

Xu Xian and Fa Hai

XU XIAN:

Sir Abbot, you really shouldn't go to all this trouble just for me. I can't stay –

Oh my, that certainly is a view: “the autumn leaves are touched by rays of” –

FA HAI:

Sir, you're married to a snake.

You are coiled in the snares of a snake demon.

XU XIAN:

What are you talking about? You said you miscalculated!

FA HAI:

And that servant of hers – that Green thing?

XU XIAN:

You mean Greenie?

FA HAI:

Snake.

XU XIAN:

This is preposterous. I advise you, sir, to stop slandering virtuous young women.

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FA HAI:

They are neither virtuous, nor young, nor women. They are snake spirits that have spent hundreds of years cultivating their magic powers. You remember the theft of gold ingots from the Magistrate's last spring? That green thing was behind it – it's how you built your shop! With stolen money! And the two of them conspired to fool you after the festival. It was indeed your wife you discovered hissing in your sheets, but the green one conjured up a third snake to fool you.

XU XIAN:

I'm going.

FA HAI:

Your only hope is to convert.

XU XIAN:

Convert?

FA HAI:

It is the only way to protect yourself.

XU XIAN:

What?! Is that what this is about? You want me to become a monk? You want me to abandon my home and family?

FA HAI:

Your "family" is an unnatural alliance. It's nothing but a nest of vipers. If you do not leave them they shall soon be deprived of you in any case, for they will eat you.

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XU XIAN:

Well, I'm very grateful for your concern on my behalf, but I have no intention of leaving my family. I chose to stay in this vale of tears. If, indeed, my wife – who is at this moment serving customers in our pharmacy and wondering where I am – if she is a snake demon I am confident I can avoid her snares by myself. It is getting late and I must go now.

FA HAI:

I'm afraid that won't be possible. The gates of the mountain are locked tight. You cannot leave.