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Curse of the Golden Flower

By Zhihong Bian

His Highness Prince Yu arrives!
Your Majesty.
Prince Yu, is everything ready?
Mother, Jai is on his way.
Is he in the Palace?
No, he is at the Official Inn
awaiting orders.
First Brother mentioned
that as soon as Father arrives. . .
. . . he will ask permission to leave.
He wants to go to Qingzhou.
Mother.
Her Majesty the Empress arrives!
First Brother.
Your Majesty.
So you are going.
Are you afraid?
You are my mother !
You now not ...
We have been intimate
for three years.
But, I am first
my father's son.
Mother!
Why you pushed me away ?
If we want, things can be changed.
We can not change anything Mother.
Still, I would like to try.
Tell me.
Go and welcome
the Emperor first.
The day breaks.
The court presides.
Peace to all.
It is the Hour of the Tiger.
The day breaks.
The court presides.
Peace to all.
It is the Hour of the Tiger.
Your servant kneels
before the Empress.
Your Majesty's medicine
for the hour is ready.
By the Emperor's command. . .

. . . retire to your chambers!
The welcome ceremony is cancelled !
Retire to your chambers!
The welcome ceremony is cancelled !
The Emperor commands. . .
. . . retire to your chambers!
The welcome ceremony is cancelled !
Retire to your chambers!
The welcome ceremony is cancelled !
Your Majesty, the Emperor commands
everyone to go back to their chambers.
The ceremony is cancelled.
-Where is he ?
-He went to. . .
. . .to the Official Inn.
Your Majesty. . .
. . .the Emperor requests the presence
of the Empress and the two princes. . .
. . .on the Chrysanthemum Terrace
tomorrow morning.
THE OFFICIAL INN
Your Highness Prince Jai,
the Emperor has arrived.
Your son kneels before you.
Father, its a great honour
to have this visit.
Now.
Father's prowess is unequalled.
The decision to send you
to the frontier. . .
. . .was the right one.
I came here today. . .
. . .to remind you. . .
... your past mistakes.
The world is so much..
... while you have
what is given ..
Never take. . by force .
. . .what I don't give.
Father's advice words...
... are acknowledged.
Return with me to the Palace .
His Highness Prince Jai arrives!
He is here.

Your son kneels before you.
Mother.
It has been over three years.
Have you been well?
I am very well.
And you?
I have just. . .
. . .I have just missed you.
You must have suffered.
I am fine.
Charity seeks no recognition.
Virtue seeks no reward.
The harvest is abundant.
It is the Hour of the Rabbit.
Your ..Highness. . .
. . .the Empress has been taking her
herbs , as you instructed.
Following Your wishes . .
. . .the black fungus is being added
by my daughter, Chan.
No one knows
How long has it been ?
Ten days.
How are you
and Father ?
Unchanged I suppose !
Yes.
Why so many chrysanthemums?
Mother
It is for the Festival
Mother! Mother!
-Your Majesty! Your Majesty!
-What is going on?
Your Highness,
your servant does not know.
It is the third time
this has happened.
Mother, please what is wrong ?
go on , tell me.
You should rest, Mother.
. . . . I must finish all the embroidery
Before the Chrysanthemum Festival.
Have you been taking medicine?
Now you should go

and see your brothers
His Highness Prince Jai arrives!
I bow to my Brother, Wan.
Hello, Jai
Please... Thank you.
-Second Brother.
-Hello Yu.
I heard Father changed his plans
and welcomed you back personally.
was it hard being away
It was fine.
Mother it seems very ill
We feel she is anemic.
She takes medicine often.
She seems that she
is embroidering a lot.
Father !
They must be for the Festival.
Have you seen Crown Prince ?
-Why would I visit the Crown Prince?
-Father knows.
What do you know?
Go, go see him
Move !
Thats a Persian black fungus.
Its very powerful
Two grams a day for a short time
can make you crazy . . .
Chan, you think you know so much...enough
-But the Empress--
-Don't breathe a word.
we will be killed !
Law of the nation. . .
. . . precept of the home. . .
. . .ancient yet unchanged.
It is the Hour of the Dragon.
Your servant kneels
before the Empress.
Your Majesty's medicine
for the hour is ready.
So you are Chan.
Yes, my name is Chan.
-and our physician is your father?
-Yes.

It seems the Crown Prince
is some what pale .
Is the Empress asking my opinion?
My job is only to prepare medicine.
I don't know much the prince.
Is that so?
Come in.
"On the highest mountains
on the same. . .
. . . but one brother is missing,
without berries in his hair."
Prince Jai has returned.
The family is reunited.
Who will tell me ,
why we assemble on this
. . .terrace every Chrysanthemum
Festival , do you know ?
Yes Father, on the ninth day
of the ninth month
the sun and the moon
join together..is the one.
It symbolizes the strength and harmony
of the family and we celebrate. . .
-. . .on this high terrace.
-You have studied well.
The terrace is round.
The table is square.
representing..
That Heaven is round and
the earth is square.
The law of the Heavens
dictates the rule of earthly life. . .
. . . under the circle, within the square,
everyone has his proper placement.
This is called natural law.
To all my sons and to whom
they are keen. . .
. . .all relationships obey this law.
Further any requests to me ?
My Father . . .
. . . I beg to ask you the permission. . .
. . .to travel to Qingzhou.
so you want
to be sent to the frontier?

I would like to view the world. . .
. . .outside of this palace
how its is?
anything else?
Father.
-I will request permission .
-I am listening ..
... I do not know
if it would be appropriate. . . .
when you know then tell me .
Your medicine was not yet finished
at the hour of the Dragon.
How much is left?
Tell me.
Your Majesty,
there is a sip or two.
-pour it to the Empress.
-Yes.
Your Highness. . .
. . a change in my health, perhaps.
Where did you hear that from?
She will have to take all of her
medicine,drink which is left over.
Third son ...
Yu.
Mother, listen to the father, please.
Mother, please drink it.
Remain kneeling
until she drinks it.
Father,
Mother won't drink it.
-Why not let her be?
-forget your request .. she needs it. . .
. . .just as life is governed
by law.
Mother, you have been taking
this medicine for years.
just once follow.
Why change?
Yes.
Doesn't seem to be strange...
. . .to quit it ?
Mother's symptoms
make her unaware ..

-We know, Father.
Being treated well now.
... with good medicine .
You have something to tell me?
Father, I know now, the night
of the Festival. . .
. . . I wish to command
the Imperial Guards.
I, too, wish to gain experience.
Since Prince Jai has returned. . .
. . . he will assume this duty.
-Jai , my son
-Yes, Father.
Are you ready to accept
this as your duty ?
for the Festival,
they will be under your sole command.
My plans are made !
I will never disappoint
you , Father .
Then you know
needs to be done.
The Empress arrives.
Your wife kneels down
before you.
Do you know why I summoned you?
Today. . .
. . .you acted against me.
Please , Watch closely.
I select each ingredient personally
with utmost care.
This will cure your anemia.
I am grateful for his highness.
All good medicine tastes bitter.
You have excess bile, for that,
fractious..why you are stubborn ?
That is why you are fractious. . .
. . .you are listless and
quite lethargic. . .
These are all very serious
symptoms of anemia.
I have anemia..
and so the medicine
. . .never ..any cure .

If your father
were not the King of Liang. . .
. . . I would not speak
to you with such restraint.
You would better understand
that as long as I am the Emperor. . .
. . .and you the Empress. . .
. . .we shall pretend well.
The Imperial Family. . .
. . . has an example to set.
As for to this family. . .
I tolerate you. . .
. . . because my concern is to
maintain law and order in the home.
Chickens roost.
Gentlemen to rest.
Streams run clear.
It is the Hour of the Snake.
Your servant kneels
before you.
The medicine
is ready now.
I thank you.
Do you know what
tomorrow is?
The Chrysanthemum Festival. . .
. . .the day my birth mother died.
You were baby when she died. . .
. . .and I was away at war
much of the time.
I never took proper care of you.
For years , we were so distant.. . .
. . . and yet you have always been
my favorite son.
I asked Jai to come back. . .
. . .and I gave him
a duty.
What do you think
will happen ?
Father , he is planning to make. . .
. . .Jai the Crown Prince.
I sense your disapproval. . .
. . . then,I won't press you.
Father , please

I am without talent
and do not deserve the throne.
Twice before , I begged you
Father, to appoint another heir.
I would follow your wish , father !
I am back.
Did the Emperor grant you
permission to leave for Qingzhou?
When the Festival ends,
will you ask once again. . .
. . . I am sure , he will agree then.
When you go, don't forget
to take me with you.Wan...
After we go there. . .
. . .we shall finally be together.
. . . . for ever.
It will happen !
Her Majesty the Empress arrives!
Your Majesty.
She can come out now.
What do you mean?
Its alright !
no
pull it!
-What is the punishment?
-For seducing His Highness
and trespassing by law
20 lashes of the whip. . .
. . . branding of the face,
and banishment from the Palace.
what do you suggest?
Your Highness
She didn't do anything
This was my fault
and I beg Your Highness. . .
. . .please exercise forgiveness.
I was prompted to do this..
Fine.
I will do it for now . . .
. . . just don't think
its free for you.
Stand up.
....think ..its easy ..
be here appropriately

until the festival.
You may Leave me.
I have made the discovery
Your Majesty requested.
Its the new ingredient
a black fungus from Persia...
.. two grams a day ..
. . .will cause a person to lose
all mind over a period of time
Thank you.
Payment is not necessary
I did not do this for money.
Then why helped me?
The Empress may think that I came
because of the generous reward.
But I came
simply , because ...
I hate the Emperor.
Only Your Majesty is in a position
to avenge me.
I see that your face is branded.
Why were you in jail?
I won't say,
forgive my silence .
Farewell.
Your Highness, Prince Wan.
The Empress has already retired.
Come here?
-Father.
-Your Majesty.
This is the wife
of the Imperial Doctor.
Father, this woman broke
into the Palace three days ago.
when just I caught her.
Raise your head.
Free her.
Get out !
Wan. . .
. . .you must never speak
of the events of this night.
Is that clear ?
You can get up.
It has been 25 years.

I was certain
. . .that I would never see you again.
And you ran off with Imperial Doctor!
At the time
you were only a lowly captain. . .
. . . plotting day and night
to become Emperor.
You flattered the King of Liang
into letting you marry his daughter.
You planned meticulously to have
my entire family put in prison. Later. . .
. . . I alone managed to get out.
You know Far from home, I almost died.
the Imperial doctor who saved me.
Who should I marry then ?
-Why did you come here ?
-I just came to see my son.
You should not haveme .
I am looking for justice
How do you ..much needed ?
. . . I shall see and paid in full.
The Imperial Doctor. . .
. . . has served us for many years. . .
. . .with impeccable conduct,
loyalty and honesty.
He is promoted
to Governor of Suzhou. . .
. . .also Commander of Chariots.
He will depart immediately. . .
. . .with his daughter, Chan.
This is the order of His Majesty.
We thank His Majesty.
Your humble servant kneels
before you.
Before I leave. . .
. . . may I have your Highness once more.
you served for me how long now?
Fifteen years , your Majesty.
If I should have wronged you ever. . .
. . . I am deeply sorry.
Your Highness
must not say that !
I would give my life
for

Your wife is well !
I hope ..
She is.
She shall go with you
when you leave here.
Your Highness is too generous.
My gratitude is without bounds.
As for the Empress's medicine. . .
. . . I have prepared
two months' supply.
Your Majesty need only command
the pharmacist. . .
. . .to heat up each dosage.
I kneel before the Emperor.
Leave us.
I am here to honour
the Crown Prince's birth mother.
She died on this day.
For over 20 years this image
has been hung here.
... in your heart. . .
you want to say something ?
So, I hear that you got
an assassin
. . .and you handled
the interrogation
You wouldn't request me ...
I will never ..
Is anything wrong with that?
Of course not.
I shall go then.
His Highness Prince Jai arrives.
Leave us, now.
Mother.
For ten years that
I have taken these herbs...
Ten days ago,
. . . the taste is different.
. . .and this new ingredient
was added.
Mother was taken ill yesterday.
Was it because of this?
Father is killing you?
Jai. . .listen

. . .after the Chrysanthemum Festival,
you will know the truth.
Each day, in front of your father. . .
. . . I sustain .. ignorance.
Every two hours. . .
. . . I swallow this poison
without protest.
Nobody knows what is happening.
I shall die exactly
as your father intends. A cretin.
But I refuse to submit without a fight.
On the night of the Festival. . .
. . . we will see the true end.
Do my brothers know
about it ?
Not yet.
would you have gone ahead ..
. . .If I was not here. . .
I would ...
Then why did you tell me?
Because I want you to be Emperor.
Father will be killed , then?
I shall force him to abdicate. . .
. . . no one will be killed.
Mother. . .
. . .a son cannot stand in rebellion
against his father!
Whatever the circumstances,
he is still my father and my Emperor.
Jai. . .my son ..
. . . I know that this would be hard ...
You can do what you do.
Prayers in the Spring. . .
. . .tranquility in the Fall. . .
. . .the earth yields.
It is the Hour of the Monkey.
Mother.
You will have my help, Mother.
You will not have to drink
medicine again.
His Highness,
the Crown Prince arrives!
Mother called me here .
What is it ?

You may leave me .
I have made a new robe for you,
different from the one last year.
What do you think this new addition ?
What does this mean?
-Its for protection.
-Protect me from what ?
What exactly are you plotting?
My son Wan. . .
. . .tomorrow night , I just
want you to wear this.
I will refuse .
I command You
to wear it .
I won't
you mustatleast tell !
He is here .
I received the message. . .
. . .that Your Highness was coming
and have been waiting .
I came here to ask you something.
Why was your mother
at the Palace?
- to see me.
-Had she visited you before?
No. Why?
Something wrong !
-Are you lying to me , Chan ?
-Why would I ?
I have no reason to lie here.
you know my Motherkeeps
embroidering chrysanthemums?
I hear they are for the Festival.
She ordered 10,000 flowers
from eunuch for weaving
Ten thousand?
She had them all delivered
to General Wu Army.
-Are you sure about it ?
-Yes .
Who told you this ?
Father mentioned this.
-What else do you know?
-Thats all .

Are you there ? Chan !
Wait a minute
My mother is coming. Please hide!
I must to go to the palace
Something is going to happen ..
.. something horrible...
I must hurry !
Your servant kneels
before you.
Your Highness,
my wife...
Quickly
Kneel down,
welcome the Crown Prince!
What are you doing ?
Get out now !
I ask .. forgive my wife
Your Highness !
Mom,you can't talk like that .
Get out!
Out !
Please forgive her.
Forgive her !
Your Highness. . .
please forgive her
I should not have let you
in the Palace for such a long.
...why did you say that ?
The two of you
can never be together again.
-But Mother?
-Promise me....
You will no longer be together.
He has to be warned...
Tonight,Something terrible
is going to happen ..
You Can't..
-Mom, I have to go and find him.
-You dare!
What were you thinking?
Chan, go outside.
For more than ten years. . .
. . . I have never once
asked your history...

What exactly have you
been hiding from me?
Where is Chan?
-Gone to the Palace!
-How can you ...
By royal command,
I am the new Governor of Suzhou !
Who are you?
Let's go!
You must be hiding
something important from me.
Quick! Go and save our daughter!
No!
His Highness
the Crown Prince arrives.
shouldn't make a move ?
you know
Have you told any body?
It souldn't be matter for you
Why don't you make a move ?
(The night
of the Chrysanthemum) Festival.
It might ...matters..
you should not be concerned
But I am the Crown Prince.
How it can not concerned me ?
.... I did it
So what if you did plan ?
You fool!
You should die !
Father is right.
You do need to take his medicine
every day until you die!
-Get out!
-you wanted me to go then you kill me
if you want proceed with your insane plan. . .
. . .you are asking me to die
Right ..right.
All you ever wanted
was for me to die,right..
You are right.
I want you to die.
Wan !
Wan ! what you have done ?

Help !
Your Majesty,
fortunately the wound is not fatal.
He will recover.
You are hiding
something else ,Mother !
Why are you doing this to me ?
.. something I must do
Don't do it. . .
. . . you don't have to do. . .
I am telling you..
I know. . .
. . . but I cannot do now.
Listen.
Your father is arriving
any moment now.
Wan, please let me go ..
you are keeping any secret..
. . . you and Empress
I know for sometime now..
Ever since. . .
. . . you have been intimate with her. . .
. . . just think of life
how I feel
you have no idea my son
I do not blame you.
I don't blame you ..
I know. . .she used to seduce to you
Father.
Jai , Where is your mother?
Father, Mother is still dressing.
I shall go and get her.
These berries. . .
. . .were your birth mother's favorite.
Even after the Festival. . .
. . .she would wear them for a few days
to ward off evil spirits.
Yes.
Each year, on this day. . .
. . .you too should wear. . .
. . .a twig of berries to honor her
she would be very grateful..
I will .
His Highness!

His Highness Prince Jai arrives!
Mother. . .
. . .Is Wan O.K.?
He knows everything.
Will he tell?
Everything is ready.
Just we may monitor.
I understand.
Wait, Jai.
Come back.
LOYALTY, FILIAL PIETY,
RITUAL, RIGHTEOUSNESS
The Commanding Officer orders :
To reward your hard work. . .
. . .a grand banquet .
While at your feast. . .
. . .your duties will be assumed
by our Commanding Officer.
His Orders are received.
Mother, what is happening?
The Emperor wants to kill
our entire family.
Why? Where is Father?
The Empress sent help
Please, this way.
Your Majesties,
the Imperial Doctor's family is outside.
Let them inside.
So ,you did this.
Get out.
I have made it here
I am still alive.
It was beneath contempt. . .
. . .to attack us
under the cloak of darkness.
Once again you have deceived me.
You are the
coward and hypocrite.
My daughter and I stand before you.
kill us!
Come on !
You spied
for the Empress.
This is all ..doing

My husband and daughter
knew nothing about me!
But they knew
far too much of me.
Father. . .
- . . .Who is this lady..?
-silence !
Listen.. . .
- . . . I know who she is.
-Your Highness!
-She is the woman in the portrait.
-Highness!
Your father's first wife. . .
. . .your mother.
Father. . .
. . . you need to tell me.
She is.
She is .
Is..... what did happen?
Yes.
I wanted it to know the children. . .
. . . how father betrayed us.
You told me she died
when I was a child
Chan !
Mother. . .
. . .why did you have to tell us?
Chan !
Hiding anything more ?
Wait and see.
-Yu ! What you have done ?
-Mother, this is all your fault !
I am not a young child ..
you are !
Ashameful to me
I know about your affair
I know you and Jai have plans..
What for you are acting now !
No !
I am acting first!
-You are foolish !
-I am not a fool !
Give the throne to me now !
I wanted to know

I know you have never cared ...
..you have never liked me .
No one wanted me !
... insane.
you are ...
He is your older brother!
I don't care !
Let him die !
It doesn't matter !
I am sorry.
Attack!
Halt!
Attack!
Throw!
Shields up!
Forward !
Attack!
Do not harm Prince Jai !
Throw!
Catch !
Ready!
Ready! Ready!
Shoot!
Hold the gates!
Take him alive!
Kneel !
Rise!
I lost my dearest son.
He told me everything. . .
-. . .about your plan.
-I thought he would.
You are really lost your mind.
Execute!
I had a plans as well.
Once the Festival ended . .
. . . I want to remove Wan
as Crown Prince. . .
. . .and appoint you as my heir.
I told you before. . .
. . you shoudn't take
what I do not give you
. . .I have been watching ...
The Imperial Flag. . .
. . .was the final warning .

I was aware. . .
. . .that I could have won
this batttle..
Kill me or dismember me. . .
. . .you will do as you wish. . .
. . . but I need you to know, Father. . .
. . .that I did not rebel. . .
. . .for the sake of the crown.
I did it for mother.
Heaven, earth, and man unite.
Fortune and prosperity to all.
Midnight, the Hour of the Rat.
The Chrysanthemum Festival begins.
Your servant kneels
before you.
Your Majesty's medicine
for the hour is ready.
What is the punishment. . .
. . .for acts of rebellion?
Your Highness,
to be torn apart by five horses.
you hear ...
I am. . .
. . . willing to spare you. . .
. . .only if you agree .
..to one thing..
From this day. . .
. . .every day. . .
. . .only you will pour
your mother's medicine.
Mother. . .
. . .your son has failed you.
Please forgive me.
Your tears
Glisten, laced with pain
The crescent moon
Hangs in the past
Pale with sickness
Cool night, too long
Turns to frost
Who is on the tower
Frozen in despair?
The rain drums lightly
On a crimson pane

My destiny is written on paper
Fluttering in the wind
Distant dreams
Rise like incense
Melting into night
Is your image
Chrysanthemums fall
Weeping to the ground
Traces of your smile
On a yellowing scroll
Your heart now empty
My thoughts quietly rest
The north wind blows
Not yet dawn
Your shadow clear and close
Only companion of my soul
On the lake, a couple mirrored
Blossoms of evening air
Beauty undimmed
Scatter everywhere
A fate hard to swallow
Sadness, do not cross the river
Your autumn heart will sink
Drowning in longing
You will not reach the other shore
Whose hills and rivers
Echo with the clamor of hooves?
My armor is shredded
By the dividing hour
The sky slowly brightens
Your sighs, silk soft
Weave a night of sorrow
So fragile, so spare
Chrysanthemums fall
Weeping to the ground
Traces of your smile
On a yellowing scroll
Your heart now empty
My thoughts quietly rest
The north wind blows
Almost dawn
Your shadow, clear and close
Only companion of my soul
On the lake, a couple reflected

Chrysanthemums sigh
In the cool night air
Traces of your smile
In yellowing despair
Your heart now empty
My thoughts quietly rest
The north wind blows
Almost dawn
Your shadow, so close
The only companion of my soul
On the lake, the two of us