

# E3 - The Unsettling Matter of the Spirit

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**SIGN** The Apothecary Diaries

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**SIGN** This story is a work of fiction. The names of all of the characters, organizations, and so on are imaginary. It also bears no connection to any specific real-life events.

**[01:33] Lady-in-Waiting A**

That can't be!

**SIGN** Episode 3: The Unsettling Matter of the Spirit

**[01:35] Lady-in-Waiting A**

A reward?!

**[01:41] Fuyou**

I understand.

**[01:45] Lady-in-Waiting B**

Lady Fuyou!

**[01:46] Lady-in-Waiting A**

Please, wait!

**[02:24] Yinghua**

Wow, that's cold!

**[02:25] Guiyuan**

We've been at the capital for a while now,

**[02:27] Guiyuan**

but the morning cold  
is still hard to get used to.

**[02:30] Yinghua**

I miss the sand and sunlight back home.

**[02:33] Ailan**

The mornings and nights  
were cold back west as well, though.

**[02:36] Guiyuan**

Ah, the Western Capital...

**[02:38] Guiyuan**

It feels like a long time ago.

**[02:40] Guiyuan**

And yet, Lady Gyokuyou's  
palace entry feels like yesterday.

**[02:44] Ailan**

By the way, my father gave me some good news.

**[02:48] Ailan**

Apparently, trade between the western  
and central capitals is on the rise.

**[02:52] Guiyuan**

The emperor really does love Lady Gyokuyou.

**[02:55] Yinghua**

It's the family home of  
the emperor's favorite concubine.

**[02:58] Yinghua**

Surely the central officers  
can't ignore that.

**[03:01] Ailan**

Cleaning the kitchen? We'll help.

**[03:05] Yinghua**

No, we have to split up or  
we'll never finish the work.

**[03:08] Yinghua**

It's not like we can rely  
on other servants.

**[03:10] Ailan**

Yes, I remember how bad it was  
back when she was pregnant,

**[03:13] Ailan**

like that time there was  
a poison needle in her dress.

**[03:16] Yinghua**

Part of it is likely because she's  
the princess of a foreign land.

**[03:20] Guiyuan**

It's fine. We have one extra  
lady-in-waiting now, right?

**[03:26] Yinghua**

Maomao, what are you making?

**[03:29] Maomao**

It's a cold remedy.

**[03:30] Yinghua**

Wow, you can make those too?

**[03:33] Yinghua**

The new lady-in-waiting is so talented.

**[03:40] Yinghua**

Hey, are you sure you don't need anything?

**[03:43] Yinghua**

Are you eating well?

**[03:44] Maomao**

Thanks to you, yes...

**[03:46] Yinghua**

Please don't keep your troubles to yourself!

**[03:48] Maomao**

Sure...

**[03:51] Yinghua**

By the way, did you hear the new rumor everyone's talking about?

**[03:56] Maomao**

No.

**[03:58] Yinghua**

They say there's a spirit haunting the rear palace.

**[04:01] Maomao**

A spirit?

**[04:02] Xialoan**

I heard that one! The ghostly lady in white, right?

**[04:06] Maomao**

So, it's famous?

**[04:07] Xialoan**

All of the servants, eunuchs, and concubines are talking about it!

**[04:12] Xiaolan**

I think it started a few weeks ago.

**[04:14] Xiaolan**

They say a ghostly lady in white dances in the air under the moonlight!

**[04:20] Xiaolan**

And she appears every night at the eastern castle walls!

**[04:26] Maomao**

Huh...

**[04:28] Maomao**

The castle walls completely surround the rear palace.

**[04:32] Maomao**

The only way to enter is through the four gates on the north, south, east and west.

**[04:39] Maomao**

The gates are always guarded, and the walls are surrounded by a moat.

**[04:44] Maomao**

Sneaking in or out would be impossible.

**[04:47] Maomao**

They say that sunken in the moats are...

**[04:55] Maomao**

The corpses of concubines who tried to escape.

**[04:59] Maomao**

In other words, just your typical ghost story.

**[05:03] Xiaolan**

What should I do if I see the spirit for real?

**[05:05] Maomao**

It's just a rumor.

**[05:11] Maomao**

Excuse me. Could you  
take a look at this medicine?

**[05:14] Guen**

Hey, little lady. One moment.

**[05:18] Maomao**

*To think that he was so wary  
of me just a short while ago.*

**[05:22] Maomao**

*When he found out I can make medicine,  
he started allowing me to do it here.*

**[05:28] Maomao**

*He also gives me the ingredients I need.*

**[05:31] Maomao**

*He even makes me tea.*

**[05:33] Maomao**

*Should he really be so laid back?*

**[05:37] Guen**

Sorry to make you wait.

**[05:41] Maomao**

Wow...

**[05:42] Guen**

You like salty better than sweet, right?

**[05:45] Jinshi**

May I have some as well?

**[05:48] Guen**

Right away!

**[05:53] Jinshi**

Good work.

**[05:55] Maomao**

It's the least I could do.

**[05:58] Maomao**

*Does this guy have nothing better to do?*

**[06:01] Maomao**

*Shouldn't he be at the Domestic  
Service Department as a eunuch?*

**[06:03] Maomao**

*Instead, he wanders around the entire  
rear palace like he's on surveillance duty...*

**[06:09] Maomao**

*In that case, he must outrank*

*the Matron of the Serving Women.*

**[06:14] Maomao**

*He could be the emperor's guardian,  
but he's too young for that.*

**[06:20] Maomao**

*Ah. He must be the emperor's  
"personal favorite."*

**[06:26] Jinshi**

Are you thinking something  
inappropriate right now?

**[06:29] Maomao**

Huh? You're imagining things.

**[06:32] Jinshi**

Doctor, could you fetch me this?

**[06:41] Maomao**

So, what do you really want?

**[06:45] Jinshi**

Have you heard about the spirit haunting?

**[06:48] Maomao**

A few rumors, yes.

**[06:49] Jinshi**

How about sleepwalking?

**[06:54] Maomao**

Sleepwalking...

**[06:56] Jinshi**

Seems like I got your attention.

**[07:02] Jinshi**

How can it be cured?

**[07:04] Maomao**

I don't know. There's no medicine  
that cures somnambulism.

**[07:08] Jinshi**

Is there a cure other than medicine?

**[07:11] Maomao**

My specialty is medicine.

**[07:15] Jinshi**

That's too bad.

**[07:20] Jinshi**

That's truly, truly too bad.

**[07:23] Maomao**

*Yuck! He's so persistent!*

**[07:30] Maomao**

I'll do my best.

**[07:44] Maomao**

*This guy doesn't come off like a eunuch.*

**[07:49] Gaoshun**

Lady Maomao.

**[07:51] Maomao**

Please don't call me "Lady."  
You outrank me by quite a bit.

**[07:56] Gaoshun**

In that case, how's Xiaomao?

**[07:59] Maomao**

*A "Xiao" nickname? That was a sharp turn.*

**[08:02] Gaoshun**

Could you stop glaring down at  
Master Jinshi like he's an insect?

**[08:08] Maomao**

*Yikes, he knows.*

**[08:10] Gaoshun**

When he returned earlier,

**[08:12] Gaoshun**

he told me, ecstatically, how you stared  
at him like he was a venomous caterpillar.

**[08:19] Maomao**

I'll be more careful.

**[08:24] Gaoshun**

If someone unprepared saw him  
like that, they might pass out.

**[08:30] Maomao**

*To each their own, I guess...*

**[08:40] Gaoshun**

Over there.

**[08:51] Maomao**

A moonlit cotton rose...

**[08:53] Gaoshun**

That's a good guess.

**[08:57] Gaoshun**

That is Concubine Fuyou.

**[09:00] Gaoshun**

She's a mid-ranking concubine,

**[09:02] Gaoshun**

scheduled to be bestowed  
to a military officer as a reward.

**[09:14] Guen**

It's been two years, I think.

**[09:16] Guen**

She's a timid princess.

**[09:19] Guen**

She's supposed to be a skilled dancer,  
but stumbled at her first showing.

**[09:23] Guen**

The emperor hasn't laid a finger on her,  
and she shut herself in ever since.

**[09:30] Guen**

I guess some things can't be avoided, but...

**[09:34] Ladies-in-Waiting**

Lady Fuyou!

**[09:34] Guen**

A bestowal? I feel sorry for her.

**[09:38] Maomao**

*She started sleepwalking over the shock  
of being treated as a reward?*

**[09:41] Maomao**

*They do say illness is a result  
of an unbalanced mind...*

**[09:46] Maomao**

*No, I need more information.*

**[09:49] Maomao**

*Maybe I'll take another look at her.*

**[09:52] Maomao**

Where is Concubine Fuyou's room?

**[09:55] Guen**

Her building is on the north side.

**[09:57] Maomao**

Thank you. And thank you for the snacks.

**[10:01] Guen**

Leaving already?

**[10:05] Guen**

I hope she feels better.

**[10:08] Guen**

I heard she's a princess  
from a small vassal state.

**[10:10] Guen**

I'm sure she doesn't want to go back.

**[10:14] Maomao**

Go back?

**[10:15] Guen**

Oh, yes. She's...

**[10:18] Lady-in-Waiting**

I feel sorry for Concubine Fuyou.

**[10:21] Low-rank Concubine**

Yes, being given away to a military officer?

**[10:24] Low-rank Concubine**

I shudder at the mere thought.

**[10:36] Maomao**

She seems very different from how  
she looked dancing on that wall.

**[10:41] Gaoshun**

Yes. I was surprised too,  
the first time I saw her.

**[10:45] Gaoshun**

She's very unassuming most of the time.

**[10:49] Maomao**

She really is like a cotton rose.

**[10:52] Gaoshun**

A cotton rose?

**[10:54] Maomao**

Yes.

**[10:55] Maomao**

The fuyou flower,  
also known as the cotton rose,

**[10:58] Maomao**

blooms as a large white flower in the morning.

**[11:00] Maomao**

However, by evening, it turns a deep pink.

**[11:06] Gaoshun**

So, the flower changes its appearance  
over the course of a single day?

**[11:11] Maomao**

Yes.

**[11:18] Xiaolan**

The spirit story?

**[11:20] Maomao**

Yeah, I wanted to hear more about it.  
Do you know anything else?

**[11:26] Xiaolan**

Well, I heard she first  
appeared on the north side.

**[11:31] Maomao**

Huh? The north side?

**[11:33] Serving girl**

Xiaolan! Laundry!

**[11:35] Maomao**

She moved from the north to the east?

**[11:36] Xiaolan**

Coming!

**[11:37] Xiaolan**

Gotta go.

**[11:37] Maomao**

Also...

**[11:39] (Flashback) Guen**

Oh, yes. She's...

**[11:42] Maomao**

I knew it. Concubine Fuyou is...

**[11:50] Maomao**

My dad would tell me not to speak up  
based on just speculation, but...

**[11:57] Maomao**

Not much is known about  
somnia, or sleepwalking.

**[12:01] Maomao**

It is said that it's caused by stress.

**[12:03] Maomao**

The patient moves about  
in their sleep, as if they're awake.

**[12:08] Maomao**

A while ago, at the brothels,  
I saw a courtesan with the same illness.

**[12:15] Maomao**

She was a cheerful person,  
skilled at poetry.

**[12:18] Maomao**

She even received a purchase offer.

**[12:22] Maomao**

However, that offer fell through.

**[12:25] Maomao**

She started roaming the brothel at night,  
as if possessed by a demonic spirit.

**[12:39] (Flashback) Courtesan A**

Why hello. What's wrong, everyone?

**[12:43] Maomao**

She had no recollection of the night before.

**[12:47] Jinshi**

And then what happened?

**[12:49] Maomao**

Nothing. When the purchase offer was  
rescinded, the sleepwalking stopped.

**[12:55] Gyokuyou**

So... That courtesan  
didn't want to get sold off?

**[13:01] Maomao**

It's possible.

**[13:03] Maomao**

The offer was made by a wealthy merchant,

**[13:06] Maomao**

but not only did he have a wife and  
children, he had grandchildren as well.

**[13:10] Maomao**

Also, she only had one year left on her term.

**[13:18] Gyokuyou**

Perhaps Concubine Fuyou was the same.

**[13:21] Jinshi**

Hmm. Is that really it?

**[13:29] Maomao**

That's it.

**[13:31] Jinshi**

Really?

**[13:35] Gaoshun**

*Please, stay calm.*

**[13:37] Maomao**

I'll get back to work.

**[13:47] Maomao**

*From that day on, Concubine Fuyou  
was forbidden from leaving her room.*

**[13:52] Maomao**

*Until the day of her bestowal,  
eunuchs were placed to watch her.*

**[14:00] Maomao**

I hope it works out.

**[14:07] Gyokuyou**

Isn't Maomao behaving strangely lately?

**[14:12] Hongniang**

Is she?

**[14:21] Gyokuyou**

I can tell.

**[14:23] Gyokuyou**

There must be something.

**[14:32] Gyokuyou**

Concubine Fuyou is leaving today, right?

**[14:37] Maomao**

That is what I've heard.

**[14:56] Gyokuyou**

Hey.

**[14:57] Gyokuyou**

You can tell me the truth, you know.

**[15:04] Gyokuyou**

I won't get upset, since I'm the one who asked.

**[15:11] Maomao**

This is all just speculation,  
so could you keep this between us?

**[15:16] Gyokuyou**

My lips are sealed.

**[15:21] Maomao**

Do you remember the story of  
the courtesan I told you before?

**[15:25] Gyokuyou**

The sleepwalker?

**[15:27] Maomao**

Yes.

**[15:28] Maomao**

There was actually another courtesan

**[15:31] Maomao**

whose purchase offer was  
called off for the same reason.

**[15:34] Maomao**

She later received another purchase offer,

**[15:39] Maomao**

but since she was ill,  
the price was cut in half.

**[15:46] Maomao**

However, it was all fraud.

**[15:49] Gyokuyou**

Fraud?

**[15:51] Maomao**

The two men who made  
the purchase offers knew each other.

**[15:56] Maomao**

The woman pretended to be sick  
to call off the first offer.

**[16:01] Maomao**

Then, the real purchaser  
made a bid at half the first price.

**[16:07] Maomao**

If they wanted to be together,  
the man lacked the silver,

**[16:11] Maomao**

and the woman still had time left on her term.

**[16:15] Gyokuyou**

So, you're saying Concubine Fuyou  
is the same as that courtesan?

**[16:19] Maomao**

Concubine Fuyou and the military officer

**[16:22] Maomao**

are childhood friends  
who grew up in the same homeland.

**[16:25] Gyokuyou**

Huh?

**[16:26] Maomao**

I heard the man showed his valor in  
a battle against barbarians the other day.

**[17:03] Maomao**

When asked what he wished as a reward,

**[17:05] Maomao**

he strongly insisted on  
receiving Concubine Fuyou.

**[17:12] Maomao**

He must have fantasized about it  
even before he left home.

**[17:17] Maomao**

As a military officer, he could never  
propose marriage to a princess.

**[17:22] Gyokuyou**

But then, she was pulled  
into the rear palace...

**[17:27] Maomao**

And the princess also had feelings  
for her childhood friend.

**[17:31] Maomao**

So, that could be why she failed at her dance,

**[17:34] Maomao**

to avoid attracting  
the attention of the emperor.

**[17:38] Maomao**

And as intended, the emperor never  
touched her. Her body is still pure.

**[17:46] Maomao**

That said, it's entirely possible

**[17:48] Maomao**

that the emperor would show  
interest in Concubine Fuyou,

**[17:50] Maomao**

now that she's scheduled to be given away.

**[17:53] Gyokuyou**

And so, she feigned somnambulism...

**[17:57] Gyokuyou**

I can't say anything about  
the emperor. It's entirely possible.

**[18:02] Maomao**

The barbarian battle took  
place in the eastern region.

**[18:05] Maomao**

And Concubine Fuyou's  
nightly dance took place on...

**[18:09] Gyokuyou**

The eastern gate?

**[18:12] Maomao**

She was probably wishing for his safe return.

**[18:15] Maomao**

Again, all speculation.

**[18:50] Gyokuyou**

Hey, Maomao.

**[18:52] Maomao**

Yes?

**[18:54] Gyokuyou**

Would it make me a terrible woman

if I said I envy Concubine Fuyou?

**[19:08] Maomao**

*That night, Concubine Fuyou was beautiful.*

**[19:16] Maomao**

*She didn't seem at all like the nondescript princess I saw during the day.*

**[19:26] Maomao**

No, I wouldn't say that.

**[19:55] Gyokuyou**

Let's go.

**[19:57] Maomao**

Yes.

**[20:19] Maomao**

If love makes a woman beautiful,

**[20:25] Maomao**

what kind of medicine would it make?

**[20:55] Emperor**

I have a request for the rumored apothecary.

**SIGN** Next Time

**[22:46] Narrator**

*Next time: "The Threat."*

**SIGN** Episode 4: The Threat

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