home? And why accuse me of being blind?"

"This is an odd business!" they laughed. "Our mistress wants to see you in the cabin. Take off that mourning and go in."

Wang Fu looked flabbergasted.

"Is the old lady still alive?" he demanded.

"Of course she is," they replied.

Wang Fu did not believe them, though, so without removing his mourning he dashed straight into the cabin.

"Fool!" shouted Wang Chen. "Your mistress is here. Go and change your clothes at once."

Then Wang Fu hurried out, removed his mourning and went back to the cabin to kowtow to the old lady, who rubbed her eyes as she stared at him.

"Well, I never!" she declared again and again. "When he came the other day his left eye was blind, but today it is perfectly all right. I suppose it couldn't have been him after all."

She hastily took out her son's letter to have a look at it, only to find that it was a sheet of blank paper too, without an ink mark on it.

The whole family was staggered. They were at a loss to understand who could have masqueraded as Liuer and Wang Fu, or why anyone should trick Wang Chen in Changan and his mother in Hangzhou in order to ruin the family. Fearing worse might follow, they were filled with doubts and forebodings. But after thinking hard, Wang Chen recollected that the false Wang Fu had been blind in the left eye, and then he saw light.

"I have it!" he cried. "This is the work of those accursed beasts!"

His mother immediately asked what he meant, and he told her how he had shot the foxes at Fanchuan and taken their book, how one of them had masqueraded as a man in the inn to recover the book, and

诒骗，和夜间打门之事说出。又道："当时我只道这孽畜不过变人来骗此书，到不提防他有恁般贼智。"众人闻言，尽皆摇首咋舌道："这妖狐却也奸狡利害哩！隔着几多路，却会仿着字迹人形，把两边人都弄得如耍戏一般。早知如此，把那书还了他去也罢！"王臣道："叵耐这孽畜无礼！如今越发不该还他了！若再缠帐，把那祸种头一火而焚之。"于氏道："事已如此，莫要闲讲了，且商量正务。如今住在这里，不上不下，还是怎生计较？"王臣道："京中产业俱已卖尽，去也没个着落。况兼路途又远，不如且归江东。"王妈妈道："江东田宅也一毫无存，却住在何处？"王臣道："权赁一所住下，再作区处。"当下拨转船头，原望江东而回。那些家人起初像火一般热，到此时化做冰一般冷，犹如断线偶戏，手足掸软，连话都无了。正是乘兴而来，败兴而返。到了杭州，王臣同家人先上岸，在旧居左近赁了一所房屋，制办日用家伙，各色停当，然后发起行李，迎母妻进屋。计点囊橐，十无其半，又恼又

how they had hammered on the inn gate all night.

"I thought they changed into men simply to get the book," he said. "Little did I dream they had such cunning."

The others shook their heads and shot out their tongues in amazement.

"These fox fairies are fearfully cunning," they declared. "In two places so far apart they were able to fool us by imitating men's handwriting and appearance so well. If you had known this, you should have returned them the book."

"A plague on these wicked beasts!" swore Wang Chen. "I shall certainly not return the book. If they trouble me again, I'll burn the accursed thing."

"We had better keep to the point and discuss our main problem," said Wang Chen's wife. "Here we are — neither north nor south — what shall we do?"

"All the property in the capital has been sold," said Wang Chen. "If we go there, we shall have nowhere to stay. Besides, it's a long way to travel. We had better go back south."

"But we have nothing left in the south either," objected his mother. "Where shall we live?"

"We shall have to rent a place for the time being," said Wang, "and make plans later."

As they headed the boat back south, the servants who had been all fire and spirit before were as cold and dull as puppets whose strings have been snapped — silent and limp. They had set off exultantly, but returned in despair. Upon reaching Hangzhou, Wang Chen and the servants went ashore first to rent a house in the quarter where they had lived before and buy the necessary furniture and utensils. Then they carried over their baggage and fetched Wang Chen's mother and wife.

气。门也不出，在家纳闷。这些邻家见王妈妈去而复回，齐来询问。王臣道知其详，众人俱以为异事。互相传说，遂嚷遍了半个杭城。

一日，王臣在堂中，督率家人收拾，只见外边一人走将入来，威仪济楚，服饰整齐。怎见得？但见：

头戴一顶黑纱唐巾，身穿一领绿罗道袍；碧玉环正缀巾边，紫丝绦横围袍上；袜似两堆白雪，舄如二朵红云。堂堂相貌，生成出世之姿；落落襟怀，养就凌云之气。若非天上神仙，定是人间官宰。

那人走入堂中，王臣仔细看时，不是别人，正是同胞兄弟王宰。当下王宰向前作揖道："大哥别来无恙？"王臣还了个礼，乃道："贤弟，亏你寻到这里！"王宰道："兄弟到京回旧居时，见已化为白地。只道罹于兵火，甚是悲痛。即去访问亲故，方知合家向已避难江东。近日大哥至京，整理旧业，因得母亲凶问，刚始离京。兄弟闻了这信，遂星夜赶来。适才访到旧居，邻家说新迁于此，母亲

When they reckoned how much money they had left, it was less than half their original capital; so between anger and despair they stayed at home fuming, unwilling to go out. The neighhours who had seen Wang Chen's mother leave and then return came to inquire, and when Wang told them his story they marvelled and spread the tale till half Hangzhou knew it.

One day Wang Chen was watching his servants clean the hall when a dignified, well-dressed stranger walked in.

He had a black gauze cap and green silk gown,
A jasper ring on his cap and a purple belt;
His socks were white as snow,
His shoes like rosy clouds;
He'd a lordly look and natural dignity.
A man like that, if not a god,
Must at least be a high official or ruler of men.

Wang Chen saw that this stranger was no other than his brother, Wang Zai, who came up to him and bowed.

"How have you been, brother," he asked, "since we parted?"

Wang Chen returned his bow.

"To think of your finding us here!" he exclaimed.

"When I went to the capital and looked for our old home," said Wang Zai, "I found it had been razed to the ground; and the thought of all you must have suffered in the war made me very sad. Then I was relieved to learn from our relatives that the family had taken refuge in the south. They told me too that you had been to the capital to set our property to rights, but left again after hearing of our mother's death. I came here posthaste and found the house where you used to live; but when the neighbours told me that you had moved and that our mother