

WU

Such has ever been my purpose.

XUAN NU

Thou hath cunning. But beware. She possesses charisma.
And power.

WU

Yes. Even one such as I must tread carefully.

XUAN NU

Aye. Thou seek to bend her to thy purpose. But she can
bend THEE to HER purpose.

WU

I know. But...misdirection can serve.

(More confidently)

Because the best way to deceive..is to tell the truth.

XUAN NU

Humans...never change!

(Lights cross fades to SHIH who wakes
and goes on deck. She glances skyward,
not noticing ZHONG)

SHIH

Xuan Nu, your hand has been on me, as ever. Forgive my
doubts, Great One.

ZHONG

The Captain's new doxy thinks she can talk to the
gods. Is she god touched? Or just touched in the head?

SHIH

Master Zhong, I didn't realize--

ZHONG

You stole my niece, you traitorous witch!

SHIH

Pardon me, Master Zhong, but Captain Cheng decided to
part you two before I came aboard.

ZHONG

How fortunate. To have riches drop into your lap.

START

SHIH

None of us control the will of the gods.

ZHONG

The gods must love the young and beautiful. You smile their way and they reward you. The ugly and old? They turn away in disgust and scorn.

SHIH

Truly, I had no hand in this--

ZHONG

We toil all our lives for a chance at glory. Yet, some empty headed wench snatches it without a care.

SHIH

You had your opportunity. What did you do with it?

ZHONG

I---I--Wish I had another chance. The captain says the seas are cruel to the soft and weak. Like...

SHIH

(softly)

Your brother?

ZHONG

Ling and I need to be tough to survive!

SHIH

But you hurt her.

ZHONG

I did. Now I cannot make amends. It's gone. Fortune. Advancement. Family. Thanks to you. Bitch. Whore!

(XI and LING enter. XI sees ZHONG and takes a vial out of her clothes.)

SHIH

The Captain's made his wishes clear. I support the captain. You should, too.

ZHONG

The sea cares little about wishes. Or a pretty face. It will break you, beauty or not.

(Calls offstage)

Pei! You better have saved some of that for me!

END