you ever see each other again? Lady, it's still early,  
and Master still hasn't come yet. Why don't we sit under the shade of the willow  
to get away from this sorrowful scene?

*(Siu Yuk looks gloomy and sits with Wun Sa under the willow.)*

*(Enter four officers carrying tablets of military order and umbrellas, salute.)*

*(Enter Wan Ming with Lei Yik, who is now dressed up in official attire.)*

*Lei Yik:* (sings) The Yangguan Pass seemed an impossible destination.  
Green foliage fills my eyes,  
Grief kills the sorrowful weed.  
Tears of my beauty are all over my green gown.  
Escorted by the flowers, assisted by the willows;  
Beyond the pagoda of parting,  
Who would understand my bitterness and aspiration?

*Wan Ming:* (sadly, speaks) Alas, Gwan Yu!  
(Sings) You didn't pay visit to the marshal, driving the Three Lords mad.  
Respectable is your talent and pride;  
Vulnerable is your path to success in the officialdom.  
Now with no one to talk to you from the heart,  
I hope you make cautious decisions in your future career.  
If one day you're forced to step down,  
You should realize who's behind it.

*Lei Yik:* (awakes from deep thoughts and gnashes his teeth in anger and sings)  
I have deep regret over the trouble caused by returning the veil,  
Which only initiated angry waves of jealousy.  
Please don't tell other people about it.  
I don't want Siu Yuk to be jealous after I leave.

*Wun Sa:* (hearing people talking, takes a peek, then waves and speaks)  
Lady, lady, Master has arrived.

*Siu Yuk: (hurriedly picks up the wine box and rushes out of the willow woods, speaks)*  
My dear husband.

*Lei Yik: (sobs and speaks)* My dear wife.  
*(Wants to hug Siu Yuk but embarrassed by others' presence)*

*Wan Ming: (walks up and bows, speaks)* Chui Wan Man, who failed the imperial exam, pays respect to my new sister-in-law.

*Siu Yuk: (shy and bitter, wipes off tears, forces a bitter smile, and speaks)* Master Chui, last night while sleeping, my husband Sap Long mentioned that his friendship with you compares only to the unyielding evergreens in winter, and is indivisible like arms and legs of the body. Therefore, let me call you master. Oh yes, there should be another master; his name is Wai Ha Hing. Why isn't he here today to bid farewell?

*Lei Yik: (speaks)* Siu Yuk, my wife, I just heard from the recruitment office that Ha Hing was ranked sixty-eight in the exam, and appointed the chief magistrate of the city of Chang'an. He's packing, and we don't need to wait for him. *(Says to his servants)* Go wait outside the woods. Let me bid my wife farewell. *(Servants exit.)*

*Wun Sa: (sets the wine on a stone table, speaks)* Lady, master, once people go beyond the Yangguan Pass, you won't see any old acquaintances. I wish you two can drink away all your sorrow *(sobs)* and sets an auspicious date for union in dream.

*(Lei Yik and Siu Yuk face each other and shed tears.)*

*(Exit Wan Ming and Wun Sa sadly on stage right.)*

*Siu Yuk: (crying)* My husband, Sap Long.

*Lei Yik: (in grief, speaks)* My wife, Siu Yuk.

*Siu Yuk: (sighs and sings)* Sorrow cut through the willow of bawdy house,  
Tears dropped all over the scholar's gown.  
Flowers dropping, willow catkins flying;  
I'm afraid to admit the ups and downs of life.  
In this moment we bid farewell on Xianyang road.  
I desire to speak yet my feelings are concealed

*Lei Yik: (continues singing)*  
The song of Yangguan sings about leaving home.  
The frontier is bleak.  
Alas, every word of parting is immensely painful.

The tears of sorrow are smeared with blood.

*Siu Yuk:* (continues singing) My husband, don't let your soul be lured by other flowers.

*Lei Yik:* (continues singing) My wife, don't cry for my departure.

*Siu Yuk:* (continues singing)  
My husband, I hope you will get promoted to the high office.  
But please keep thinking of me, thinking of me.

*Lei Yik:* (continues singing) Alas, how can I leave my weeping wife?

(Horn and percussion music heard from backstage.)

*Siu Yuk:* (speaks)  
Just when I'm about to look into the end of the endless passes and mountains,  
the heartbreaking sound of horns and drums is urging you. Sap Long, Sap Long,  
my husband. Before us is the Bridge of Baling. Let me, your wife, break this  
willow before you to write down my parting thoughts. Sap Long, here's to you.

(raise the wine cup and sings) Under the willow,  
As husband and wife, we once again exchange our cup of grape wine.  
Like the parting swallows begging for reunion.

(empty the wine, tosses the cup and speaks) Sap Long, please go.

*Lei Yik:* (picks up his belongings, sobs, and sings)  
The miserable sound of horns and drums is urging me to go.  
My tears will be dried.

(Lei Yik walks.)

*Siu Yuk:* (speaks) Sap Long, Sap Long.

(sings) Allow me to stop and gently call you, my husband, yet again.  
Let's break this willow to tie you up and remind you to miss me forever.

*Lei Yik:* (breaks the willow, sings) Even if the earth ages and the heaven dies,  
Our love lasts forever, and we share the same dream.  
(Gently holds Siu Yuk.)

*Siu Yuk:* (continues singing) Part yielding, part holding,  
Weeping at each other on this heartbreaking road,  
Part falling, part swinging.

*(Sound of horns and drums.)*

*Lei Yik:*           *(continues singing)* Words of sorrow buried in my dream,  
To be revealed once we meet again.

*(Lei Yik and Siu Yuk are clung, unable to part, sadly.)*

*(The big drum strikes one beat at a time, accompanying the horns.)*

*(Enters left stage General of Sixth Troop with a horse. Enters General Lau.)*

*(Enter four officers carrying tablets of military order and umbrellas; enter two guards carrying wine; enter Ha Hing, Wan Ming, and Wun Sa.)*

*Wan Ming:*   *(speaks)* Ha Hing, come to meet our new sister-in-law.

*Ha Hing:*       *(bows and speaks)* Wai Ha Hing is here to salute new sister-in-law.

*Siu Yuk:*       *(embarrassed, speaks)* Master, you're too kind.

*General Lau:* *(speaks)* Honored Scholar, your humble servant Lau Gung Jai of the Yangguan Pass, as recommended by my revered teacher, is here to greet you. It's getting late. [Calls to followers] Come, play the horn and go.

*Siu Yuk:*       *(rushes forward, pulls the gown and speaks)* Sap Long, Sap Long.

*(sings)* I will curse for heavy storm to attack the Yangguan Pass,  
Which steals from me my heroic, noble, and beautiful husband.  
I hope to say a few wishes to you.  
I wonder if you would listen.

*Lei Yik:*       *(speaks)* My wife, Siu Yuk, please continue.

*Siu Yuk:*       *(speaks)* Sap Long, I'm only eighteen, and you're only twenty-two. There're still eight more years before you reach the prime of your life. I hope our love and pleasure will survive this period. After eight years, it won't be too late for you to choose another woman from a noble family in order to make a marriage alliance. You wife will then be removed from worldly matters, shave my hair off, and wear a nun's robe. This shall fulfill my long-cherished wish. *(Weeps aloud.)*

*Lei Yik:*       *(also weeps, and speaks)* My wife, Siu Yuk, if I ever have the chance to return, I will never consider another woman and fail our marriage.

*(helps Siu Yuk up and speaks)* Siu Yuk, my old friend Chui Wan Ming, an unlucky talented man, is poor and always suffers from hunger; Wai Ha Hing, whose salary is low, has an old mother to take care of. I hope you will cherish them as family.

*Wan Ming:* *(listening to these words, sobs; carrying a wine cup, speaks)* Gwan Yu, come, let me, your stupid brother, give a toast to say goodbye. Please remember that a great man builds his lifelong career based on fidelity.

*Ha Hing:* *(gives a toast and sobs)* Gwan Yu, my brother, it's said that "long flag lifts the setting sun; short sword cuts the grief of separation." I hope you return to the capital soon and keep my sister-in-law full and warm.

*General Lau:* *(speaks)* Your Honor, let's go, please. [Calls to followers] Bring the horses.

*Lei Yik:* *(stamps his foot, sings)* A word of goodbye and stay well, off I go.  
Once on the horse, never can I turn around and look.  
*(Gets on the horse and exits left stage; everyone follows.)*

*(Siu Yuk shouts out Sap Long's name hysterically and faints. Wun Sa helps her up.)*

*(Ha Hing and Wan Ming look at each other gloomily.)*

*Wun Sa:* *(sings)* Lady, your weak body can't bear the sadness of departure.  
Only in dreams will you travel to the Yangguan Pass to meet your husband.

*Curtain*

### **ACT 3**

#### **Fulfilled Dream by Morning Window Freezing, Selling Hairpin**

*Garden with partial view of bedroom, similar to the scene of The Butterfly and Red Pear Blossoms, Act 4, Scene 3, but change the left-hand side of the stage to the lady's bedroom. On the right is a garden with pagoda. The room on the left has a large canopy with table and candles. Outside the garden, near the right exit, there's a small stove for preparing herbal tea and medicine.*

*(Three years later.)*

*(Siu Yuk is sleeping inside the canopy.)*

*(Curtain rises.)*

*Wun Sa:* (carries the money and herbal medicine, enters from stage's right, recites)  
I just pawned the pearl bracelet.  
The only thing left now is the purple hairpin.  
(sighs) Alas, master's gone for three years already. Lady is depressed and sick.  
Pray to the Buddha, beg the gods, but we're spared with nothing valuable.

(puts the medicine in a pot, sings)  
Back then the lanterns illuminated the flowery street.  
One night's romance brought the debt of grief.  
Rarely have there been mails over the last three years.  
In her heart, tears linger.  
Thinking of her husband leaves her fragile.  
Night after night, she leans against the burner, guessing when he will return.  
She prays to the gods thousands of times every day.  
She's visited the return route of Baling Road countless times,  
And cried in pain towards the Yangguan Pass.  
Poor lady is sick, but she refuses to be treated,  
Only asks me to buy her the medicine dong quai ("shall return").

(speaks) Alas, she only takes dong quai regardless of her body condition. How can she ever recover?

*Siu Yuk:* (in the canopy, hears the voice, and speaks) Wun Sa! Wun Sa!  
(Lifts up the canopy and gets up.)

*Wun Sa:* (walks towards her and speaks) Lady,

*Siu Yuk:* (speaks) Wun Sa, have you already pawned the pearl bracelet?

*Wun Sa:* (sobs and recites) Lady, the pearl bracelet you'd given me,  
It's sold for ten thousand dollars.  
Chui, the old master, comes here every three or five days,  
How long will the money last?  
Very soon, we'll be left with nothing to pawn, nothing to sell.

*Siu Yuk:* (recites) Wun Sa, when the old master comes,  
Don't you ever speak a word about our difficulty.  
It's said that when the soul of a poet is let down,  
He still has proud bones to raise his body up.

*Wun Sa:* (nods and speaks) Alright.

(Wan Ming is coughing in backstage.)



Wun Sa: *(speaks in a low voice)* You see? Here he comes again! *(Prepares the medicine.)*

Wan Ming: *(appears languid and sick, enters, and speaks)*  
 The candle is hard to glow with the wind shaking the sick bed.  
 The logs are wet with the rain shattering this grass-made window.  
  
*(steps inside and speaks)* Sister-in-law,

Siu Yuk: *(speaks)* Master, I haven't seen you for only three days, how come you look so languid? Wun Sa, please gather some money to help our old master!

Wan Ming: *(shakes his head and speaks)* Sister-in-law, I come here today not for the meal but to see you when I'm still alive.  
  
*(sings)* I come here every three to seven days to ask for loan.  
 To help me, you've already pawned your golden bracelet and silver hairpin.  
 Legend has it that Minister Jiang didn't get introduced to Emperor Wen of the Zhou Dynasty until he was seventy.  
 I'm poor, but I still have ambition.  
 I'm here because Marshal Lou has delivered his recruitment invitation to me.  
*(shows the invitation notice, continues to sing)*  
 I, a white-haired old scholar, am about to step on the Jade Steps.  
 But I regret that I don't have a nice wardrobe,  
 And it'd be rude to wear only swallow-tailed shoes.

Siu Yuk: *(after listening to what Wan Ming said, empties all the money from the basket into a wrap and brings it to him, speaks)* Master, your talents and ambitions are respectable. Here's not much, but it should suffice for a nice wardrobe. Master, please take it.

Wan Ming: *(takes the money regretfully and crying, speaks)* Sister-in-law, I understand too that it's difficult to take care of my prolonged poverty. I also understand that it's getting harder and harder for you. If I had only one breath left, I would still seize every opportunity, so as to return your favor over the past three years.  
  
*(crying hard)* Sister-in-law, if Chui Wan Ming cannot return your huge favor in this life, I'll ensure your favor be returned after I die. You and Sap Long will be reunited. Sister-in-law, I'll protect you, whether I'm alive or dead. *(kneels)*

Siu Yuk: *(hurriedly helps Wan Ming up, speaks in tear)*  
 Master, please stand up; otherwise my fortune will be cut short.

Wan Ming: *(speaks)* Sister-in-law, please take care. I leave now. *(Exits.)*

*Wun Sa:* (speaks, sadly) Alas, lady, we have no more money left. Even if a messenger comes to send us news of master, we'll have no ways to thank him.

*Siu Yuk:* (speaks, ruthlessly) Wun Sa, bring me the purple hairpin!

*Wun Sa:* (goes to the bedroom and brings the hairpin, speaks)  
Lady, this hairpin was used on your wedding ...

*Siu Yuk:* (smiles in pain and sings) Money spent up, only to beg for news.  
Luck deprived, why still cares about selling the hairpin?  
Go, get Mr. Hau here. This hairpin is too valuable to sell. (Sobs at the hairpin.)

(*Wun Sa exits and in a rush enters stage right with Hau Ging Sin.*)

*Ging Sin:* (speaks) I salute you, madam.

*Siu Yuk:* (covers her face, embarrassed and speaks)  
Alas, Uncle Hau, it's said that once misfortune befalls the children of a decent family, there is no dignity left for them to see families. Yet, I have an urgent matter. Please help me to sell this purple hairpin immediately.

*Ging Sin:* (speaks) Madam, this hairpin is worth at least ninety thousand. In such a rush how can I find someone who can afford to buy it? Oh, now I remember. Let me take this to Marshal's residence. They're marrying off their daughter and are in urgent need of a hairpin for the wedding. (Takes the hairpin and exits.)

(*Siu Yuk is speechless and deep in thoughts.*)

*Siu Yuk:* (sings) It's been three years; messages are scarce.  
Fruitless is my spirit's travel to the edge of the sky.

*Curtain*

#### **ACT 4**

*Lei Yik:* (sings) Yellow sand covers my drunken eyes.  
Recruited talents are stranded in the frontier.  
The jade birds deliver mails, but they can't convey love.

Longing—separated by mountains and passes.  
Thousands of mountains and falling woods;  
Hundreds of miles of dust.  
Overlooking Chang'an from my empty tent, I sigh.  
Three autumns of separation and regrets;  
Two places of sorrow being taken apart;  
One foot long of letters, I wish to see.  
The sound of the horn moves my grief.  
With it I sigh at the moon.  
Mails and news are blocked by the cloud to reach the frontier.  
Like a forlorn wild goose.  
(*Gong of first night watch sounds*)

(*Sings*) Wind strikes, snow strikes;  
On and off over the past three heart-wrenching years.  
Spring wind, autumn rain;  
Too late, unfortunately, to drift through the sky's edge.  
Still here at the Jade pass.  
Sorrow has made strong wine taste light.  
Night after night, we miss each other so much that it's difficult to close the eyes  
Our hearts are tied, no matter where we are.

(*Sings*) Sorrow provides no proof; dreams give no evidence.  
When to return, I want to ask.  
But never will I bend my waist to beg those corrupted officials.  
Drinking and singing madly on the frontier to no avail.  
Tears of grief are overwhelming me.  
Let's repel old grudge.  
Compose a new text to the melody of "Yiliang,"  
Which, nonetheless, hardly narrate my immense grief.

(*Grabs a pen and write, then recites*) Day after day I get drunk in Liang County.  
Not wanting to rest even after the songs and music are finished.  
I don't need to go to the Wangjing (Capital Viewing) Tower to show my gratitude.  
(*Appears drunk*) Haha! I won't go to Wangjing Tower.

(*sings*) The wine all becomes tears when poured through my sorrowful guts.  
Let me weep unashamedly after singing. (*Drunk and collapsed.*)

(*Eight military generals hold white stick; eight maids lined up the curtain.*)

(*Wong Saau Yi stands on the front of stage.*)

*(Curtains open) (Enters Marshal Lou holding a poem on stage left.)*

*Marshal Lou: (sings)* Anger has degraded myself.  
Three years have quickly passed.  
My secret help to the scholar has been in vain after he becomes famous.  
How would I know that he defies my order and falls in love with a courtesan.  
Last month Lau passed me these poems in mail.  
Line after line, Sap Long reveals his anger.  
Words after words, the poem narrate his hatred towards the court.  
I could defame him with treason.  
He's obsessed with alcohol but never got drunk at the celestial Yao Pond.  
He's fond of women yet fallen for a degraded courtesan.  
I have this poem on hand as evidence of treason,  
Enough to recall this stranded goose.

*(speaks)* I, the old master, have already called him back to Chang'an. He's not allowed to go home until he pays me a visit. Then I will have the opportunity to threaten him. That will surely do it. Alas, but if I want him to be married into my family, I could do nothing but first approach him with courtesy. Old scholar Chui and Wai Ha Hing are Lei Yik's lifelong acquaintances. I ordered them to come and be the matchmaker. So that I can save some talking and persuasion. It's said that fierce tiger who just escaped from the wood can easily take over the mountain. Yet even the cleverest dragon stuck in nets can hardly make a ripple.

*(Enter, separately Wan Ming and Ha Hing, wearing the official cone-shaped cap and round collar gown, each of them holding a red invitation card.)*

*Wan Ming: (sings)* The Heaven bestowed upon Sap Long a decent wife,  
who has fed me and kept me alive.  
Tapestry can be embroidered with one hundred more pieces of flowers.  
Yet in the snow one can hardly find three catties of charcoal.

*Ha Hing: (sings)* Having obtained a piece of the black official cap,  
I abide to the rule of my job and be filial to my mother.  
Hurried to the Marshal's residence,  
I am showered in the gratitude of the Emperor with no misery.

*Wan Ming and Ha Hing: (pay respect to Marshal Lou)* Our respect to Your Highness.

*Marshal Lou: (speaks)* Be excused from the ritual. Come sit beside me.

*Wan Ming and Ha Hing: (speak)* Thank you, Your Highness.

*Marshal Lou:* *(speaks)* Old Scholar Chui and Young Brother Wai, I, the Old Master, invite you for banquet today for two reasons. First, Colonel Lei was sent back to Beijing about a month ago. Considering the length of the trip, he should arrive today. Second, Colonel Lei is indulged in the world of drinking and women. This way he cannot amount too much in life. I'd like to have him as my son-in-law. Old Scholar Chui and Young Brother Wai, I'm to cause you trouble: I need your help to be the matchmakers to convince this returning goose.

*Wan Ming:* *(stands up angrily and speaks)* Your Highness, did you ask me to come here only for this matter?

*Marshal Lou:* *(speaks)* Exactly.

*Wan Ming:* *(gets mad and speaks)* It's said that the love for the first wife lasts long, and you may not divorce a wife who has shared poverty with you. Sap Long has already married Siu Yuk as his first wife. Now you ask me to separate him from his first love and someone who has shared poverty with him? I can't be a wicked matchmaker and do such unconscionable things.

*(speaks)* I shall leave now. *(About to depart.)*

*Marshal Lou:* *(mocks at Wan Ming's harsh words and sings)*  
Matchmaker will surely be rewarded with a "Golden Belt."

*Wan Ming:* *(speaks)* Despicable.

*Marshal Lou:* *(continues singing)* How about a fifth-rank officer?  
You don't listen to my order.  
Don't you see that the beating sticks are all ready in the hall?

*(Beaten, Wan Ming fell to the ground.)*

*Ha Hing:* *(shocked and speaks)* Your Highness, please set aside your anger. *(Repeats.)*

*(Persuades Wan Ming, sings)* Stop fighting with each other.  
You appear to be very sick.  
The Lion's roar is heavy to bear.  
Recklessness and arrogance only invite trouble.  
Authority and power push one towards hardship.  
*(Helps Wan Ming rise while singing.)*

*Wan Ming:* *(extremely angry, spits on Ha Hing, and speaks)* Ptui!  
*(Holds his anger and speaks)* Your Highness, how many daughters do you have?

*Marshal Lou: (thinking Wan Ming might change his mind, speaks calmly)*  
I, the Old Master, have five daughters; Yin Jing is the youngest.

*Wan Ming: (speaks)* Are they all waiting to be married off?

*Marshal Lou: (speaks)* Well, four of them are already married.

*Wan Ming: (speaks)* Oh well, how are they getting along with their husbands after marriage?

*Marshal Lou: (speaks)* Not bad, indeed.

*Wan Ming: (speaks)*  
Your Highness, I too have four daughters waiting to be married. I would like your four sons in-laws to marry my four daughters. Do you think it would work?

*Minster Lo: (stunned, speaks)* What are you saying?

*Wan Ming: (speaks)* Could your four sons in-laws abandon their wives and marry again?

*Marshal Lou: (shocked, speaks)*  
What? Abandon their wives? Doesn't that mean divorcing my daughters?  
*(Realizes that it is the trick, speaks)* This would be ...

*Wan Ming: (mocks at him and speaks)* This ... this ... this ...  
*(sings)* This is like one doesn't feel pain unless one is pricked by a needle. Once the needle pricks, pain is all over. *(Laughs hardily.)*

*Marshal Lou: (Provoked to rage and sings)*  
It's said that tiger's authority is not to be infringed on.  
Both the eyes and the mind of the poor scholar are blind.  
Furiously grab the beating sticks.

*(The entourage grabs a beating stick and beats Wan Ming)*

*Wan Ming: (grabs the sticks and speaks)* Ha Hing, Ha Hing!

*(sings)* I ... I ... I feel ashamed; I have nothing to compensate Siu Yuk's kindness.  
Fortunately I still have loyalty and integrity to pay her back.  
Please tell Sap Long not to abandon his love for Siu Yuk.  
Tell him that my soul will be haunting our hometown. *(Dead.)*

*(Ha Hing holds the corpse and wails madly.)*

*Marshal Lou: (gets even angrier and speaks)* Ha Hing, step aside! Shut up! Entourage, take the corpse of this old fellow to the backyard and get him buried hastily. Ha Hing, in a minute when Sap Long arrives, if anyone tells him about this old fellow's death and the whereabouts of Siu Yuk, he would be executed right away with no forgiveness.

*Ha Hing: (frightened, speaks)* Noted, noted.

*Marshal Lou: (speaks)* Sit down. *(Shakes his sleeves.)*

*(Two generals lift Wan Ming's corpse and exit on the left-hand corner of the white screen.)*

*(Enter Ging Sin holding a purple jade hairpin on the right-hand stage entrance.)*

*Ging Sin: (speaks)* Marquis, I, an old jade craftsman of Chang'an, have a purple hairpin for sale.

*(Wong Saau Yi nods and brings in Ging Sin, who bows to pay respect and presents the purple hairpin.)*

*Marshal Lou: (sees the hairpin and speaks)* Hey, Mr. Hau, I'm looking for a top-quality purple hairpin for my little daughter's wedding. How come it's taken you so long to come? How much is this worth?

*Ging Sin: (speaks)* The owner of this pin asks for 90,000 *guan*.

*Marshal Lou: (speaks)* Let me take a look. *(Narrates)* The little swallow, weaved with flower, is delicately crafted. It truly is a first-rate hairpin of purple jade. Mr. Hau, which family did this hairpin belong? And why should this hairpin have been sold?

*Ging Sin: (sighs and speaks)* Your Honour, this hairpin originally belonged to a noble family in Luoyang. Alas, it is said that the integrity of the sons and daughters falls with the decline of their noble family. Why bother to disclose their family name and to add to the disgrace?

*Marshal Lou: (displeased, speaks)* Take this back. *(Narrates)* If this hairpin's origin is doubtful, how is it worth 90,000 *guan*?

*Ging Sin: (desperately speaks)* Your Honor, Your Honor! *(Whines and narrates)* Alas, this hairpin originally belongs to Fok Siu Yuk for her wedding. *(Ha Hing was shocked)* If not for the misfortune, how would she sell this hairpin.

*Marshal Lou: (holds the hairpin for a look and speaks)* Oh, Fok Siu Yuk, purple hairpin. Mr. Hau, I'll buy this hairpin at the demanded price. My little daughter is getting married

soon. There are still a few other pieces of jewelry and they need to be repaired. Cheun Mui, bring Mr. Hau to the West Chamber and serve him a cup of tea. When the repairing is done, bring him back to take a look.

*(The maidservant brings Ging Sin to the stage on the side.)*

*(Marshal Lou holds the purple hairpin and walks to the front of the stage, contemplating.)*

*(Ha Hing walks close to him to look at the hairpin.)*

*Marshal Lou: (shakes the sleeves and speaks) Saau Yi, come over!*

*Wong Saau Yi: (speaks) Yes.*

*Marshal Lou: (speaks) Saau Yi, bring the purple hairpin to your home immediately! When Colonel Lei arrives, ask your wife to dress like Lady Bao's third sister to offer the hairpin. Ask your wife to tell him that Siu Yuk has been seeing someone else and therefore sold the hairpin. As our plan goes, if Colonel Lei gets angry about that, then he will certainly leave his old wife and accept a new one.*

*(Exit Saau Yi on the left side of the stage holding the hairpin.)*

*(Ha Hing keeps feeling anxious and uneasy.)*

*(Enter two banners and four high flags, on which were written "summoned to return to the capital and relocated to station in the town of Mengmen.")*

*Lei Yik: (enters and sings) To Mengmen, wild goose from the Far West returns,  
With teary eyes covered by sandstorms in the aliens' territories.  
The hope to return is difficult even in dreams.  
On the day when we're supposed to be reunited, we're still apart.  
I was not permitted by the imperial order to return.  
(Waves to ask the followers to leave, and enters)  
(Speaks) Respect to my revered teacher.*

*Marshal Lou: (delighted and speaks) Please sit down. Please sit down.*

*(Lei Yik sits on the right side. The maidservant serves him tea.)*

*Lei Yik: (speaks) My revered teacher, I, your student, has served in the Far West for three years. Yet upon this long-awaited return, I am not allowed to return home by Imperial Edict. I wonder what purpose does this serve.*



*Marshal Lou: (pretending to know nothing about it, speaks)* Sap Long, is the “home” you referred to the one in Chang'an or the one in Longxi?

*Lei Yik: (shocked, realizes the connotation, gives a wry smile and speaks)* My revered teacher, Longxi is my mother's home, and Chang'an is my wife's home. Now that I'm back in Chang'an, I should be ... (stuttered and tongue-tied)

*Marshal Lou: (with an evil smile, speaks)* Hey, Sap Long, you are my most favorite student. And my home is therefore no difference to your home. *(Laughs.)*

*Lei Yik: (hopes to ask but not dare to ask, speaks)* Ha Hing, it's been three years. I'm glad to see that my old friends are still fine. Ah, Chui Wan Ming has been down-and-out is his life. How has he been doing since we parted? Is he still living a pedestrian life?

*Ha Hing: (sobs and speaks)* Brother Wan Ming, ... he's doing ... rather well ... very well, so well that he's finally washed off his poverty, and doesn't need to be taken care of.

*Lei Yik: (contented, speaks)* This is Heaven's blessing. Thank God!

*(Wong Saau Yi brings the impersonated Third Lady Bao and takes purple hairpin onto the stage. Saau Yi gives an eye signal. Impersonated Lady Bao arrives.)*

*Lady Bao: (speaks)* Your Highness, Marshal Lou, I, the old lady, bow.

*Marshal Lou: (pretending that he knows nothing, speaks)* Which family are you from?

*Lady Bao: (speaks)* From the Bao family.

*Marshal Lou: (speaks)* Why are you here?

*Lady Bao: (speaks)* I heard that your little daughter will soon be married and she wants a hairpin of purple jade for the wedding. Now I have a ready-made hairpin to present to you.

*Marshal Lou: (takes the hairpin, speaks)* It's really a top-quality purple jade hairpin with crafted swallow. Sap Long, why don't you take a look? *(Passes the hairpin to Lei Yik)*

*Lei Yik: (receives the hairpin and speaks)* Thank you, my kind teacher. *(Holding and examining the hairpin carefully, sings)*  
The day when I first picked up this hairpin,  
It shined through my eyes.  
The swallow crafted on the head of the pin still radiates,  
With the word “happiness” attached to it.

The red velvet on the hairpin still isn't worn.  
Yet the soul beneath has already been shattered.  
The more I touch it, the more I panic. *(Falls off the chair.)*  
I must ask about the source of the hairpin immediately.

*(Speaks, quickly)* Hairpin-selling old lady, if your family name is Bao, do you have any sisters?

*Lady Bao:* *(speaks, quickly)* There're seven sisters in my family; I am the third oldest.

*Lei Yik:* *(speaks, quickly)* Do you know the fourth sister?

*Lady Bao:* *(speaks)* She's my younger sister. She runs business around bawdy houses, and is a humorous lady who is good at match-making.

*Lei Yik:* *(speaks)* Lady Bao, you don't dress like someone who owns this hairpin. Where did you get this hairpin?

*Lady Bao:* *(speaks)* Your Highness, this hairpin belongs to my younger sister. She asked me to sell it for her on her behalf. Fok Siu Yuk had married a talented scholar who has gone for three years without any news. Last month, my younger sister helped her find another husband, and Fok Siu Yuk was married again. That's why this hairpin is being sold.\

*Lei Yik:* *(fell from the chair, shouts)* Siu Yuk ... Siu Yuk ...

*Marshal Lou:* *(speaks)* Lady Bao, that Siu Yuk and Colonel Lei have had some tangled affairs. This jade pin will stay here. You may leave now.

*Lady Bao:* *(pretends to be extremely frightened)* The old lady is damned. Colonel Lei, please forgive my sin. *(Exits promptly)*

*(Lei Yik holds the pin.)*

*(Ha Hing wants repeatedly to remind Lei Yik but is yelled to stop by Marshal Lou.)*

*Lei Yik:* *(speaks)* Siu Yuk ... you ... you are such a heart-breaker.  
*(Sings)* The one who picked the hairpin has returned with the night rain.  
The one who dropped the hairpin has gone with the clouds.  
It's only one month late.  
My regret can never be recovered.  
Eight thousand miles of dreams apart.  
Willows scattered alongside the Baling Bridge.  
As if seeing my lover in dream,

waving to welcome me home.  
But instead I'm shocked to see this hairpin seller.  
The hairpin is still intact, but love has already broken.  
Old romance has already been destroyed before it's renewed.  
Even if you don't remember the vow of love in the garden;  
Even if you don't recall the broken willow at the bridgehead;  
Even if you don't think of our shattered cup at Baling,  
You should still be reminded of the tearful poem by the candles;  
You should still tender thoughts of our intimate moments.  
Also is there the vow of love,  
That is printed on the silk.

*(Sings)* The hairpin is still here, but love has died; I came back for nothing.  
Our parting is actually forever; love is difficult to sustain.  
If I ever return to the bridge of Weicheng, I would cover my eyes up,  
For the fear that I would recall a beautiful woman dropping her hairpin.

*(Sobs and sings)* I cling to the remaining fragrance on our wedding pillows.  
Yet you have gone and the bed is empty; it's hard for me to be reminiscent.  
*(Shouts Siu Yuk's name at the hairpin.)*

*Marshal Lou:* *(smiles and walks towards him, speaks)* Sap Long, why take it so seriously?  
Mistresses are just like roadside wild flowers. Why are you so obsessed with her?

*Lei Yik:* *(weeps and speaks)* My kind teacher, I've been gone for three years without any news. Siu Yuk's marrying someone else, only trying to rid herself of this grief of separation.

*Marshal Lou:* *(smiles and speaks)* Sap Long, a man of real worth never has to worry about having no wife. Let's use this purple hairpin to match you instead with my little daughter. See, Ha Hing will be the matchmaker. We'll pick an auspicious date and time to hold the wedding. *(Stares at Ha Hing with an angry look, and mumbles.)*

*(Ha Hing, uncertain how to react, forces a bitter smile and awkwardly nods to Lei Yik.)*

*Lei Yik:* *(speaks)* Oh, Ha Hing as the match-maker. *(Weeps and speaks)* Ha Hing, Ha Hing, with mercy and gratitude, three of us swore an oath to good friends like the pine, the bamboo, and the plum in the winter. I couldn't expect ruthlessness of you. It's said that, if you owe someone a cent, the debt remains if you don't pay it back; if you are burdened down with debt, you wouldn't feel relieved if you don't return pay it off. *(Cries harder)* Ha Hing, you're still young, and I don't blame you. Fortunately, Wan Ming isn't here today. Otherwise, you would be rebuked in the cause of justice.

*(Ha Hing bows and thanks Marshal Lou repeatedly, then turns his back to Marshal Lou and knocks on his chest.)*

*Marshal Lou: (sings)* Today this hairpin fails you, the officer.  
But it's not the same as Sima Xiangru failing his mistress of Maoling.  
If the money you lent is not returned,  
Then you would be heart broken.  
If you owe me a favor,  
To return it you need to marry my daughter.  
*(Look askance at Ha Hing with anger, forcing him to be the match-maker.)*

*(Lei Yik ponders, closes his eyes.)*

*Ha Hing: (Walks around Lei Yik, sobs and sings)*  
Sending a marriage proposal to make him the son-in-law,  
Who could bear such responsibility?  
I need to keep the official's cap to pay tribute to my mother.  
But I should also take pity on my old friend. What a dilemma!  
Don't be fearless because you are lovesick.  
Marshal Lou has the power to dictate your destiny.  
The strings were broken by a sword.  
Brother, I hope you just put on new strings and play it with tears.

*(Two maidservants accompany Yin Jing to go on the stage from the left side, watching carefully from behind the screen.)*

*Lei Yik: (recites)* Boya had broken this zither.  
And it's difficult to put new strings on a broken zither.  
*(Sings)* I lament for the love bygone.  
Waiting secretly for the purple hairpin, with tears and hopelessness.  
Kneeling before the Heavenly God, I tell him about my love.  
Broken from my love, it's too painful to live.  
The parted swallow never waited for me to return; I weep.  
Let me swallow the hairpin to break apart the jade.  
Love has subsided;  
I decided to die in sacrifice for love.  
To be accomplished with mortal eyes.  
*(Set to swallow the hairpin.)*

*(Ha Hing kneels on both knees and holds Lei Yik's hand tightly.)*

*Marshal Lou: (strokes his beard angrily, speaks)* Lei Gwan Yu, don't try to threaten me by swallowing the hairpin. In fact, you have long kept your intent to subvert the

court. Marrying my daughter would make it inconvenient for you to launch your plan. Isn't it true?

*Lei Yik:* *(shocked, speaks)* My kind teacher, marriage is minor matter compared to moral integrity. Please do not accuse me with false wrongdoings and leave me destroyed by the punishment of state law.

*Marshal Lou:* *(picks up the poem and speaks angrily)* Sap Long, open your doggy eyes and see who wrote this poem?

*(Sings)* With utmost anger,  
Let me reveal your deceitful conspiracy.  
A high mirror scares the thief's gut.  
A fox with an exposed tail cannot escape easily.  
Reluctant to be advanced in career.  
A subversion on purpose.  
This is irrefutable evidence of treason.  
Let me, the old master, present this to His Majesty for his judgment.

*Lei Yik:* *(extremely anxious, with tears running down and speaks)* My kind teacher, my kind teacher! The punishment of treason can cost lives of nine generations. How could I have the heart to let my aged parents suffer? My kind teacher, please spare our lives.

*Marshal Lou:* *(speaks, with a plain face)* I, the old master, has never offered you my gratitude. Kind teacher, I cannot bear the title "kind teacher." Tomorrow morning when the court starts, I'll handle this case according to the law. Send our guest off.

*Ha Hing:* *(steps forward to beg, speaks)* My revered teacher, please pardon his life *(repeats)*.

*Marshal Lou:* *(speaks, sarcastically)* First, we're not families. Second, we're not relatives. It doesn't pay to shelter you for wrongdoing.

*Lei Yik:* *(sings)* I'm willing to leave my wife,  
Realizing the difficulty for a returned swan, once captured, to escape.  
Surviving the misfortune, I'm afraid to see candlelight.  
Please pardon me. Ah! I'll bow to you a hundred times.

*Marshal Lou:* *(laughingly, speaks)* Sap Long, I, the old master, value talented people. Now you regret your wrongdoing. I can take it or leave it. From now on, you stay at the villa of the Flower Tower here at the Marshal's residence. Without my permission, you may not leave there. Now Yin Jing is waiting to see you at the

Flower Tower. Please don't let her wait for you anxiously in the terrace, expecting the flautist nights and days.

*Lei Yik:* *(sobbing and shaking his head in disapproval, speaks)* Kind teacher, why do you force me to go to the terrace with tears?

*Marshal Lou:* *(speaks)* Chau Ho, Heung Guk, bring your master to the Flower Tower to meet with the lady. *(The two maidservants escort Lei Yik walking towards the left side. Ging Sin comes onto the stage from the left side and runs into Lei Yik.)*

*Ging Sin:* *(speaks)* Respect to the honorable marshal. All jewelries and accessories have been properly repaired.

*Marshal Lou:* *(speaks)* Alright. Go pay respect to Lei Yik the bridegroom, my fifth son-in-law.

*Ging Sin:* *(speaks)* Respect to the fifth son-in-law of the honorable marshal.

*Marshal Lou:* *(speaks)* Servants, come and bring Mr. Hau to the bursar and pay him ninety thousand guan for the hairpin. Give him another three thousand as reward.

*Ging Sin:* *(speaks)* Thank you, honorable marshal.

*Ha Hing:* *(speaks)* Kind teacher, may I make a trip to Ci'en Temple with Sap Long? Back then the three of us best friends were in Chang'an, Master Mo Seung of the temple would take care of us at our disappointment. He was the one with sympathy.

*Marshal Lou:* *(speaks)* Not permitted.

*Lei Yik:* *(speaks)* Now I've entered the official career. If I do not offer my gratitude to the master, I'm worried that people would chit chat at street corners and alleys.

*Marshal Lou:* *(speaks, with a cunning smile)* Alright then. Saau Yi, go immediately to reserve a flower-seeing banquet at Ci'en Temple. Military officers, hold the white sticks and follow every step of the bridegroom when he is enjoying the flowers. If anyone dares to mention Fok Siu Yuk, kill him with the clubs.

*Military officers:* *(speak)* Understood.

*Lei Yik:* *(sings)* What a pitiful imprisoned swallow.  
Let me hide the purple hairpin under the sleeve.

*[a few lines skipped]*

Marshal Lou: (speaks) Come here Wong Saau Yi. From now on, watch every step and movement of the Fifth Master. If anyone dares to mention Fok Siu Yuk, kill him with the clubs.

Marshal Lou: (speaks) Set up the banquet at the rear hall (Leaves from the left)

Siu Yuk: (waking up, sings) Not seeing the goose in my dream,  
I lean on the balcony with tears.  
(Shouts) Wun Sa, Wun San.

Wun Sa: (speaks) Lady.

Siu Yuk: (speaks) I just dreamed of a big fellow wearing in yellow. He looked like an official, but he's not an official. He looked like a warrior, but he's not a warrior. He gave me a pair of colorful shoes. (Forces a bitter smile) Shoes come in pairs, and the word "shoe" is pronounced the same as "united." I believe the day will come when Sap Long and I are reunited.

Wun Sa: (speaks) No wonder the yellow-dress man came to your dream; he's a prophet. The Gods must be rewarding you for your service over the last three years.

Siu Yuk: (sighs and sings) Regret is living between depression and sickness for three years.  
I only hope that the grace of the Gods will protect lovers,  
And flowers opened after misfortune will look splendid.

(Speaks) Wun Sa, go look at the account book and see how much donation I still owe the temples. After the purple hairpin is sold, we should spend the money to thank the Gods.

Ging Sin: (enters and speaks) Respect to princess.

Siu Yuk: (speaks) Uncle Hau, has the purple hairpin been sold?

Ging Sin: (speaks) If the purple hairpin hadn't been sold, how would there be so much money? Marshal Lou's fifth daughter is about to be married, and he bought the hairpin for her wedding.

Siu Yuk: (speaks, with regrets) Oh, also for wedding.

Wun Sa: (asks, curiously) Who is the lucky one to marry Lou's fifth daughter?

Ging Sin: (blurts out) His son-in-law is Colonel Lei Yik.

Siu Yuk: (speaks) What? Colonel Lei Yik. Did you see his son-in-law?

*Ging Sin:* (speaks) I did. I did. He has a decent disposition, just like Pan An. He has a perfect figure, just like Song Yu. I eavesdropped on the conversations of maidservants in the West Chamber. They gossiped that he's originally from Longxi and has just returned from the frontier.

*(Siu Yuk is shocked like thunderstruck and spits blood.)*

*(Wun Sa shouts lady.)*

*Ging Sin:* (shocked and speaks) I should be damned. I, old Hau, am to leave now. (Exits.)

*Wun Sa:* (sobs and speaks) Lady,

*Siu Yuk:* (sings) I can't believe this jade hairpin, once used to hold my hair,  
Is now to hold his new spouse's hair.  
I swear I'll break into the residence to question Sap Long,  
To see if he's already tired of me, the sick, old, and impoverished.

*(Speaks) Wun Sa, go to Marshal Lou's residence with me.*

*Wun Sa:* (tries to stop her and speaks) Alas, lady, please don't go.

*Siu Yuk:* (insists) Go! Go! (Exit *Siu Yuk* and *Wun Sa*.)

*(The gatekeeper of Marshal's residence enters and speaks):*

Servants safeguarding the marshal's gate are of a higher rank than Rank Four of imperial officials. As ordered by the marshal, Colonel Lei is to be married into the Lou's family. Extreme attention should be paid to guard against any news about Fok Siu Yuk.

*(Siu Yuk and Wun Sa rush to enter.)*

*Siu Yuk:* (steps forward and speaks) Brother officer, could you please report that there're visitors?

*Wong Saau Yi:* (speaks) Report your name.

*Siu Yuk:* (speaks) This is Fok Siu Yuk reporting.

*Wong Saau Yi:* (speaks) Pfui! (Pushes away *Siu Yuk*, speaks) Come! Block the gate!

*Siu Yuk:* (sings) The gate is closed for the grieved soul, who,  
Sick and panting, couldn't knock the gate with the bronze rings.  
Enraged now, I become mad.



Life or death, I won't flinch.  
(Try to rush into the gate.)

*Wun Sa:* (holds *Siu Yuk* back and speaks) It's been said that, women are indulged in wishful love, while men are fickle lovers. Even if you breach the guards and see *Sap Long*, you'd be lucky if *Sap Long* recognizes you. But what if he doesn't and humiliate you? When you're married, there's no ceremony, wedding or marriage certificate. Alas, even if you loved his talent so much that you married yourself off to him, you still shouldn't have slept with him right the way on that night.

(*Siu Yuk* is terrified word after word, cannot stand, and collapses.)

*Wun Sa:* (screams, with sorrow) Lady, lady, please take care of yourself.  
(Sings) Yearning for an old lover who's has already had a new lover.  
Destroyed by the lost romance.

## ACT 5

### Scene 1

#### Meeting Hero before Flowers

(Six monks dressed in yellow gowns lining up beside a statue of Buddha with palms together.)

(Curtain rises)

*Master Mo Seung:* (Enters, wearing saffron robe and holding a Buddhist cane, and speaks):  
Peonies compete in the sacred land. It's difficult for monks to have mundane emotions. I, the poor monk, am *Master Mo Seung* of *Ci'en Temple*. Today *Magistrate Wai* holds a banquet for *Colonel Lei* and invites him also to enjoy the peonies. He reserved a table in the West Hall, and the table is marked by a golden flower. My protégés, serve the newly appointed with care.  
(Sits down next to the Buddha statue.)

(Four alien servants, dressed in white, hold wine and carry bows under their arms. Eight enchantresses bear the mouth organ and bamboo flute, and pluck the zither. One alien servant, dressed in black, brings a horse. One young alien servant enters first with wine pot.)

*Fellow in Yellow:* (enters, wearing a horse-riding gown, riding a horse, carrying a sword, sings)  
From the heaven comes a man dressed in yellow,  
To privately monitor the injustice of the human world.  
With a warm heart, he voices against injustice.  
With cold eyes, he watches over the entire world.

*(Enters the temple, turns back to speaks to the young alien servant outside the temple)* Alien servant, bring the exceedingly strong wine to the banquet table in the West Hall.

*Master Mo Seung: (gravely shocked, palms put together, and speaks)* Benefactor, today the West Hall is reserved for Magistrate Wai to host a banquet for newly appointed officer Colonel Lei to enjoy the peonies. The table is marked with a gold flower. Benefactor, please help yourself in the South Hall.

*Fellow in Yellow: (speaks)* The new officer Colonel Lei.

*Master Mo Seung: (speaks)* He's Marshal Lou's fifth son-in-law.

*Fellow in Yellow: (speaks again)* What is the reputation of that colonel in Chang'an?

*Master Mo Seung: (sighs and speaks)* Monks, removed from worldly affairs, do not meddle in others' business. Amitābhaḥ.

*Fellow in Yellow: (yells forthrightly)* Tell me about it!

*Master Mo Seung: (speaks)* Colonel Lei ranked first in the Imperial Exam. His talents top the world. Unfortunately he lacks morality in private life.

*Fellow in Yellow: (speaks)* What is meant by lacking morality in private life?

*Master Mo Seung: (speaks, in a righteous manner)* Colonel Lei divorced his ex-wife and was married into Marshal Lou's family. Poor Fok Siu Yuk is now sick in her empty house. People who heard even the slightest of this in Chang'an are sympathetic of Siu Yuk's profound love and enraged for Lei Yik the fickle lover.

*Fellow in Yellow: (speaks)* Oh, boiling the green, cooking the red, messing with a girl and then dumping her—this is the primary misdeed in the human world. Why don't I kill the heart-breaker Colonel Lei with one stroke of sword? Wouldn't this make Fok Siu Yuk a widow for life? Alas! Love and destiny, each has its own accounts. Who cares?

*(Sings)* It's only that I'm tender towards the tree and don't want to cut it.

*(Withdraws the sword.)*

I love the flower. That's why I need to keep a shelter for it.

Sunny days come not without cloud and wind.

I shouldn't care about that so as not to diminish my passion for the spring.

*(Speaks)* Come, alien servants! Bring some fine wine to the banquet table of the South Hall. Let me enjoy the peonies first and I'll come back for the wine. You may head out now and get yourselves ready.

*(The courtesans bring the wine to a side table next to the fence on the right hand of the stage, and exits immediately with other servants.)*

*(Fellow in Yellow shakes his head, sighs, and exit from the right-hand corner of the white screen.)*

*(Enter Siu Yuk and Wun Sa.) (Wun Sa, chasing after Siu Yuk, calls Siu Yuk)*

*Siu Yuk:* *(sings)* The swallow hairpin is set on a new bride's hair.  
Only leaving the old lover to bear such bitterness.  
I'm ready to be tortured by sickness,  
I've already found a graveyard to bury off the rest of my miserable life.

*Wun Sa:* *(speaks)* Lady, why don't you take a rest here? Let me beg for a bowl of ginger soup from the Buddhist master to keep you warm and prevent you from throwing up.

*Siu Yuk:* *(speaks)* Wun Sa, where're we now?

*Wun Sa:* *(speaks)* Lady, we're at Ci'en Temple.

*Siu Yuk:* *(speaks)* Ci'en Temple. Wun Sa, I've recently prayed to the Heavenly Mother and the Bodhisattva. How could I ignore the Buddha? Let me ask for help from the Buddha. *(Enters the temple pleasantly.)*

*Siu Yuk:* *(kneels down before the Buddha, sobs and speaks)* Buddha, please help me!  
Buddha, please help me!

*(Sings)* Knocking my head on the ground to pray to the Buddha.  
Confessing my sad stories.  
Three years after, and the goose who'd been sent to the frontier was back,  
Only to marry a new wife.  
I, the young wife, is heartbroken.  
The fallen beauty sobs for her poor life.  
Broken mirrors couldn't be mended.  
A disjointed hairpin is hard to be recombined.  
My Buddha, I beg for you epiphany.  
Wake the wanderer up and bring him back.

*Buddhist Master:* *(speaks)* Protégé, please strike the bell and drum.

*(Siu Yuk lights the incense.)*

*Buddhist Master: (speaks)* Please offer.

*Siu Yuk: (speaks)* Wun Sa, help me put down thirty thousand guan as incense money. Faithful woman Cheng pays respect.

*(looks up and sees Fellow in Yellow. She appears to have realized something, shows the dream with clandestine hand gestures and eye-sights.)*

*(Wun Sa reluctantly signs the fortune. After paying the money, she returns to where she was, and can't help crying.)*

*Fellow in Yellow: (speaks)* Young maid, it's rewarding to get your fortune in a temple. Why're you crying?

*Wun Sa: (cries out and speaks)* My lady has lost her well-being for love. She met an unfaithful lover. She sold her wedding hairpin, and was left with only ninety thousand guans. Then she gave thirty thousand to the Heavenly Mother, thirty thousand to the Bodhisattva, and now the last thirty thousand to the Buddha. She wouldn't have any left to even buy a coffin if she died.

*Fellow in Yellow: (takes the money back from the Buddhist Master and speaks)* Madam, offerings to the Buddha should be made from surplus money of the believers. Your family doesn't have any saving, and you look sick. Why don't you save the money for your health? *(Returns the money.)*

*Siu Yuk: (sobs and, in refusal, speaks)* Alas, with all the money spent, I can't even buy my unfaithful husband back. I only have this small amount left. If I didn't offer it to the Buddha, who else could help me to see my husband for one last time to bid farewell? *(Appears to be throwing up and fainting.)*

*(Fellow in Yellow feels miserable for Siu Yuk.)*

*Fellow in Yellow: (tosses the money on the side table and speaks to himself)* How come there are countless stories of heartbreakers in the world?

*(Facing Siu Yuk, sings)*

It is rare to see saints in love in the world.

Most lovers are heartbreakers with bad reputation.

Siu Yuk from the Fok family has mistaken fish eyes for pearls.

The precious jade of Kunshan is being entrusted to the floating lotus.

The grieved woman here in this temple has the same wounded fate as her.

Who's hurt more? Who's hurt less?

I'm sorry that I don't have a cure for lovesickness.  
But perhaps I can retie the broken threads.

*(Gets a glass of wine, speaks)* Madam, who is your unfaithful lover? Tell me now, so that I can hear the cold story while drinking the warm wine, and to gaze at the romance with indifferent eyes.

*Siu Yuk:* *(talks to herself)* Alright—to hear the cold story while drinking warm wine, and to gaze at the romance with indifferent eyes. *(Sobs)* The husband is unfaithful. But the wife's love is firm as gold. I didn't intend to reveal his name for him to be mocked at.

*(Fellow in Yellow urges her to say his name.)*

*Siu Yuk:* *(faces stage front, speaks)* But how would I know that the person dressed in yellow robe, who appeared in my dreams, is now here? What he said is extraordinary. He must be an extraordinary person. *(Speaks)* Allow me to use my sorrowful stories to accompany you drinking three glasses of wine. Please listen.

*Fellow in Yellow: (speaks) Madam, please.*

*Siu Yuk:* *(sings)* Meeting by chance,  
I longed for his everlasting love.  
Surviving the misfortune,  
I was hurt by his merciless.  
You asked for my name? It's Fok Siu Yuk.  
The sorrowful dream has been awakened.  
Lei Sap Long has forsaken me and pursued Yin Jing.

*Fellow in Yellow: (shocked at hearing her name Fok Siu Yuk, drops his glass, and speaks)* What? You're Fok Siu Yuk? How come when you signed off on the fortune, you put down Cheng as your family name? But how come all in a sudden your family name becomes Fok? You must be lying. *(Shakes his sleeves)*

*Siu Yuk:* *(speaks)* Alas, I, an unworthy woman, am the daughter of Fok the king. After all the misfortunes, I was forced to adopt my mother's maiden name.

*(Continues singing)*

I cry for my mother. She's like a flower encountering strong wind.  
She came from a modest background.  
When the family collapsed, the husband's family name is gone as well.  
She was abandoned, and would never be recognized.

*Fellow in Yellow: (speaks)* Family members of Prince Fok should not deny their family relations.  
Siu Yuk, how did you meet Sap Long?

*Siu Yuk: (continues to sing)*  
Love and hatred are destined by fate.  
Lovable is how he found my hairpin and fell for me.  
Respectable is his intelligence.  
We were hastily married without any dowry. (*Embarrassed.*)  
Relying on my handsome husband my mother's wishes of having a son-in-law  
has been fulfilled.  
Sap Long was married to the Fok family to honour my mother's final years.

*Fellow in Yellow: (speaks)* Siu Yuk, if he loves you and you love him—both at first sight—then  
why did you separate so easily?

*Siu Yuk: (continues singing)* Things can change all of a sudden.  
He's ordered to serve on the frontier.  
He's enlisted in the army and embarked on the long journey.

*Fellow in Yellow: (speaks)* How long has he been gone?

*Siu Yuk: (continues singing)* Alas, he's been gone for two autumns followed by one spring.

*Fellow in Yellow: (speaks)* Well, geese from the frontier had returned twice to announce the  
beginning of autumn, after that spring came and they returned to the snowed  
mountains on the frontier. (*Speaks*) Two autumns and one spring make three  
years. Has he sent any letters back?

*Siu Yuk: (sobs and continues singing)*  
Speaking of letters, I longed and longed, but the wild geese never brought me  
any word. Even the sky mourns over the sound of the wild geese.

*Fellow in Yellow: (pounds on the table and speaks)* Hey, Sap Long has been unfaithful in the first  
place. Siu Yuk, how has the three years been for you?

*Siu Yuk: (weeps and continues singing)*  
Lonely by day; lonely by night.  
After he's gone, day and night, I've been  
Looking at my image in the mirror and  
Living with the medicine pot, the only thing left in this forsaken home.  
My belongings have all been pawned.  
Hearing my mother's sobbing is unbearable.

*Fellow in Yellow: (feels sad after hearing the story, speaks)* Slow down, slow down. You're crying so hard. I couldn't hear what you're saying. Siu Yuk, where is your hometown?

*Siu Yuk: (continues singing)* I'm originally from a noble family in Luoyang. For many years, we've lived in an alley by the Shengye Quarter in Chang'an.

*Fellow in Yellow: (speaks)* You've lived in Chang'an for a long time. Then who is Lei Sap Long?

*Siu Yuk: (continues singing)*  
He is a scholar awarded the second imperial rank. He's a talent from Longxi, and looks as good as the handsome Pan An.

*Fellow in Yellow: (speaks)* So he is a scholar awarded the second imperial rank. Where does he live after he returned?

*Siu Yuk: (continues singing)* The new boudoir at Marshal Lou's residence is where the couple is courting. Marshal Lou has power and he is arrogant.

*Fellow in Yellow: (speaks, with anger)* Siu Yuk, Siu Yuk, you are from Chang'an, and he's from Longxi. Chang'an and Longxi are three thousand miles apart. How did you meet each other?

*Siu Yuk: (sings)* It's said that with love one can find each other despite the distance.

*Fellow in Yellow: (speaks)* Now you live by the Shengye Quarter, and he lives at Marshal Lou's residence. Shengye Quarter is only one block away from Marshal Lou's residence. Why doesn't he come to meet you?

*Siu Yuk: (cries and sings)* This is exactly what is meant by the saying that without love, You don't find each other even met face-to-face.

*(Enraged and sings)* Never have I, the humble wife, made a mistake.  
Blame only on me for triggering the karma.  
Grudge only on his fickleness.  
I'm afraid to face my kind mother, who has taken care of me while I was sick.  
When she asked about the ungrateful man,  
I shut my ears and closed my eyes.

*Fellow in Yellow: (enraged and speaks)* This is outrageous!  
*(Sings)* If my precious sword doesn't take his life,  
The three years of love of this forlorn wife will not be consoled.  
When will he returned the debt of love?  
Nothing can change his sissy character.  
*(Kicks the robe and straddles.)*

*Siu Yuk: (kneels, grabs the robe, and sings) My tragic life is like morning dew,  
Which hopes to lie on a piece of lotus leaf.  
Yet if a breezy wind sweeps,  
The dew will drop, the leaf will sink, and both will vanish.*

*(Enters Wun Sa, serving the medicine to Siu Yuk, and Siu Yuk shakes her head.)*

*Fellow in Yellow: (looks ghastly, speaks) Alas! No wonder it's said that dewdrops feels pity for falling leaves. No falling leaves would feel pity for dewdrops. Siu Yuk, seeing that you still love him so much, I have much respect. Come over, seeing that you are such in love. I have nothing decent to show my respect. Come over, here I have a piece of gold for you. Please go home immediately, burn silver candles, and wait for my visit tonight.*

*(Wun Sa, seeing the piece of gold, wants to take it.)*

*Siu Yuk: (stops Wun Sa with eye gesture, forces a bitter smile) Gentleman, my home is no longer the same one in the past. After Sap Long left, there's been no dew and flowers have withered; there's been no rain and grass has ceased to grow. There's no even the music of silk and bamboo instruments. How would there be atmosphere to entertain guests? (Sobs.)*

*Fellow in Yellow: (sighs and speaks) Siu Yuk, this is just a small amount of money. Please take it. I do not mean to come over to get drunk and tender towards women. I only want to write a story about the forsaken purple hairpin. Although the stage is dark, the emotion should be there to set the scene. (Presents the piece of gold again.)*

*Siu Yuk: (further feels Fellow in Yellow is extraordinary, speaks) The forsaken purple hairpin.*

*Wun Sa: (speaks) If lady doesn't want it, let me, Wun Sa, take it. Our home is deserted, but we still have ink and brush. Let's hope the wine would add to your inspiration. Drunken eyes would better recognize the cycle of life. (Takes the piece of gold and helps Siu Yuk up, speaks) Lady, let me help you go back.*

*Siu Yuk: (sadly, walks two steps and turns her head, speaks) Generous man, please leave me your name, so that I, the wretched woman, can note down your generosity.*

*Fellow in Yellow: (laughs and speaks) Yeh, Siu Yuk. It's said that human beings have no inborn character, why care about names? Beautiful names are not for me, why leave any? Anonymous visitors are the only kind-hearted ones. This is too much to ask.*



*Siu Yuk: (nods slightly, walks several steps and recalls something, rushes back to Fellow in Yellow and sings) Please don't tell anyone about my sorrow.  
For fear that it might hurt my husband's future.  
If you are to write a book about the misfortune of the forsaken purple hairpin,  
Then please avoid mentioning the heartbreaker's name.*

*Fellow in Yellow: (deeply sympathizes, weeps, and speaks) Yes, I understand it.*

*(Exit Wun Sa holding Siu Yuk.)*

*(Fellow in Yellow, holding the wine cup, turns his back on stage.)*

*(Enter eight military generals of Marshal Lou's residence holding white stick and Wong Saau Yi on stage left.)*

*(Enter Ha Hing accompanying Lei Yik, who holds the hairpin and plays with it.)*

*Lei Yik: (sings) Before me is a wedding hairpin,  
Sold after three years of separation.  
Fearing the power of Marshal Lou,  
I was forced to give up my love for Madam Fok.  
On the top of the hairpin is wedding sign of the "double happiness."  
On the bottom are intertwining red threads.  
The purple jade leaves traces of grief on the hairpin.  
Behind the hairpin, it's fading fragrance.  
(Plays with the hairpin, turns his head and sees Wong Saau Yi keeping an eye on him, then hides the hairpin.)*

*Ha Hing: (seeing what happens, sighs, and sings)  
Enjoying the flower, I wish to relay the message from her.  
Yet my lack of courage forbids me to mention her name.  
Let me make use of the flowers to get his attention.  
Holding my tears I go ahead.  
(Speaks) Gwan Yu, please have a seat.*

*Lei Yik: (speaks) Ha Hing, please have a seat. (The two sit down in East Chamber.)*

*(Lei Yik receives the cup and frowns over the flowers.)*

*(Fellow in Yellow fixing his eyes on them.)*

*Ha Hing: (takes the cup and speaks) Gwan Yu, did you see the purple peony outside the East Corridor? The flower is plain yet fragrant. What a pity that no one cares about it. Such a befallen precious flower, how could there not be a poem for it?*

*(Lei Yik gets what he means and feels sorry.)*

*Ha Hing:*       *(speaks)* This way, Gwan Yu, please start to give the flower a poem.

*Lei Yik:*       *(speaks)* Ha ... Ha Hing, please go ahead.

*Ha Hing:*       *(smiles, takes the cup and recites)*  
Little [**Siu**] praise for the purple peony at Ci'en Temple.  
Jade [**Yuk**] is what it is like, pure and clear, waiting for someone to return.  
**Never** has she received a raindrop from the kind of the sky.  
**Married** to the gate of Zen only to be accompanied by paintings and fence.

*Lei Yik:*       *(praises and speaks)* What a good poem. What a good poem. "Little praise for the purple peony at Ci'en Temple." Elegant is the word "little" [Siu]. "Jade [Yuk] is what it is like, pure and clear, waiting for someone to return." (*Accelerates*) The word "jade" connects well. "Never has she received a raindrop from the kind of the sky. Married to the gate of Zen only to be accompanied by paintings and fence." (*Drum heard*) Wait, the phrase "Siu Yuk Never Married" is etched in the first word of each of the four lines in this poem by Ha Hing. Lady Pao selling the hairpin—it must be Marshal Lou's trick to set me up for the marriage. Let me take this opportunity to compose a poem to correspond to Ha Hing's to ask about the whereabouts of my wife in order to meet her later.

*(Grabs Ha Hing and sings quietly)*  
This new poem dawns on the ear of a sad person.  
The implication is clear even without further explanation.  
My heart is broken by the first word of each line.  
Please tell me the misfortune in order for me to get inspired.

*Ha Hing:*       *(on an impulse, sings)* That Fok family,

*(Wong Saau Yi shouts out to the captains, who stumped on the floor with the stick altogether)*

*Ha Hing:*       *(changes his wording and sings)*  
Everyone cares only for the snow in front of their home, Siu Yuk.

*(Wong Saau Yi shouts again and captains were about to hit)*

*Ha Hing:*       *(frightened, forces a bitter smile to Wong Saau Yi, sings)*  
I only asked him ... to care less for Siu Yuk, move forward with life, shut his mouth like a winter cicada, and meditate like an old monk. (*Hides away.*)

*(Lei Yik and Ha Hing facing each other, sigh together.)*

*Fellow in Yellow: (laughs wildly and speaks)* Ha ha, the new wife is as treasure; the ex-wife is like enemy. Almost running into each other, yet you play strangers. If it's not a painful lovesick, why sighs?

*(Lei Yik, hearing the voice, is shocked.)*

*Fellow in Yellow: (speaks)* May I ask if this groom is Colonel Lei Yik?

*Lei Yik: (speaks)* I, humble person, am.

*Fellow in Yellow: (speaks)* My family is originally from Shandong. We have extended family members at the imperial court. I have always admired you. With this precious opportunity, would you mind visiting my poor house, which is not far from here, and have a drink?

*Wong Saau Yi: (speaks)* No way! Marshal Lou has commanded that, without permission, Colonel Lei may not leave alone. Otherwise he'd be beaten to death.

*Fellow in Yellow: (sings)*

Let me smash this slave's bones.

*(Beats away Wong Saau Yi and takes his sword to expel the soldiers, sings)*

Hurt the cowards, I sympathize not.

*(The soldiers are expelled and run away as crooks.)*

*(Wong Saau Yi hides at a hidden corner and watches sneakily.)*

*Fellow in Yellow: (puts the sword back and sings)* Sap Long,  
Tonight, for whom, the new moon, up in the tip of the tree, shines?  
You turn down someone who comes from a long mile; it's rude.

*Lei Yik: (fearing Fellow in Yellow's daring gesture, speaks)*  
The moon is already up. Let's set another date for the gathering.

*Fellow in Yellow: (speaks)* Appointments may be rescheduled. But commitments may not be reverted. Sap Long, come with me, quick! *(Drags Lei Yik.)*

*(Ha Hing follows Lei Yik closely. Wong Saau Yi follows Ha Hing closely.)*

*Lei Yik: (looks up and speaks)* Fellow in Yellow, isn't it Shengye Quarter right over here?

*Fellow in Yellow: (laughs and speaks)* Sap Long has good eyes. Yes, this is Shengye Quarter.

*Lei Yik: (shocked and embarrassed) Oh!  
(Looks down and appears unwilling to go forward.)*

*Fellow in Yellow: (enraged and speaks) Are there wolves in the Shengye Quarter?*

*Lei Yik: (frightened and speaks) No, there's no wolf.*

*Fellow in Yellow: (further questions) Are there tigers there?*

*Lei Yik: (speaks) No, there's no tiger.*

*Ha Hing: (runs forward to appeal for Sap Long and speaks) Fellow in Yellow, even if there's no wolf or tiger, Sap Long still has reasons to fear.*

*Fellow in Yellow: (enraged, speaks) Nonsense!*

*(sings) When will all past and present revenges come to an end, can anyone tell?  
It's said that the great poet Han Hong never disappointed his courtesan's love.  
Sap Long should also keep his promise of love.  
The encounter sparked by the purple hairpin  
Is destined in the first place.  
How can you let the willow fall without a sound?  
For whom has Siu Yuk fallen sick?  
For your love, she pounds medicine to survive.  
If you care for the flower, you should feel sorrowful for the fallen petals. How  
can you fall in love with a new love and dump the old wife?*

*Lei Yik: (sighs and sings) Alas, Heaven has always envied those obsessed with love.  
Who cares to marry to benefit from the honor of the spouse?  
The sorrowful Cowboy and the Spinning Maid are separated by the galaxy,  
It's only because the Marshal controls over our life and death.*

*Fellow in Yellow: (getting impatient, speaks) Hey!  
(Sings) You planted the seed of love in the first place.  
You can't just fall in love with someone else in difficult situations.  
You fear the unbeatable power of the court,  
But don't you also fear my three-foot sword may take your life!*

*Lei Yik: (hesitant, wants to explain) Well ...*

*Fellow in Yellow: (speaks) Sap Long, spare your nonsense. Come with me, quick!  
(Drags Lei Yik to enter the Fok house.)*

*Ha Hing:* (shocked, speaks) Alas, Sap Long returns to old home tonight. I'm afraid that things will get worse afterwards. I need to follow him closely to take care of him.  
(Hopes to follow.)

*Wong Saau Yi:* (yells and speaks) General Wai, why don't you follow me back to Marshal Lou's residence? What are you doing stealthily here?

*Ha Hing:* (gives a sigh and sings) As miserable as a bird trapped in cage,  
I'm at his disposal and can only swallow the humiliation.  
(Exits with Wong Saau Yi.)

*Curtain*

## **Scene 2** **Reunion of Sword and Hairpin**

*Scene changed to chamber of Siu Yuk's sickbed. In the chamber, on stage right, Siu Yuk lies beside a cage over a brazier sleeping on her sickbed. Wun Sa bends down beside her bed and sobs. Underneath the chamber and facing the stage are one specially made side table and two small chairs. On the side table are burning bright candles, fruits, and wine cups. Near the right corner is a tiny stove for medicine. Madam Fok (looks extremely disappointed and worn-out) is seated on the floor preparing medicine. Sound of weeping are heard from time to time. Swirling smoke from the stove is like hazy fog from afar, painting a heartbreaking scene.*

*Lei Yik:* (sings) Sorrow and hatred are all over.

*(Enters Fellow in Yellow dragging Lei Yik.)*

*Lei Yik:* (in a begging tone, sings)  
Fellow in Yellow is yet to realize the danger of sympathy.  
Poor me—I'm like a trapped goose.  
An unfaithful person, Gwan Yu is not.  
Thousands of sorrows waiting to be revealed.

*Fellow in Yellow:* (speaks) Nonsense! First, I don't want to hear words of oblivion. Second, I don't want to hear words from the unfaithful. For husband and wife by the first marriage, a simple apology is enough.  
(Sings) She has been sick and learning against the fence yearning for you.  
Just like a falling flower fearing for night breeze.  
Sap Long, wait a little while before the courtyard.  
Let me first bring the good news to the sick phoenix.  
(Steps inside, drenched in the smoke of medicine, covers his nose and speaks)  
Miserable! Miserable is the deserted courtyard, left only with smell of medicine.

*(Madam Fok weeps gently.)*

Fellow in Yellow: *(recites)* Beside the medicine pot sits a white-haired old lady.  
*(Speaks)* My respect to you, madam.

*(Madam Fok sees Fellow in Yellow but doesn't respond, cries even more miserably.)*

*(Outside, Lei Yik eavesdrops and pays attention to what happens inside.)*

Fellow in Yellow: *(speaks)* Madam Fok, after plants wilt, there'll always be spring to look forward to. When a family is dispersed, there'll still be chance of luck. Is it because you see the deserted courtyard, so you lose yourself in crying out loud?

Madam Fok: *(weeps)* I'm sixty. I've never cried in front of others. Siu Yuk met a wrong man. But I've never blamed her. Today Siu Yuk is dying. It's time for me to cry to plead.

*(Lei Yik beats his chest and cries.)*

Fellow in Yellow: *(recites)* Madam Fok, don't be too sad. Even Siu Yuk's fate is doomed, what's precious is that she's fully experienced mother's love. Look, with all the white hair, you still prepare the medicine and watch the stove. How could Siu Yuk leave her mother forever and be buried down in the grave?

Madam Fok: *(cries and speaks)* Alas, you don't know it. Desperate wife crying over sorrowful spring, how could she understand her mother's love? After Siu Yuk fell sick, it's been a dose of *dong quai* in the morning, another dose of *dong quai* at night. She refused to see a doctor. She doesn't care about whether her body can take it. She's so aloof that no one compares.

Fellow in Yellow: *(sighs and speaks)* *Dong quai, dong quai.* Return to Order, just as Sap Long is returning to home. *(Walks out and drags Lei Yik.)*

Lei Yik: *(sees Madam Fok and shouts)* Madam, where is Siu Yuk? Where's Siu Yuk?  
*(Ashamed and sings)* Ai ya ya, I'm ashamed and there's no place to hide.

Madam Fok: *(shocked)* Sap Long? Sap Long? *(Runs to chamber)* Siu Yuk, Sap Long's back!

Wun Sa: *(hearing the voice, runs outside from the fence. Upon seeing Lei Yik, shakes Siu Yuk and speaks)* Lady, lady, Sap Long's back!

Siu Yuk: *(sings)* Life is as light as a thread. I yearn for reunion but to no avail.  
Nightmares accompany the forlorn soul,  
Which dreams of the husband's infidelity.

My hair is messy.  
The spring wind and the autumn rain fooled me twice, depriving me of health.  
My heart often hurts in the middle of the night,  
(sings) Opening my sleepy eyes,  
I'm shocked to find this irreconcilable foe and lover here.

*Lei Yik:* (continues singing) It's difficult for a sorrowful goose who experienced a catastrophe to express the grief suffered in a few words.  
(Hopes to comfort Siu Yuk yet is speechless.)

*Fellow in Yellow:* (sings) Let's put this fickle man in the hand of his obsessed lover,  
And bring together the hairpin in one piece in a jade cup.  
Sap Long has offered this strong wine a long time ago.  
Now *dong quai* is melted in wine.

(Picks up the cup and offers it to Lei Yik, and sings)  
Sap Long, the ancient scholar Dongfang Shuo has said that,  
Only wine can dissolve sorrow.  
The two of you are husband and wife by first marriage,  
Simply offer a cup of wine to apologize.  
I now withdraw myself.

(Fellow in Yellow signals Madam Fok and Wun Sa to follow his exit.)

*Lei Yik:* (hesitant, takes the wine cup, speaks) My wife, Siu Yuk, please drink this cup of wine and count it as my apology.

*Siu Yuk:* (holds the cup in her left hand and grasps Lei Yik's arm with her right hand, sad and angered, speaks) Gwan Yu, Gwan Yu, I, your humble wife, is a woman, with a poor life like this. My husband, you've been such an unfaithful man. With young face and teeth, I die with my resentment. My caring mother is at home, but I'm unable to take care of her. Fine clothes and sound of strings and pipes will be put to a stop from now. My pains are with me to the world of deaths—this is caused by you. Gentleman Lei, Gentleman Lei, now we bid farewell for good. (Throws the cup to the floor and faints.)

(Lei Yik helps Siu Yuk up to sit on the small chair, wails, and calls Siu Yuk.)

*Lei Yik:* (sings) Under the foggy moonlight, I weep for my fallen wife.  
Almost have I ruined the dream of the lantern and the hairpin.  
Over and over, I call the soul of my love:  
You must remember me in order for us to be reunited.  
Sickness has plagued her body, which cannot move, I lament.  
(Tries to help Siu Yuk up but to no avail.)

As heavy as Wangfu (Longing for Husband) Mountain, yet she's soft and looks sick.

Thousands of words are yet to be said.

All our happiness, I'm worried, will turn void.

*(Calls out)* Siu Yuk, my wife.

*(The sound of wind blowing bamboo is heard.)*

*Siu Yuk:* *(perplexed, gets up and continues singing)*  
Heaven music is drifting everywhere.  
The dew is cold at night, I'm worried, secretly.  
Enemies and blames are to be complained to the head of the hell.  
*(The sound of wind blowing bamboo is heard.)*  
With the sound of wind blowing bamboo,  
And the shadow of dim light silhouetted on the curtain,  
*(recites)* It's rare to see east wind in a foggy night.  
My body, weak as the flying willow catkins, is being carried by whom, I wonder?

*Lei Yik:* *(recites)* Siu Yuk, my wife, it's me, Sap Long, who's carrying you.

*Siu Yuk:* *(casts a side glance to Lei Yik and speaks)* Being alive is no better than being dead.  
Care from you, Gentleman Lei, is not needed.

*Lei Yik:* *(beats his chest, weeps, and continues singing)*  
May God reduce the fortune and life of Sap Long,  
And not to make my beloved wife sick and pain.  
*(recites)* The sword and the hairpin to reunite.  
We've lived a day. Let's wish us to be alive for another day, my wife Siu Yuk.  
*(continues singing)* Conjoined water lilies have once also shared the same root.  
Power and authority, I look down upon them.  
All I care about is love.  
Have been husband and wife with you,  
It's already more fortunate than poet Liang Hong.

*Siu Yuk:* *(continues singing)*  
In the grave, all the grief and pain of longing can be forgotten.  
You wail, you weep, you try to bring me back to the mundane world—I hate it.  
*(recites)* Dead! Dead! Dead! About to die, I've already swallowed my voice.  
Alive! Alive! Alive! What's the point of being alive?  
*(continues singing)* You're already matched to the phoenix of the mountain,  
Who fondles your white jade flute again and again.  
But when the red moans and when the green is jealous, I'm worried,  
How can your old love and the new one get along?  
I hope you fulfill your dream with your lover.



I'm willing to bury myself in a tiny grave,  
And to return my worn-out bones to the tomb. (*Turns her back.*)

*Lei Yik:* (*continues singing*)  
The blurred moon is covered by cloud; it's further gloomy.  
The whistling of the wind is mistakenly leaked and circulated by whom?  
There's never any encountering in the Jade Chamber.

*Siu Yuk:* (*recites*) If it's not infidelity, then why didn't you come back to me—Shengye  
Quarter and Marshal Lou's residence is only one street apart?

*Lei Yik:* (*weeps and sings*) Tears are exhausted, just like a returning goose being trapped  
and tied to a jade dragon. With the wings broken, how could it fly?

*Siu Yuk:* (*recites*) Who would trust you?  
My hairpin was sold, and you should know that I've befallen.  
I imagine that the lady of Lou (*continues singing*) must be around you the day  
when you became the dragon; she must be  
Tying her hair up with the jade swallow hairpin,  
Swinging her hip walking to the chamber, and  
Throwing herself to you with her flirty hairdo and makeup. She must be  
Tweaking her eyes,  
Smiling with dimples, and  
Touching you gently.  
The jade swallow hairpin, she must have said,  
Is worth a million just to show off.  
(*recites*) Don't you know that the hairpin on the new lover is a prick in the eyes  
of the old wife?

*Lei Yik:* (*continues singing*) I've never changed my love. It's miserable that you're picking  
on me. (*Cries out loud.*)

*Siu Yuk:* (*extremely enraged, presses him hard, sings*)  
I sold the hairpin; I sacrificed my body to serve you.  
I longed for you; I hoped for your return;  
I was charmed by you; I dreamed of you.  
How can you marry another woman and hurt me?

*Lei Yik:* (*continues singing*)  
Our vow is eternal. I've never been unfaithful.  
The love next to my pillow weighs a thousand pounds.  
But a real man should both love his wife and be loyal to the master.

*Siu Yuk:* (*feels strange and continues singing*) If you are faithful, how come you don't have integrity and respect yourself?

*Lei Yik:* (*continues singing*) Don't be jealous. Please understand the pain in my heart.

*Siu Yuk:* (a little angry, continues singing) Hau's already brought the message. I do not see any disloyalty from him.

*Lei Yik:* (*continues singing*) I've already turned down the marriage. Nightmares will come.

*Siu Yuk:* (*shocked, continues singing*) I don't trust that after married into the extravagant chamber you dared not to attach yourself to the phoenix and climb up to the dragon.

*Lei Yik:* (*continues singing*) Sap Long is never used to share bed with someone with different dreams. What's more, I remember Siu Yuk's gratitude.

*Siu Yuk:* (*softens her tone, continues singing*)  
Under the willow there're gusts of smoky wind.  
I will listen to your summon of love. (Leans against Lei Yik's and sits down.)

*Lei Yik:* (*continues singing*) The sun is hanging in the middle of the sky; it looks particularly red. The broken moon needs eventually to have unifying threads.  
(*recites*) A thousand sins originated from the poem I composed.  
In the poem I wrote that I didn't want to be promoted to the court.  
(*continues singing*)  
He takes the poem out of context and spread rumors,  
With the intention to coerce me into the marriage.  
Seeing the hairpin again now,  
I'd rather die than attach myself to the powerful and rich.  
I'd swallow the hairpin and kill myself to reject the marriage.

*Siu Yuk:* (*weeps and recites*) Sap Long, Sap Long, did you really swallow the hairpin in order to reject the marriage and to refuse the powerful? Sap Long, if this is true love, then return the hairpin to me.

*Lei Yik:* (*gets the purple jade hairpin from under his sleeve and gives it to Siu Yuk.*)

*Siu Yuk:* (*takes the hairpin, astonished, continues singing*)  
The swallow on the hairpin has become worn-out since it lost the east wind.  
The hairpin is being played with again,  
And it starts to show smile again little by little.  
(*Self-pleased, recites*)  
Pure as jade, clear as ice, no crack is tolerated.

Tonight when I do my hair, I have this hairpin.  
(*recites*) Wun Sa, Wun Sa, get me the mirror and cosmetics. Let me wear the hairpin again.

(*Enters Wun Sa with dressing case and cosmetics, puts the cosmetics in place, and holds the mirror.*)

(*Siu Yuk looks in the mirror. Her hand is shaking, unable to put on the hairpin.*)

*Lei Yik:* (*helps Siu Yuk put on the hairpin, recites*) Drifting fragrance radiates from your hair and the jade hairpin.

*Siu Yuk:* (*recites*) I'm only worried that the returning goose would abandon the falling flower.

*Lei Yik:* (*recites*) Today we're reunited after years of separation.

*Siu Yuk:* (*recites*) Woman shines again for her lover.  
(*Continues singing*) (*getting faster*)  
Lit by the candle, I put on more cosmetics,  
And let fragrance be sent to you secretly.

*Lei Yik:* (*takes the mirror and sings*)  
Broken mirror pieced together again to reflect a glamorous phoenix.

*Siu Yuk:* (*continues singing*) I look drowsy after illness.  
(*Exchanges the mirror and cosmetics with Lei Yik.*)

*Lei Yik:* (*continues singing*) Let the light cosmetics add radiance to your face.

*Siu Yuk:* (*looks in the mirror and continues singing*)  
I shine in glory for your care and love.  
Hope my illness will recede because of you.

*Lei Yik:* (*continues singing*)  
Laughter hangs in the flowers, hoping to greet the spring wind.  
Light makeup and simple attire,  
Unexcelled is your charming posture and dazzling look.  
The pearl hairpin and its jade swallow will never drift again.

*Siu Yuk:* (*gasps, turns back on Lei Yik, weeps and continues singing*)  
My illness lurks among the flowers, afraid that you see my sick face.

(*Noise from backstage.*)

*(Enters Wong Saau Yi taking a lantern from Marshal Lou's residence, seizing Ha Hing on stage right, followed by bodyguards and four soldiers carrying spears. Saau Yi, bodyguards, and soldiers stand in front of the steps. Ha Hing enters.)*

*Ha Hing:* *(drags Lei Yik and recites)* Gwan Yu, Gwan Yu, Marshal Lou learns about your return to the Shengye Quarter and he's furious. He sent people to Longxi to seize your mother. He also set up a wedding banquet overnight, demanding you to return to his residence to get married. Alas, I'm afraid that this couple may never renew the old romance.

*(Enter Madam Fok and Wun Sa on stage left.)*

*Siu Yuk:* *(drops the mirror, picks up the broken pieces, weeps, and speaks)* Sap Long, please go. Recalling the moment when we made our vows, I remember I said things with inauspicious meanings. How would I know that the prophecy is fulfilled today? *(Cries painfully.)* Please go. Please go. My ill fate has nothing to do with your infidelity. A falling flower never matches to the Top Scholar's fortune. *(Cries out loud.)*

*Wong Saau Yi:* *(yells)* As ordered by Marshal Lou, tie Lei Yik back to the residence. Go get him, servants! *(Two bodyguards enter and seize Lei Yik.)*

*(Siu Yuk kneels and grabs Lei Yik, and shouts.)*

*Lei Yik:* *(cries madly and sings)* I only beg for a reunion of my love.  
Dying of love breaks the lighting candles.

*Siu Yuk:* *(cries out to Sap Long and sings)* I only wish I wouldn't die in front of you.  
It's hard to accept the pain of separation.

*Wong Saau Yi:* *(yells)* Come, servants! Take off the hairpin from this little wicked woman! *(Takes the hairpin and speaks)* Return to Marshal Lou's Residence!

*(Lei Yik is jolted against the horses by two bodyguards, exits while calling out to Siu Yuk. Siu Yuk kneels forward, but is slapped away by a soldier. Madam Fok supports Siu Yuk up.)*

*(Exit Ha Hing with soldiers, sighs and stamps his foot in regret.)*

*(Siu Yuk cries out loud at stage front)*

*(Enters Wun Sa dragging Fellow in Yellow and crying, speaks)* Grandpa Fellow in Yellow, it's said that if you help someone, help all the way; if you send off the Buddha, send him off all the way to the West. Why didn't you get drunk earlier or later? But now,

at this critical moment, you get drunk? Didn't you hear lady cries so painfully?  
Didn't you know that Sap Long was tied up and taken back by Marshal Lo?

*Fellow in Yellow: (opens his drunken eyes, throws away the wine container, and sings)*

Salaries of all government officials are paid by the people.  
Yet they treat the people like ants and insects.  
Fok Siu yuk, as wife of a top scholar,  
Why don't you throw yourself into the cave of wolves and tigers?  
Siu Yuk, if Sap Long has never been unfaithful to you,  
Then you are the wife of a top scholar.  
It's said that a wife depends on her husband for success and honor. You may  
even reclaim the name of your father, Fok the king,  
As well as the title of princess.  
You should wear the phoenix crown and put on the jade pendant,  
And make your majestic steps to Marshal Lou's residence.  
Have a debate to win back your husband.  
Your life would be at risk for the injustice.  
Yet this would be a just death.  
I have other businesses to tend to.  
So I cannot keep you company.  
Good bye! (Exit)

*Siu Yuk: (nods while listens, speaks) A debate to win back my husband back.*

*Madam Fok: (tries to stop her and speaks) Siu Yuk, forget about it. To go to fight your husband  
back is just like finding your way to death.*

*Wun Sa: (weeps and speaks) If it's not Grandpa Fellow in Yellow who brought back the  
master, things would've been much simpler.*

*Siu Yuk: (contemplates and smiles bitterly, not hearing Madam Fok and Wun Sa, murmurs,  
talks to herself, and sings)  
"Wear the phoenix crown, put on the jade pendant, Go and get my top scholar  
back." How well!*

*Curtain*

## **Act 6**

### **Princely Favors**

*(Wong Saau Yi stands on the right of the stage, hanging a red flag.)*

*(Ten maids—four picking up flower baskets; four holding flower baskets; two, who are close to the forward-facing chair, holding wedding flower bouquet with a red tray. All stand in front of the stage wearing the same.)*

*(Four daughters wear phoenix crown and rosy jade pendant; two son-in-laws wear satin cap and gown stand next to the forward-facing chair on both sides.)*

*(Ten soldiers, in uniform, put on red clothes. Each holds a white stick, lining up solemnly on both sides of the stage in front of the screen.)*

*(Two house guards stand in front of the screen.)*

*(Curtain rises.)*

*Ha Hing:*       *(enters listlessly; seeing the line-up, sighs and recites)*  
Absent at Siu Yuk's wedding,  
Yet I am present at the banquet that sets the couples apart forever.

*(Steps inside, salutes with hands folded, and stands solemnly and miserably.)*

*Marshal Lou:* *(enters on the left of the stage, sings)* Sap Long is yet to become my son-in-law.  
What a waste that I hold the power and authority.  
Not worried that the bird retreats to faraway woods to escape the furious wind.  
See how I drop a fishing boat downstream.  
Holding a wedding banquet at the lavish chamber;  
Waiting for the bridegroom to return to the elegant banquet.  
*(sings)* It's difficult for the flimsy willow to match the top scholar.  
The peony should seize the bright spring.

*(Everyone sits down.)*

*(Lou ladies sit with their husbands.)*

*Ha Hing:*       *(speaks)* Your student is here to pay respect.

*Marshal Lou:* *(speaks)* Alright. Stand over there.

*(Enter two maids holding Yin Jing's phoenix crown and jade pendant on stage left.)*

*Yin Jing:*       *(at stage front, sings)* At the makeup table,  
I look a hundred times into the water chestnut flower mirror,  
Hoping to take possession of the beautiful top scholar.  
My dreams of three years are difficult to forget.  
I love him for his body, which is like the handsome Sung Yuk's, and his face,  
which is like Seung Yu's. *(Steps in and speaks.)* I pay respect to father.

*Marshal Lou:* (*gently speaks*) Sit down. Sit down.

*Yin Jing:* (*sits down and sighs*) Oh, father ... (*Covers her face and weeps.*)

*Marshal Lou:* (*speaks*) Alas, Yin Jing, don't cry. I have plenty of gold and jade here, only missing a top scholar as my son-in-law. He wants to delay the marriage. But I won't let him do that. Ha Hing, come here. (*Speaks.*) Has Sap Long returned yet?

*Ha Hing:* (*speaks*) Well ... my revered teacher.  
(*sings*) First you took the purple hairpin.  
Then you break the swallow on it.  
Siu Yuk, in her sickbed, grieves over her lingering love with Sap Long.  
She weeps in the orchid chamber.  
Can't you hear the weeping?  
Lei Yik still hasn't broken the old string. How is he going to put on a new string?  
(*Sobs.*) How can he bear to add another moaning ghost to the night,  
While sleeping next to a beautiful woman?

*Marshal Lou:* (*stands up and rebukes Ha Hing*) How inappropriate it is to consider Fok Siu Yuk as Sap Long's ex-wife?

(*sings*) Back then he took only a passing glance at women.  
He must realize love over a courtesan is a short-lived one.  
Even I can forget the subversive poem he composed  
He should still remember who recommended and supported him.

(*speaks*) Cheun Mui, come over here. Take those bridal bouquets to the flower chamber and guide the master to the wedding ceremony. Hurry up! No Delay.  
(*Toss the bouquet to the maid.*)

(*Exits Cheun Mui holding the bouquet.*)

*Lei Yik:* (*enters holding the bouquet and at stage front, sings*)  
There's Loi Chun Sun  
Who is remarried and leaves behind his old wife.  
Destined to be rebuked by everyone for thousands of years.  
In the past there's a man called Hou Sizheng,  
Who was forced to be remarried.  
Before he was married to a rich lady,  
He killed himself to show his contempt for power.  
(*Enters.*) Modest student pays respect to revered teacher. This bouquet ...  
(*Returns the bouquet.*)

*Marshal Lou: (receives the bouquet and laughs, speaks)* This wedding bouquet will ensure that you, my humble junior, will live happily together for hundreds of years to come.

*(Puts the bouquet in the hands of Lei Yik and holds Lei Yik's hands, sings.)*

The ritual music is waiting for our order to start.

A man with ambition should spread his wings like an eagle,

Don't be intertwined by orphaned and wild vines.

In the wedding hall hangs a golden plaque,

As if to pass the beauty to the lad.

Come, light the flowery candles.

*(Speaks)* Come, servants, light the flowery candles, and play the bells and drums.

*Lei Yik: (speaks)* Slow down, slow down, my revered teacher.

*(sings)* To be infatuated with green chain of jade;

Yet the lady is stuck with illness.

Don't greed over new love and forget the old love.

Holding the cup I cannot bear this banquet

An ancient sage once said,

Marriage should happen before the parents.

Deep filial love, shallow relationship;

Student fails to memorize the word of the sage.

Mother is still far away.

*(speaks)* Without parents' presence, the son may not get married. Please forgive me, my revered teacher. *(Places the bouquet in the hand of Marshal Lou.)*

*Marshal Lou: (receives the bouquet and angrily, sings)*

How come you could get married stealthily then,

Were your mother ever there? *(Tosses the bouquet to Lei Yik.)*

*Lei Yik: (continues singing)*

That was a destined match of the one who dropped the hairpin,

And the one who picked it up.

So deeply rooted that it is hard to break.

*(Tosses the bouquet back to Marshal Lou.)*

*Marshal Lou: (continues singing)*

Is love upon the hairpin heavier or is my kindness to you?

*Lei Yik: (continues singing)* My meritorious service will ultimately repay your grace.

*Marshal Lou: (continues singing)*



This remuneration cannot compare to having a half-son, marrying into the family.

*Lei Yik:* (continues singing) It's against my will.

*Marshal Lou:* (continues singing) Just drink the nuptial wine.

*Lei Yik:* (continues singing) Wine hardly tastes sweet.

*Marshal Lou:* (getting mad, continues singing) If Siu Yuk died of sickness,

*Lei Yik:* (continues singing) Sap Long would shave my hair and become a monk.

*Marshal Lou:* (dropped from his chair, enraged, shakes, removes a poem from his sleeves, sings)  
Let me re-examine this subversive poem to our Tang court.  
I will hurriedly report this to the Imperial court. (Kicks his gown.)

*Lei Yik:* (sings) Alas, I can't serve my parents anymore.  
The poem can kill nine generations. (Frightened and faints.)

*Ha Hing:* (holds Lei Yik up and speaks) My brother, Gwan Yu ...

*Yin Jing:* (speaks) Father, Lei Yik has fainted.

(Marshal Lou is so enraged he couldn't speak.)

(Enters Wun Sa with Siu Yuk, who wears phoenix crown and jade pendant on stage right.)

*Siu Yuk:* (sings) Wearing this crown enamored with jewels,  
I can hide my sick face.  
Hissing rain and strong wind break the lotus boat.  
With wind blowing, the fragile light of life is hard to burn.  
Or else, with rain dropping, the ash of love is hard to ignite again.  
The core of the candle looks like breaking but not.  
Jealous woman fighting for husband strongly sustains life.

(sings) Under the lantern, flowers are hung on the hall,  
Which looks tall and breathtaking as a castle.

(speaks) Wun Sa, knock the door for me.

*Wun Sa:* (hesitant, cries and speaks) Lady,

(sings) Your fragile life holding against this hard gate.  
Beware of any attack behind your back.

Recovered from illness, you shouldn't go near the death gate.  
You shouldn't die in the house of the riches.

*Siu Yuk: (grieves and speaks) Wun Sa, knock the door for me, the princess.*

*Wun Sa: (helplessly walks up to Wong Saau Yi, holding lower corners of her clothes, bows) Sir, my lady is here to report.*

*Wong Saau Yi: (without even looking, speaks) Well, (extends his hand.)*

*Wun Sa: (seeing the situation, speaks) Alas, (facing the audience, desperate) Fellow in Yellow sent us a piece of gold. I, the poor maid, stealthily saved a little bit for lady. It looks like I have to use it as a gift for reporting. (Tosses piece of silver into Wong Saau Yi's hands.)*

*Wong Saau Yi: (weighs the piece of silver and satisfied, speaks) Tell me your name.*

*Wun Sa: (speaks) Sir, my lady doesn't have a written visiting note, only a verbal one. You can just say that Princess Fok Siu Yuk—Prince of Luoyang's daughter, who's also the wife of a seventh-rank official and top scholar—requests to pay respect.*

*Wong Saau Yi: (shocked, looks at Siu Yuk and speaks) Oh, it's that sick woman. Where did she get such prestigious titles? Alright, people in our profession (tongue twister) care not enemies nor opponents; we judge not prostitutes or courtesans. If you can pay, you're respected. If you can't, you're trashed. Lady, please wait for a moment. (Enters.) Master, there's a lady outside the door asking to be seen.*

*Marshal Lou: (speaks) What lady?*

*Wong Saau Yi: (speaks) It's Princess Fok Siu Yuk—Prince of Luoyang's daughter, who's also the wife of a seventh-rank official and top scholar.*

*(Marshal Lou tosses his beard.)*

*(Yin Jing leaves her chair and makes an eye gesture.)*

*(Ha Hing, shocked, shakes Lei Yik, who remains unconscious.)*

*Marshal Lou: (speaks) Oh, this Fok Siu Yuk dare to come here? Well, while Sap Long is still unconscious, let me meet this courtesan, beat her to death, and have my anger released. Soldiers! When Fok Siu Yuk walks to this chamber, raise your stick, beat when you see a shadow, beat when you see a human being. Beat! Beat! Beat!*

*(Ten soldiers yell simultaneously and raise the sticks.)*

*(Marshal Lou tosses his bear) Beat her!*

*(Siu Yuk and Wun Sa were shocked hearing the noise.)*

*Lei Yik: (awoken by the noise and fetches Ha Hing, speaks) Ha Hing, Ha Hing. Beat! Beat! Beat! Whom does Marshal Lou want to beat? Why is there a mess in this court?*

*Ha Hing: (hurried, speaks) Gwan Yu, Gwan Yu, do you know that the tiger and the wolf are going to break the jade in front of the door, and beat the sick beauty to death?*

*Lei Yik: (tosses cap and sings) If anyone beats my modest wife in this chamber, Sap Long will rather compensate it with my own life. Her life is like the half-lit light before the wind, cannot bear the sticks. let me block the door and persuade her. (Wants to run to the doorway.)*

*Marshal Lou: (shouts) Followers, take Lei Yik to prison.*

*(Two nearest soldiers run to fetch Lei Yik and grab his arm tightly.)*

*Marshal Lou: (speaks) Let Fok Siu Yuk in.*

*(Lei Yik stamps his feet as in regret and begs not to let her in.)*

*(Receiving the order, Wong Saau Yi is about to be headed to the door.)*

*Marshal Lou: (recalls something and speaks) Saau Yi, come back!*

*Wong Saau Yi: (speaks) Yes,*

*Marshal Lou: (speaks) When Fok Siu Yuk reported at the door, she said she's the princess of Luoyang and wife of the top scholar. How was she dressed up then?*

*Wong Saau Yi: (speaks) Reporting to Master, when that Lady Fok reported at the door, on her head is the hundred-flower crown and on her body, a gown with purple seal.*

*Marshal Lou: (shocked and speaks) What? She has a pearl crown and a gown with purple seal? According to the law, no one can beat anyone wearing a gown with purple seal. I originally thought Fok Siu Yuk is of a low family since childhood and wouldn't know such rule. Who taught her that today? Anyway, when King of Hell ordered someone dead, anyone must obey the order. (Hurriedly) Saau Yi, you go out to the door and tell her that the Master won't see her. Over here I'll pretend to*

start playing wedding music. Women are generally jealous. When Siu Yuk hears the music, I bet she wouldn't stay at the door but come in. *(Even faster)* Then we can accuse her of trespassing. We'll first break her crown, then take off her gown before we can beat her to death.

*Lei Yik:* *(gets scared while listening and struggles with bodyguards before shouting at the door)* Siu Yuk, Siu Yuk!

*Ha Hing:* *(covers Lei Yik's mouth and speaks)* Stop, Sap Long! If Siu Yuk hears your voice and then trespasses, wouldn't it be digging her own grave?

*(Lei Yik, hoping to shout yet dares not, stamps on his feet and covers his face weeping.)*

*Marshal Lou:* *(stares at Yin Jing and fondling his beard, smiles and speaks)* Saau Yi, follow the plan. *(Sweeps the sleeves.)*

*Wong Saau Yi:* *(speaks)* Noted. *(Stands rigidly at the door.)*

*Siu Yuk:* *(anxious, speaks)* Officer, what's taking it so long to get me inside?

*Wong Saau Yi:* *(looking stiffly, speaks)* Today is Marshal Lou's daughter's wedding. Colonel Lei is married into the family. Walk-ins are impermissible. Master won't see any guests.

*Siu Yuk:* *(disappointed, speaks)* Oh, Marshal Lou's daughter's wedding? Colonel Lei is married into the family?

*Marshal Lou:* *(speaks)* Music!

*(The pipa lute plays a short fast passage.)*

*Siu Yuk:* *(on hearing the wedding music of the pipa, acts anxiously and angrily stamps her feet on the ground, and sings)*

Hearing the chimes and drums,  
My husband is in the phoenix banquet.  
Flying horizontally at me are arrows with white feather;  
Pricked by jealousy so badly that my outfit and hairpin mess up.  
Women are always narrow-minded,  
How can I stand her, a pretty girl born into an affluent family?  
Years after years, months after months,  
She'll be sleeping by my husband's side;  
With help of the sour wind, I break through the extravagant flowers and wine.  
*(Pipa plays another short and fast passage.)*

*Wun Sa:* *(rushes towards Siu Yuk, hugs Siu Yuk on her knees, speaks)* Lady, lady.

*(Sings)* Holding your knees and yelling madly, using all my force to stop you.  
Nothing left in the house to sell for warmth.  
A pale and white-haired in the family.  
Don't toss the jade towards the eagle and the dog.  
*(Pipa plays fast passage.)*

*Siu Yuk:* *(speaks)* Wun Sa, my sister, it's said that mother leading a harsh life often has children with poor life. We're both like candles before the wind. Please go back and serve my mother for me. This way I waste no purpose to take care of you. Wun Sa, go! Go tell me my mother on behalf of me, tell her that Siu Yuk thinks too highly of herself throughout her life that she never apologizes in front of her. Now I realize I'm wrong.

*(Sings)* Tell her that the precious jade of the Fok's is useless.  
She has left her mother with nothing after her death.  
*(Waves Wun Sa off.)*

*(Wun Sa recedes to the entrance.)*

*Siu Yuk: (angrily sings)* I won't wait for any summon to meet you.

*Wong Saau Yi: (yells)* A woman has trespassed into the banquet.

*Marshal Lou: (speaks)* Call the court!

*(Ten soldiers yell at once.)*

*(Exits Wun Sa sobbing, stamping on her feet, and covering her face.)*

*(Siu Yuk retreats a step on hearing the yelling before entering calmly.)*

*(Seeing Siu Yuk, Yin Jing gets jealous, stares at her angrily)*

*(Siu Yuk also stares at Yin Jing, yet fearlessly.)*

*Marshal Lou: (hinting at soldiers, speaks with increasing volume)* Beat! Beat! Beat!

*(When Siu Yuk's prowess recedes, Yin Jing returns to her seat.)*

*(Hearing the order three times, soldiers are about to go head and beat Siu Yuk. Yet they show sympathy, looking at each other, they put their sticks back, lower their head, and sigh.)*

*(Lei Yik repeatedly thank soldiers.)*

*Marshal Lou: (drops from chair and tosses his beard, speaks) Alas!*

*Siu Yuk: (speaks) Prince Fok's daughter, top scholar's wife bows respectable Marshal Lou.*

*(Two soldiers drag Lei Yik to the back and return to original positions.)*

*Marshal Lou: (angrily recites) Checking Prince Fok's genealogy, never did I know he has a daughter. Examining the marriage record of Chang'an, never did I see that the top scholar has a wife. You're only a courtesan from the Shengye Quarter, with unkempt appearance and a poor origin.*

*Siu Yuk: (sneers and speaks) Your honor, daughter of Prince Fok is not recorded in the genealogy but in God's ways and human hearts. The marriage of Lei and Fok is not registered in government record but carved in the rock of three incarnations. Whether Fok Siu Yuk is wife of First Scholar or a courtesan, you need not consult the marriage records. Just ask Lei the top scholar in this court.*

*Lei Yik: (hurriedly speaks) Fok Siu Yuk is my wife. There's a poem of vow on a three-foot sash as a proof.*

*Siu Yuk: (retrieves the sash from her sleeve and speaks) Your honor, if you don't mind the mad love of a man and a woman staining your gracious perusal, please take a look at this poem of vow. Love surpasses the time.*

*Marshal Lou: (tosses his beard and speaks) This is a poem of illicit sexual affair. A courtesan can hardly be regarded as a lady. Well, Lei Yik, why don't you love the rare herbs that sustain longevity, but obsessed by this sick and vulgar fox?*

*Siu Yuk: (sneers and recites)*  
Your honor, you're regarded as Master of Three Terrace with respect.  
You shouldn't be speaking lowly like a woman.  
Pledged to die, Fok Siu Yok has the muted heart of Wangfu Rock (on which wives expecting their husband).  
Losing everything in order to get the hairpin together,  
I have the intelligence of Huai Qing Terrace.  
Daughter of Marshal Lou must have good education.  
Don't you know that it's despicable when one seizes other's husband?  
Don't you know that it's miserable when one relies on wealth to abuse power?

*(Yin Jing covers her face and sobs.)*

*(Marshal Lou grabs Siu Yuk and pushes her to the ground.)*

*(Lei Yik tries to stop this.)*

*Marshal Lou: (enraged, speaks) Well, if you want to get Lei Sap Long back, let me present this petition to the Imperial Court, and then return Sap Long at the execution court.*

*Lei Yik: (sad and angered, speaks) Marshal Lo,  
(Sings) I'm willing to be unjustly convicted for subversion.  
Yet don't implicate my pale and white-haired ones in the family.  
I'm willing to be torn apart.  
Yet please bury my wife and me together.*

*Marshal Lou: (Ruthless, speaks) Come, get the sedan ready.*

*Siu Yuk: (soft-hearted, speaks) Wait!  
(Sings) My soul destroyed in Minister's residence;  
Tiger howled in King of Hell's palace.  
Life and death is a second away;  
How could I not compromise for my lover?  
My initial flame of anger has tamed.  
I am destroyed on the Rock of three incarnations.  
I beg to end my remaining life under random strokes.  
Let me, modest maid, remove this pearl crown.  
(Removes the phoenix crown and kneels. Lei Yik also follows suit to bend his knees and begs to die.)*

*Marshal Lou: (With anger suppressed, raises the stick, sings)  
Now that King of Hell has ordered you dead*

*(From offstage comes a shout and three strokes of gong.)*

*Marshal Lou: (withdraws the stick and sings)  
Who dares to shout at the door?  
Here's a poem subversive to the Tang court, which can kill like a sword.*

*(Lei Yik and Siu Yuk lie on the ground and beg.)*

*(Enter a young maid carrying a sword of the celestial realm. Enter four generals, two officers carrying tablets of military order.)*

*(Enters Fellow in Yellow in official attire with face covered.)*

*Fellow in Yellow: (recites) Dust-kicking sleeves cover ice-cold face;  
Fellow in Yellow and purple crown bring the mystery.  
(Speaks) I'm here to announce my arrival.*

*Wong Saau Yi: (retreats in fear and bows, speaks)* Marshal Lou is holding a banquet for his daughter. Colonel Lei is married into the family. Who's this master who comes to send congratulations? Please report your name.

*Fellow in Yellow: (speaks)* Well, ... *(Puts down sleeves.)*

*(Wong Saau Yi recognizes Fellow in Yellow and is shocked and shaking.)*

*Alien servants and officers carrying tablets of military order:*  
*(speaks)* Fourth Prince has honorably arrived.

*Wong Saau Yi: (immediately kneels and speaks)* Fourth Prince has honorably arrived.

*Marshal Lou: (shocked, speaks)* Out to welcome.  
*(Walks down the step and welcome Fellow in Yellow in and both are seated.)*  
*(Alien servants carry swords and stands behind Fellow in Yellow.)*

*(When Fellow in Yellow enters, Lei Yik and Siu Yuk lie down and not dare look up. All ladies and son-in-laws stand up and bow.)*

*Fellow in Yellow: (speaks, pretending to be unknowing)* Kneelt below the steps are a man and a woman, who are they?

*Marshal Lou: (speaks)* Ah...Your Highness, I, old subject, was about to go to court. Never did I anticipate the arrival of Your Highness. Your Highness, there's a man who served on the far western frontier. He wrote a subversive poem in the exam. How should he be punished?

*Fellow in Yellow: (speaks)* As a result of the sin, his nine generations of family will be executed.

*(Lei Yik and Siu Yuk squat on the ground and shake.)*

*Marshal Lou: (smiles and speaks)* Oh, as a result of the sin, his nine generations of family would be executed.

*(Recites)* Kneeling before the steps is Lei Yik, who has written a poem of subversion to the imperial court. The poem is in the hands of mine, your old follower. This is undeniable. *(Presents the poem.)*

*Fellow in Yellow: (recites)* Wait, wait. *(Recites)*  
When I was at the entrance,  
The officer told me that marshal's daughter is having a wedding, and  
Colonel Lei is being married into the family.



Marshal Lou already knew that Colonel Lei is subjected to the execution of the whole clan of his family, which includes extended families.  
Why do you still allow your daughter to marry him?

*Marshal Lou: (speaks)* Well ...

*(Siu Yuk recognizes Fellow in Yellow and is shocked, secretly exchanges looks with Lei Yik and Ha Hing)*

*Marshal Lou: (enraged from embarrassment, speaks)* Keep your head down!

*Fellow in Yellow: (speaks)* Marshal Lou, I am unfamiliar with the law, and would like to consult you. If an officer abuses his power to suppress a talent, force him to abandon his first wife and remarry, even forces an old scholar to be the matchmaker and then slaughters him. What is the punishment?

*Marshal Lou: (speaks)* He should be removed from duty.

*Fellow in Yellow: (recites)* Oh, he should be removed from duty. Marshal Lou, I dressed in plain to make visits and inspections, and heard that Marshal Lou abuses your power to suppress a talent, force him to abandon his first wife and remarry. The poor old scholar who refuses to be the matchmaker was killed.

*Marshal Lou: (recites)* Well, I, the old subject, is respected as Master of Three Terraces. How would I do such immoral things? What you heard on the road are rumors without evidence. May I ask if there exists a witness accusing me of killing a civilian and a talent?

*Ha Hing: (irritated, speaks)* Your Highness, a witness is here.  
*(sings)* Hurting my old friend,  
Who tragically died in this lavish hall.  
Marshal Lou's crime,  
I, the low official, witness it all.

*Fellow in Yellow: (facing Marshal Lou, speaks)* Remove him from the chair.

*Lei Yik: (speaks)* Your Highness,  
*(Sings)* Forcing me to remarry,  
Marshal Lou abuses his power  
Only to let the peony possess the top scholar.

*Siu Yuk: (sings)*  
Misreading the poem with intention,  
Only to defame Lei the top scholar.

I wish this will be justly handled.

*Fellow in Yellow: (angered, speaks)* Remove his crown! Listen to the verdict.  
*(Uses a sword to remove Marshal Lou's crown.)*

*Marshal Lou: (shocked, kneels and speaks)* I, old subject, realize my sin. Your Highness, please have mercy!

*Fellow in Yellow: (sneers and speaks)* Ah!  
*(Sings)* Your vices are unmistakable and previously acknowledged.  
Bestowed upon me from Heaven is this loyalty sword.  
On behalf of the Royal decree, I, Fellow in Yellow, will decide.  
*(Sings faster)* Your salary and title will be taken away.  
And you'll be the matchmaker for this love bound by the purple hairpin.  
Nuptial flowers, wedding banquets.  
The reunited jade still needs a joyful banquet.  
The maiden passionately supports the handsome horse;  
Even with white hair will one support the colorful bird.

*(Sings)* Come, light up the flowery candles again. *(Sits facing the stage.)*

*(House servants light up the flowery candles.)*

*(Yin Jing returns the hairpin to Lei Yik.)*

*Fellow in Yellow: (speaks)* Sap Long, why don't you take the purple hairpin and put this on Siu Yuk?

*Lei Yik: (takes the purple hairpin and speaks)* Thank you, Your Highness.  
*(Puts the hairpin on Siu Yuk.)*  
*(The two bow to each other and then bow to Fourth Prince)*

*Fellow in Yellow: (smiles and sings)* Purple Hairpin,  
Leaves a legend  
Of the reunion of sword and hairpin.

*The End*