



George Balazs <honumazu@gmail.com>

The Divided Daughter (離魂記 / Lihún jì)

1 message

George Balazs <itsahonuworldinhawaii@hotmail.com>

Sun, Oct 5, 2025 at 10:13 AM

To: George Balazs <honumazu@gmail.com>

The Divided Daughter (離魂記 / Lihún jì)

Retold from the Tang chuanqi by Chen Xuanyou

Long ago, in the Tang capital, there lived a young woman named **Zhang Qianniang**, daughter of an upright official. She was known for her beauty and gentle conduct, and for her promise to marry **Wang Zhou**, a poor scholar of fine talent. But when her father rose in rank, he withdrew his consent—seeking a match more befitting his new status.

Heartbroken, Qianniang fell ill with grief. One night, as she lay motionless, her spirit slipped free from her body. In this form—radiant, living, yet immaterial—she journeyed to Wang’s modest home. Seeing her before him, he believed Heaven had shown mercy. They married quietly, and for years lived as man and wife, their days filled with calm joy. They even had children, and no shadow fell between them.

At last Wang sought to make peace with her family. Together they returned to the Zhang household—where Qianniang’s mother fainted in shock, and her father stood speechless. “How can this be?” he cried. “My daughter has lain unconscious in her bed since the day she parted from you!”

They rushed inside—and there upon the couch lay **another Qianniang**, pale but breathing, her body stirring as if from a long dream. The soul that had walked the earth with Wang slowly merged again into the sleeping form. When her eyes opened, she recognized them all—the man she loved, the parents she mourned—and tears fell freely.

Thereafter, her father relented, honoring the marriage Heaven itself had sanctioned. Qianniang and Wang lived long and contented lives; their story was told for generations as proof that **true affection transcends the bounds of body and soul**