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汉英对照

红楼梦

A DREAM
OF RED MANSIONS



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Chinese-English

红楼梦

A Dream of Red Mansions

I



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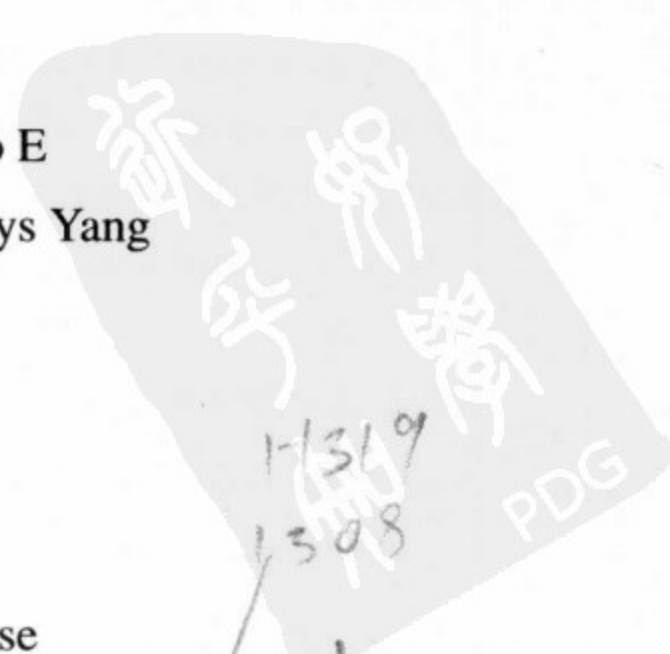
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总 序

《大中华文库》终于出版了。我们为之高兴，为之鼓舞，但也倍感压力。

当此之际，我们愿将郁积在我们心底的话，向读者倾诉。

—

中华民族有着悠久的历史 and 灿烂的文化，系统、准确地将中华民族的文化经典翻译成外文，编辑出版，介绍给全世界，是几代中国人的愿望。早在几十年前，西方一位学者翻译《红楼梦》，书名译成《一个红楼上的梦》，将林黛玉译为“黑色的玉”。我们一方面对国外学者将中国的名著介绍到世界上去表示由衷的感谢，一方面为祖国的名著还不被完全认识，甚而受到曲解，而感到深深的遗憾。还有西方学者翻译《金瓶梅》，专门摘选其中自然主义描述最为突出的篇章加以译介。一时间，西方学者好像发现了奇迹，掀起了《金瓶梅》热，说中国是“性开放的源头”，公开地在报刊上鼓吹中国要“发扬开放之传统”。还有许多资深、友善的汉学家译介中国古代的哲学著作，在把中华民族文化介绍给全世界的工作方面作出了重大贡献，但或囿于理解有误，或缘于对中国文字认识的局限，质量上乘的并不多，常常是隔靴搔痒，说不到点子上。大哲学家黑格尔曾经说过：中国有最完备的国史。但他认为中国古代没有真正意义上的哲学，还处



在哲学史前状态。这么了不起的哲学家竟然作出这样大失水准的评论，何其不幸。正如任何哲学家都要受时间、地点、条件的制约一样，黑格尔也离不开这一规律。当时他也只能从上述水平的汉学家译过去的文字去分析、理解，所以，黑格尔先生对中国古代社会的认识水平是什么状态，也就不难想象了。

中国离不开世界，世界也缺少不了中国。中国文化摄取外域的新成分，丰富了自己，又以自己的新成就输送给别人，贡献于世界。从公元5世纪开始到公元15世纪，大约有一千年，中国走在世界的前列。在这一千多年的时间里，她的光辉照耀全世界。人类要前进，怎么能不全面认识中国，怎么能不认真研究中国的历史呢？

二

中华民族是伟大的，曾经辉煌过，蓝天、白云、阳光灿烂，和平而兴旺；也有过黑暗的、想起来就让人战栗的日子，但中华民族从来是充满理想，不断追求，不断学习，渴望和平与友谊的。

中国古代伟大的思想家孔子曾经说过：“三人行，必有我师焉。择其善者而从之，其不善者而改之。”孔子的话就是要人们向别人学习。这段话正是概括了整个中华民族与人交往的原则。人与人之间交往如此，在与周边的国家交往中也是如此。

秦始皇第一个统一了中国，可惜在位只有十几年，来不及作更多的事情。汉朝继秦而继续强大，便开始走出去，了解自己周边的世界。公元前138年，汉武帝派张骞出使西



域。他带着一万头牛羊，总值一万万钱的金帛货物，作为礼物，开始西行，最远到过“安息”（即波斯）。公元前36年，班超又率36人出使西域。36个人按今天的话说，也只有一个排，显然是为了拜访未曾见过面的邻居，是去交朋友。到了西域，班超派遣甘英作为使者继续西行，往更远处的大秦国（即罗马）去访问，“乃抵条支而历安息，临西海以望大秦”（《后汉书·西域传》）。“条支”在“安息”以西，即今天的伊拉克、叙利亚一带，“西海”应是今天的地中海。也就是说甘英已经到达地中海边上，与罗马帝国隔海相望，“临大海欲渡”，却被人劝阻而未成行，这在历史上留下了遗恨。可以想见班超、甘英沟通友谊的无比勇气和强烈愿望。接下来是唐代的玄奘，历经千难万险，到“西天”印度取经，带回了南亚国家的古老文化。归国后，他把带回的佛教经典组织人翻译，到后来很多经典印度失传了，但中国却保存完好，以至于今天，没有玄奘的《大唐西域记》，印度人很难编写印度古代史。明代郑和“七下西洋”，把中华文化传到东南亚一带。鸦片战争以后，一代又一代先进的中国人，为了振兴中华，又前赴后继，向西方国家学习先进的科学思想和文明成果。这中间有我们的领导人朱德、周恩来、邓小平；有许许多多大科学家、文学家、艺术家，如郭沫若、李四光、钱学森、冼星海、徐悲鸿等。他们的追求、奋斗，他们的博大胸怀，兼收并蓄的精神，为人类社会增添了光彩。

中国文化的形成和发展过程，就是一个以众为师，以各国人民为师，不断学习和创造的过程。中华民族曾经向周边国家和民族学习过许多东西，假如没有这些学习，中华民族决不可能创造出昔日的辉煌。回顾历史，我们怎么能够不对伟大的古埃及文明、古希腊文明、古印度文明满怀深深的感



激?怎么能够不对伟大的欧洲文明、非洲文明、美洲文明、澳洲文明,以及中国周围的亚洲文明充满温情与敬意?

中华民族为人类社会曾作出过独特的贡献。在15世纪以前,中国的科学技术一直处于世界遥遥领先的地位。英国科学家李约瑟说:“中国在公元3世纪到13世纪之间,保持着一个西方所望尘莫及的科学知识水平。”美国耶鲁大学教授、《大国的兴衰》的作者保罗·肯尼迪坦言:“在近代以前时期的所有文明中,没有一个国家的文明比中国更发达,更先进。”

世界各国的有识之士千里迢迢来中国观光、学习。在这个过程中,中国唐朝的长安城渐渐发展成为国际大都市。西方的波斯、东罗马,东亚的高丽、新罗、百济、南天竺、北天竺,频繁前来。外国的王侯、留学生,在长安供职的外国官员,商贾、乐工和舞士,总有几十个国家,几万人之多。日本派出“遣唐使”更是一批接一批。传为美谈的日本人阿部仲麻吕(晁衡)在长安留学的故事,很能说明外国人与中国的交往。晁衡学成仕于唐朝,前后历时五十余年。晁衡与中国的知识分子结下了深厚的友情。他归国时,传说在海中遇难身亡。大诗人李白作诗哭悼:“日本晁卿辞帝都,征帆一片远蓬壶。明月不归沉碧海,白云愁色满苍梧。”晁衡遇险是误传,但由此可见中外学者之间在中国长安交往的情谊。

后来,不断有外国人到中国来探寻秘密,所见所闻,常常让他们目瞪口呆。《希腊纪事》(希腊人波桑尼阿著)记载公元2世纪时,希腊人在中国的见闻。书中写道:“赛里斯人用小米和青芦喂一种类似蜘蛛的昆虫,喂到第五年,虫肚子胀裂开,便从里面取出丝来。”从这段对中国古代养蚕技术的描述,可见当时欧洲人与中国人的差距。公元9世纪中叶,



阿拉伯人来到中国。一位阿拉伯作家在他所著的《中国印度闻见录》中记载了曾旅居中国的阿拉伯商人的见闻：

——一天，一个外商去拜见驻守广州的中国官吏。会见时，外商总盯着官吏的胸部，官吏很奇怪，便问：“你好像总盯着我的胸，这是怎么回事？”那位外商回答说：“透过你穿的丝绸衣服，我隐约看到你胸口上长着一个黑痣，这是什么丝绸，我感到十分惊奇。”官吏听后，失声大笑，伸出胳膊，说：“请你数数吧，看我穿了几件衣服？”那商人数过，竟然穿了五件之多，黑痣正是透过这五层丝绸衣服显现出来的。外商惊得目瞪口呆，官吏说：“我穿的丝绸还不算是最好的，总督穿的要更精美。”

——书中关于茶(他们叫干草叶子)的记载，可见阿拉伯国家当时还没有喝茶的习惯。书中记述：“中国国王本人的收入主要靠盐税和泡开水喝的一种干草税。在各个城市里，这种干草叶售价都很高，中国人称这种草叶叫‘茶’，这种干草叶比苜蓿的叶子还多，也略比它香，稍有苦味，用开水冲喝，治百病。”

——他们对中国的医疗条件十分羡慕，书中记载道：“中国人医疗条件很好，穷人可以从国库中得到药费。”还说：“城市里，很多地方立一石碑，高10肘，上面刻有各种疾病和药物，写明某种病用某种药医治。”

——关于当时中国的京城，书中作了生动的描述：中国的京城很大，人口众多，一条宽阔的长街把全城分为两半，大街右边的东区，住着皇帝、宰相、禁军及皇家的总管、奴婢。在这个区域，沿街开凿了小河，流水潺潺；路旁，葱茏的树木整然有序，一幢幢宅邸鳞次栉比。大街左边的西区，住着庶民和商人。这里有货栈和商店，每当清晨，人们可以



看到，皇室的总管、宫廷的仆役，或骑马或步行，到这里来采购。

此后的史籍对西人来华的记载，渐渐多了起来。13世纪意大利旅行家马可·波罗，尽管有人对他是否真的到过中国持怀疑态度，但他留下一部记述元代事件的《马可·波罗游记》却是确凿无疑的。这部游记中的一些关于当时中国的描述使得西方人认为是“天方夜谭”。总之，从中西文化交流史来说，这以前的时期还是一个想象和臆测的时代，相互之间充满了好奇与幻想。

从16世纪末开始，由于航海技术的发展，东西方航路的开通，随着一批批传教士来华，中国与西方开始了直接的交流。沟通中西的使命在意大利传教士利玛窦那里有了充分的体现。利玛窦于1582年来华，1610年病逝于北京，在华20余年。除了传教以外，做了两件具有历史象征意义的事，一是1594年前后在韶州用拉丁文翻译《四书》，并作了注释；二是与明代学者徐光启合作，用中文翻译了《几何原本》。

西方传教士对《四书》等中国经典的粗略翻译，以及杜赫德的《中华帝国志》等书对中国的介绍，在西方读者的眼前展现了一个异域文明，在当时及稍后一段时期引起了一场“中国热”，许多西方大思想家的眼光都曾注目中国文化。有的推崇中华文明，如莱布尼兹、伏尔泰、魁奈等，有的对中华文明持批评态度，如孟德斯鸠、黑格尔等。莱布尼兹认识到中国文化的某些思想与他的观念相近，如周易的卦象与他发明的二进制相契合，对中国文化给予了热情的礼赞；黑格尔则从他整个哲学体系的推演出发，认为中国没有真正意义上的哲学，还处在哲学史前的状态。但是，不论是推崇还是批评，是吸纳还是排斥，中西文化的交流产生了巨大的影



响。随着先进的中国科学技术的西传，特别是中国的造纸、火药、印刷术和指南针四大发明的问世，大大改变了世界的面貌。马克思说：“中国的火药把骑士阶层炸得粉碎，指南针打开了世界市场并建立了殖民地，而印刷术则变成了新教的工具，变成对精神发展创造必要前提的最强大的杠杆。”英国的哲学家培根说：中国的四大发明“改变了全世界的面貌和一切事物的状态”。

三

大千世界，潮起潮落。云散云聚，万象更新。中国古代产生了无数伟大科学家：祖冲之、李时珍、孙思邈、张衡、沈括、毕升……，产生了无数科技成果：《齐民要术》、《九章算术》、《伤寒杂病论》、《本草纲目》……，以及保存至今的世界奇迹：浑天仪、地动仪、都江堰、敦煌石窟、大运河、万里长城……。但从15世纪下半叶起，风水似乎从东方转到了西方，落后的欧洲只经过400年便成为世界瞩目的文明中心。英国的牛顿、波兰的哥白尼、德国的伦琴、法国的居里、德国的爱因斯坦、意大利的伽利略、俄国的门捷列夫、美国的费米和爱迪生……，光芒四射，令人敬仰。

中华民族开始思考了。潮起潮落究竟是什么原因？中国人发明的火药，传到欧洲，转眼之间反成为欧洲列强轰击中国大门的炮弹，又是因为什么？

鸦片战争终于催醒了中国人沉睡的迷梦，最先“睁眼看世界”的一代精英林则徐、魏源迈出了威武雄壮的一步。曾国藩、李鸿章搞起了洋务运动。中国的知识分子喊出“民主与科学”的口号。中国是落后了，中国的志士仁人在苦苦探



索。但落后中饱含着变革的动力，探索中孕育着崛起的希望。“向科学进军”，中华民族终于又迎来了科学的春天。

今天，世界毕竟来到了 21 世纪的门槛。分散隔绝的世界，逐渐变成联系为一体的世界。现在，全球一体化趋势日益明显，人类历史也就在愈来愈大的程度上成为全世界的历史。当今，任何一种文化的发展都离不开对其它优秀文化的汲取，都以其它优秀文化的发展为前提。在近现代，西方文化汲取中国文化，不仅是中国文化的传播，更是西方文化自身的创新和发展；正如中国文化对西方文化的汲取一样，既是西方文化在中国的传播，同时也是中国文化在近代的转型和发展。地球上所有的人类文化，都是我们共同的宝贵遗产。既然我们生活的各个大陆，在地球史上曾经是连成一气的“泛大陆”，或者说是一个完整的“地球村”，那么，我们同样可以在这个以知识和学习为特征的网络时代，走上相互学习、共同发展的大路，建设和开拓我们人类崭新的“地球村”。

西学仍在东渐，中学也将西传。各国人民的优秀文化正日益迅速地为中国文化所汲取，而无论西方和东方，也都需要从中国文化中汲取养分。正是基于这一认识，我们组织出版汉英对照版《大中华文库》，全面系统地翻译介绍中国传统文化典籍。我们试图通过《大中华文库》，向全世界展示，中华民族五千年的追求，五千年的梦想，正在新的历史时期重放光芒。中国人民就像火后的凤凰，万众一心，迎接新世纪文明的太阳。

杨牧之

1999 年 8 月 北京



PREFACE TO THE *LIBRARY OF CHINESE CLASSICS*

The publication of the *Library of Chinese Classics* is a matter of great satisfaction to all of us who have been involved in the production of this monumental work. At the same time, we feel a weighty sense of responsibility, and take this opportunity to explain to our readers the motivation for undertaking this cross-century task.

1

The Chinese nation has a long history and a glorious culture, and it has been the aspiration of several generations of Chinese scholars to translate, edit and publish the whole corpus of the Chinese literary classics so that the nation's greatest cultural achievements can be introduced to people all over the world. There have been many translations of the Chinese classics done by foreign scholars. A few dozen years ago, a Western scholar translated the title of *A Dream of Red Mansions* into "A Dream of Red Chambers" and Lin Daiyu, the heroine in the novel, into "Black Jade." But while their endeavours have been laudable, the results of their labours have been less than satisfactory. Lack of knowledge of Chinese culture and an inadequate grasp of the Chinese written language have led the translators into many errors. As a consequence, not only are Chinese classical writings widely misunderstood in the rest of the world, in some cases their content has actually been distorted. At one time, there was a "*Jin Ping Mei* craze" among Western scholars, who thought that they had uncovered a miraculous phenomenon, and published theories claiming that China was the "fountainhead of eroticism," and that a Chinese "tradition of permissiveness" was about to be laid bare. This distorted view came about due to the translators of the *Jin Ping Mei* (*Plum in the Golden Vase*) putting one-sided stress on the raw elements in that novel, to the neglect of its overall literary value. Meanwhile, there have been many distinguished and well-intentioned



Sinologists who have attempted to make the culture of the Chinese nation more widely known by translating works of ancient Chinese philosophy. However, the quality of such work, in many cases, is unsatisfactory, often missing the point entirely. The great philosopher Hegel considered that ancient China had no philosophy in the real sense of the word, being stuck in philosophical "prehistory." For such an eminent authority to make such a colossal error of judgment is truly regrettable. But, of course, Hegel was just as subject to the constraints of time, space and other objective conditions as anyone else, and since he had to rely for his knowledge of Chinese philosophy on inadequate translations it is not difficult to imagine why he went so far off the mark.

China cannot be separated from the rest of the world; and the rest of the world cannot ignore China. Throughout its history, Chinese civilization has enriched itself by absorbing new elements from the outside world, and in turn has contributed to the progress of world civilization as a whole by transmitting to other peoples its own cultural achievements. From the 5th to the 15th centuries, China marched in the front ranks of world civilization. If mankind wishes to advance, how can it afford to ignore China? How can it afford not to make a thoroughgoing study of its history?

2

Despite the ups and downs in their fortunes, the Chinese people have always been idealistic, and have never ceased to forge ahead and learn from others, eager to strengthen ties of peace and friendship.

The great ancient Chinese philosopher Confucius once said, "Whenever three persons come together, one of them will surely be able to teach me something. I will pick out his good points and emulate them; his bad points I will reform." Confucius meant by this that we should always be ready to learn from others. This maxim encapsulates the principle the Chinese people have always followed in their dealings with other peoples, not only on an individual basis but also at the level of state-to-state relations.

After generations of internecine strife, China was unified by Emperor Qin Shi Huang (the First Emperor of the Qin Dynasty) in 221 B.C. The Han Dynasty, which succeeded that of the short-lived Qin, waxed pow-



erful, and for the first time brought China into contact with the outside world. In 138 B.C., Emperor Wu dispatched Zhang Qian to the western regions, i.e. Central Asia. Zhang, who traveled as far as what is now Iran, took with him as presents for the rulers he visited on the way 10,000 head of sheep and cattle, as well as gold and silks worth a fabulous amount. In 36 B.C., Ban Chao headed a 36-man legation to the western regions. These were missions of friendship to visit neighbours the Chinese people had never met before and to learn from them. Ban Chao sent Gan Ying to explore further toward the west. According to the "Western Regions Section" in the *Book of Later Han*, Gan Ying traveled across the territories of present-day Iraq and Syria, and reached the Mediterranean Sea, an expedition which brought him within the confines of the Roman Empire. Later, during the Tang Dynasty, the monk Xuan Zang made a journey fraught with danger to reach India and seek the knowledge of that land. Upon his return, he organized a team of scholars to translate the Buddhist scriptures, which he had brought back with him. As a result, many of these scriptural classics which were later lost in India have been preserved in China. In fact, it would have been difficult for the people of India to reconstruct their own ancient history if it had not been for Xuan Zang's *A Record of a Journey to the West in the Time of the Great Tang Dynasty*. In the Ming Dynasty, Zheng He transmitted Chinese culture to Southeast Asia during his seven voyages. Following the Opium Wars in the mid-19th century, progressive Chinese, generation after generation, went to study the advanced scientific thought and cultural achievements of the Western countries. Their aim was to revive the fortunes of their own country. Among them were people who were later to become leaders of China, including Zhu De, Zhou Enlai and Deng Xiaoping. In addition, there were people who were to become leading scientists, literary figures and artists, such as Guo Moruo, Li Siguang, Qian Xuesen, Xian Xinghai and Xu Beihong. Their spirit of ambition, their struggles and their breadth of vision were an inspiration not only to the Chinese people but to people all over the world.

Indeed, it is true that if the Chinese people had not learned many things from the surrounding countries they would never have been able to produce the splendid achievements of former days. When we look back



upon history, how can we not feel profoundly grateful for the legacies of the civilizations of ancient Egypt, Greece and India? How can we not feel fondness and respect for the cultures of Europe, Africa, America and Oceania?

The Chinese nation, in turn, has made unique contributions to the community of mankind. Prior to the 15th century, China led the world in science and technology. The British scientist Joseph Needham once said, "From the third century B.C. to the 13th century A.D. China was far ahead of the West in the level of its scientific knowledge." Paul Kennedy, of Yale University in the U.S., author of *The Rise and Fall of the Great Powers*, said, "Of all the civilizations of the pre-modern period, none was as well-developed or as progressive as that of China."

Foreigners who came to China were often astonished at what they saw and heard. The Greek geographer Pausanias in the second century A.D. gave the first account in the West of the technique of silk production in China: "The Chinese feed a spider-like insect with millet and reeds. After five years the insect's stomach splits open, and silk is extracted therefrom." From this extract, we can see that the Europeans at that time did not know the art of silk manufacture. In the middle of the 9th century A.D., an Arabian writer includes the following anecdote in his *Account of China and India*:

"One day, an Arabian merchant called upon the military governor of Guangzhou. Throughout the meeting, the visitor could not keep his eyes off the governor's chest. Noticing this, the latter asked the Arab merchant what he was staring at. The merchant replied, 'Through the silk robe you are wearing, I can faintly see a black mole on your chest. Your robe must be made out of very fine silk indeed!' The governor burst out laughing, and holding out his sleeve invited the merchant to count how many garments he was wearing. The merchant did so, and discovered that the governor was actually wearing five silk robes, one on top of the other, and they were made of such fine material that a tiny mole could be seen through them all! Moreover, the governor explained that the robes he was wearing were not made of the finest silk at all; silk of the highest grade was reserved for the garments worn by the provincial governor."

The references to tea in this book (the author calls it "dried grass")



reveal that the custom of drinking tea was unknown in the Arab countries at that time: "The king of China's revenue comes mainly from taxes on salt and the dry leaves of a kind of grass which is drunk after boiled water is poured on it. This dried grass is sold at a high price in every city in the country. The Chinese call it 'cha.' The bush is like alfalfa, except that it bears more leaves, which are also more fragrant than alfalfa. It has a slightly bitter taste, and when it is infused in boiling water it is said to have medicinal properties."

Foreign visitors showed especial admiration for Chinese medicine. One wrote, "China has very good medical conditions. Poor people are given money to buy medicines by the government."

In this period, when Chinese culture was in full bloom, scholars flocked from all over the world to China for sightseeing and for study. Chang'an, the capital of the Tang Dynasty was host to visitors from as far away as the Byzantine Empire, not to mention the neighboring countries of Asia. Chang'an, at that time the world's greatest metropolis, was packed with thousands of foreign dignitaries, students, diplomats, merchants, artisans and entertainers. Japan especially sent contingent after contingent of envoys to the Tang court. Worthy of note are the accounts of life in Chang'an written by Abeno Nakamaro, a Japanese scholar who studied in China and had close friendships with ministers of the Tang court and many Chinese scholars in a period of over 50 years. The description throws light on the exchanges between Chinese and foreigners in this period. When Abeno was supposedly lost at sea on his way back home, the leading poet of the time, Li Bai, wrote a eulogy for him.

The following centuries saw a steady increase in the accounts of China written by Western visitors. The Italian Marco Polo described conditions in China during the Yuan Dynasty in his *Travels*. However, until advances in the science of navigation led to the opening of east-west shipping routes at the beginning of the 16th century Sino-Western cultural exchanges were coloured by fantasy and conjecture. Concrete progress was made when a contingent of religious missionaries, men well versed in Western science and technology, made their way to China, ushering in an era of direct contacts between China and the West. The experience of this era was embodied in the career of the Italian Jesuit Matteo Ricci. Arriving in



China in 1582, Ricci died in Beijing in 1610. Apart from his missionary work, Ricci accomplished two historically symbolic tasks — one was the translation into Latin of the “Four Books,” together with annotations, in 1594; the other was the translation into Chinese of Euclid’s *Elements*.

The rough translations of the “Four Books” and other Chinese classical works by Western missionaries, and the publication of Père du Halde’s *Description Geographique, Historique, Chronologique, Politique, et Physique de l’Empire de la Chine* revealed an exotic culture to Western readers, and sparked a “China fever,” during which the eyes of many Western intellectuals were fixed on China. Some of these intellectuals, including Leibniz, held China in high esteem; others, such as Hegel, nursed a critical attitude toward Chinese culture. Leibniz considered that some aspects of Chinese thought were close to his own views, such as the philosophy of the *Book of Changes* and his own binary system. Hegel, on the other hand, as mentioned above, considered that China had developed no proper philosophy of its own. Nevertheless, no matter whether the reaction was one of admiration, criticism, acceptance or rejection, Sino-Western exchanges were of great significance. The transmission of advanced Chinese science and technology to the West, especially the Chinese inventions of paper-making, gunpowder, printing and the compass, greatly changed the face of the whole world. Karl Marx said, “Chinese gunpowder blew the feudal class of knights to smithereens; the compass opened up world markets and built colonies; and printing became an implement of Protestantism and the most powerful lever and necessary precondition for intellectual development and creation.” The English philosopher Roger Bacon said that China’s four great inventions had “changed the face of the whole world and the state of affairs of everything.”

3

Ancient China gave birth to a large number of eminent scientists, such as Zu Chongzhi, Li Shizhen, Sun Simiao, Zhang Heng, Shen Kuo and Bi Sheng. They produced numerous treatises on scientific subjects, including *The Manual of Important Arts for the People’s Welfare, Nine*



Chapters on the Mathematical Art, A Treatise on Febrile Diseases and *Compendium of Materia Medica*. Their accomplishments included ones whose influence has been felt right down to modern times, such as the armillary sphere, seismograph, Dujiangyan water conservancy project, Dunhuang Grottoes, Grand Canal and Great Wall. But from the latter part of the 15th century, and for the next 400 years, Europe gradually became the cultural centre upon which the world's eyes were fixed. The world's most outstanding scientists then were England's Isaac Newton, Poland's Copernicus, France's Marie Curie, Germany's Rontgen and Einstein, Italy's Galileo, Russia's Mendeleev and America's Edison.

The Chinese people then began to think: What is the cause of the rise and fall of nations? Moreover, how did it happen that gunpowder, invented in China and transmitted to the West, in no time at all made Europe powerful enough to batter down the gates of China herself?

It took the Opium War to wake China from its reverie. The first generation to make the bold step of "turning our eyes once again to the rest of the world" was represented by Lin Zexu and Wei Yuan. Zeng Guofan and Li Hongzhang started the Westernization Movement, and later intellectuals raised the slogan of "Democracy and Science." Noble-minded patriots, realizing that China had fallen behind in the race for modernization, set out on a painful quest. But in backwardness lay the motivation for change, and the quest produced the embryo of a towering hope, and the Chinese people finally gathered under a banner proclaiming a "March Toward Science."

On the threshold of the 21st century, the world is moving in the direction of becoming an integrated entity. This trend is becoming clearer by the day. In fact, the history of the various peoples of the world is also becoming the history of mankind as a whole. Today, it is impossible for any nation's culture to develop without absorbing the excellent aspects of the cultures of other peoples. When Western culture absorbs aspects of Chinese culture, this is not just because it has come into contact with Chinese culture, but also because of the active creativity and development of Western culture itself; and vice versa. The various cultures of the world's peoples are a precious heritage which we all share. Mankind no longer lives on different continents, but on one big continent, or in a



“global village.” And so, in this era characterized by an all-encompassing network of knowledge and information we should learn from each other and march in step along the highway of development to construct a brand-new “global village.”

Western learning is still being transmitted to the East, and vice versa. China is accelerating its pace of absorption of the best parts of the cultures of other countries, and there is no doubt that both the West and the East need the nourishment of Chinese culture. Based on this recognition, we have edited and published the *Library of Chinese Classics* in a Chinese-English format as an introduction to the corpus of traditional Chinese culture in a comprehensive and systematic translation. Through this collection, our aim is to reveal to the world the aspirations and dreams of the Chinese people over the past 5,000 years and the splendour of the new historical era in China. Like a phoenix rising from the ashes, the Chinese people in unison are welcoming the cultural sunrise of the new century.





前 言

19 世纪初，清嘉庆年间的《京都竹枝词》咏北京风俗云：“开谈不说《红楼梦》，读尽诗书是枉然。”人们谈起《红楼梦》，意见分歧，朋友之间争论得激烈起来，甚至可以弄到“几挥老拳”的地步。二百年过去了，《红楼梦》还是中国人说不完的话题。人们把对《红楼梦》的评论和研究称为“红学”。一部小说的研究竟成为一个专门的学问，确实是绝无仅有的。

《红楼梦》意蕴丰富，思想深邃，“横看成岭侧成峰，远近高低各不同”，它是一个永远不能穷尽的艺术世界。它的魅力，如果用简单的话语来概括，也许可以这样说：它充分而真实地展示了青春，展示了人在青春时的纯真、热烈、优美和丰富的柔情。小说主人公贾宝玉和林黛玉生活的时代，那特定的社会条件和人文环境都已成为遥远的过去，但贾宝玉和林黛玉以及大观园的少女们的梦想和追求，以及他们的情感生活，却仍然可以激起今人的共鸣。

《红楼梦》的作者曹雪芹（1715 年？ - 1763 年？），名霭，字梦阮，号雪芹，又号芹圃、芹溪。祖籍辽阳，先世原是汉族，后入满洲正白旗为“包衣”人。曹雪芹祖上三代任江宁织造官达 60 年之久。曾祖母孙氏是康熙皇帝玄烨的保姆，祖父曹寅曾做过玄烨的伴读和御前侍卫，玄烨六次南



巡，曹寅接驾四次，足见曹寅如何得到玄烨的恩宠。曹寅去世以后，曹雪芹的父辈曹颀等也得到玄烨的眷顾，不过好景不长，雍正即位，曹家连遭变故，曹颀因“亏空”、“骚扰驿站”等罪名被革职治罪，家产被抄没，曹家从此结束了风月繁华的生活，不得不举家迁往北京。曹雪芹自幼过着锦衣纨绔、饫甘餍肥的生活，随着家道败落，便从温柔富贵之乡，堕入清寒困顿之地，愈往后日子愈艰难，到了晚年移居北京西郊，连温饱都难以维持，“满径蓬蒿”、“举家食粥”就是他那时生活的写照。乾隆二十七年（1762年），他的幼子夭亡，这沉重的打击使他病倒，不久，于当年除夕（1763年2月12日）与世长辞。

关于曹雪芹的生卒年问题，由于资料匮乏，学术界有不同意见。卒年就有三说，即“壬午（乾隆二十七年）说”、“癸未（乾隆二十八年）说”、“甲申（乾隆二十九年）说”。关于曹雪芹的生年，则依据他不满五十岁之说，由卒年向前推算。

曹雪芹是一位性格傲岸、才华横溢的艺术家。他的友人敦诚评他的诗说：“爱君诗笔有奇气，直追昌谷破篱樊。”又说：“知君诗胆昔如铁，堪与刀颖交寒光。”可惜曹雪芹诗作没有完整的留传下来，仅存题敦诚《琵琶行传奇》两句：“白傅诗灵应喜甚，定教蛮素鬼排场。”曹雪芹还是一位画家，喜绘石头，其友人敦敏《题芹圃画石》云：“傲骨如君世已奇，嶙峋更见此支离。醉余奋扫如椽笔，写出胸中块磊时。”他的画作，从敦敏的诗句推想，一定是很有风骨的笔墨。当然，曹雪芹之所以著名，还是因为他创作了伟大的长



篇小说《红楼梦》。

关于曹雪芹创作《红楼梦》的过程，我们现在所知不多。《红楼梦》第一回“作者自云”：

今风尘碌碌，一事无成，忽念及当日所有之女子，一一细考较去，觉其行止见识，皆出于我之上，何我堂堂须眉，诚不若彼裙钗哉？实愧则有余，悔又无益之大无可如何之日也！当此时，则自欲将已往所赖天恩祖德，锦衣纨绔之时，饫甘餍肥之日，背父兄教育之恩，负师友规谈之德，以致今日一技无成、半生潦倒之罪，编述一集，以告天下人。虽我之罪固不能免，然闺阁中本自历历有人，万不可因我之不肖，自护己短，一并使其泯灭也。虽今日之茅椽蓬牖，瓦灶绳床，其晨夕风露，阶柳庭花，亦未有妨我之襟怀笔墨者。虽我未学，下笔无文，又何妨用假语村言敷演出一段故事来，亦可使闺阁昭传，复可悦世之目，破人愁闷，不亦宜乎？

由此看来，曹雪芹是在经历了家族自盛而衰的变故之后，在贫困潦倒的景况中写作《红楼梦》的。他的生活经历不但为他的创作提供了素材，而且也磨炼了他的思想，提升了他的

情怀。第一回中还说“曹雪芹于悼红轩中披阅十载，增删五次”，也就是说《红楼梦》凝铸了曹雪芹十年的心血。早期抄本《脂砚斋重评石头记》（甲戌本）第一回

“满纸荒唐言，一把辛酸泪。都云作者痴，谁解其中味。”有眉批云：“能解者方有辛酸之泪，哭成此书。壬午除夕，书

未成，芹为泪尽而逝。”曹雪芹未写成全书，今传早期各种抄本只有前八十回，据说八十回以后他还写了若干回，可惜都迷失了。现在通行的《红楼梦》百二十回的后四十回为他人所续补，程伟元、高鹗于乾隆五十六年辛亥（1791年）刊行百二十回《红楼梦》时在序文中说，后四十回是从鼓儿担上买来的，他们只是做了一些编辑工作，但有学者认为后四十回其实就是高鹗续补的，所谓从鼓儿担买来之说只是一个烟幕。后四十回的思想境界和艺术水平显然不及前八十回，但它补成全书，使故事情节首尾完整，并且保存了悲剧气氛，其功绩不可泯灭。百二十回本通行二百年已为人们所接受，就充分说明了这一点。程伟元、高鹗刊行的百二十回《红楼梦》，对曹雪芹的前八十回原文也作了修改，要认识曹雪芹著作的本来面目，必须对照各种早期抄本。

《红楼梦》描写了一个由盛而衰的贵族大家庭中的爱情婚姻悲剧。小说主人公贾宝玉是荣国府的嫡派子孙，他出身不凡，又聪明灵秀，是贾氏家庭寄予重望的继承人。但他却不愿意接受贵族家庭的生活方式和生活道路。他觉得贵族社会是那样的虚伪、丑恶和腐朽，而纯真美好的东西却存在于包括地位微贱的侍女在内的少女们身上，他认为“女儿是水做的骨肉，男子是泥做的骨肉。我见了女儿便清爽，见了男子便觉浊臭逼人”。除晨昏定省之外，他尽力逃避参加士大夫的交游和应酬，他厌恶一般封建士子所追求的功名利禄，只想在大观园中与少女们自由自在地厮混，他对那些天真无邪的少女们说：“我此时若果有造化，该死的时，如今趁你们在，我就死了，再能够你们哭我的眼泪流成大河，把我的



尸首漂起来，送到那鸦雀不到的幽僻之处，随风化了，自此再不要托生为人，就是我死的得时了。”贾宝玉的性格对于封建社会具有深刻的叛逆倾向，封建家长斥责他离经叛道，一般人也认为他痴傻，但他无怨无悔，在封建势力的不断压迫下，他的叛逆思想性格日趋成熟和坚定。他的这种性格集中表现在他与林黛玉和薛宝钗的爱情、婚姻上。

封建婚姻的基础不是爱情，而是家族的利害关系。贾家虽是百年望族，但已走上衰败之路，不仅经济上入不敷出，贵族的庄园经济已经维持不了贵族的铺张奢侈的生活，而且更重要的是贵族的精神的空虚和人格的堕落，一代不如一代，以至在偌大的一个家族中，竟找不出一个像贾宝玉这样可望支撑门户的子孙。在这样的背景上，贾家需要金钱的援手和帮助贾宝玉入于封建正途的内助，贾宝玉婚配的最佳人选当然是出身豪富而又谨守礼教的薛宝钗。薛宝钗聪明美丽、温柔玲珑，但就因为她思想的封建正统倾向，贾宝玉不爱她。贾宝玉在爱情上选择了门庭单薄的林黛玉。林黛玉的父母相继去世，没有兄弟姐妹，孤苦无靠，只能依傍外祖母的贾家，过着寄人篱下的生活。在声势显赫而又势利恶劣的贾家里，她处处保持自己的人格尊严，用她的直率和锋芒抵御欺凌和压迫。她的这种叛逆精神恰好与贾宝玉相共鸣。贾宝玉和林黛玉初恋时的缠绵和抵牾带有孩童的幼稚和单纯，经过感情和思想认知的深化，他们的爱情变得执着而成熟。然而，随着贾家境况的恶化，随着家长要把贾宝玉引上封建正路以挽救家庭颓局的希望日益明确和强烈，家长便把他们的缔结贾宝玉薛玉钗“金玉良缘”的意图一次又一次地暗示

出来，一次又一次地剿杀贾宝玉身边的反叛势力，逐渐把压迫的圈子越来越紧缩到贾宝玉和林黛玉身上。林黛玉本来就怯弱多病，在这样的压迫下健康状况日益恶化，终于怀抱纯洁的爱和对环境的怨愤永远地离开了尘世。按曹雪芹的原意，贾宝玉在林黛玉去世后才与薛宝钗结婚，但是他还是不能忘记林黛玉，不能与薛宝钗和谐地共同生活，最终从家庭出走，“金玉良缘”原来只是一个悲剧。

清代顺治、康熙年间曾流行以《平山冷燕》、《好逑传》等为代表的一大批才子佳人小说，它们都是描写才子佳人的婚恋故事，《红楼梦》写贾宝玉、林黛玉和薛宝钗的爱情婚姻，与它们有什么不同呢？首先，作者曹雪芹是把主人公的爱情婚姻纠葛放在一个真实、复杂而具体的社会家庭环境中，社会家庭环境不只是这个爱情婚姻悲剧的舞台和背景，同时还与这个爱情婚姻悲剧的发生、发展和结局有着深刻而具体的联系。小说通过爱情婚姻与社会家庭的关系的描写，深刻地揭示了这个爱情婚姻悲剧的社会根源。其次，曹雪芹写贾宝玉、林黛玉的恋爱，不是传统的才子佳人式的恋爱。才子佳人的恋爱原则是通常所谓的“郎才女貌”。“女貌”指姿色美丽，自然还包括聪明才气在内，而“郎才”的“才”，既包括诗词歌赋之才，同时还包括精通举业、博取功名之才。一般才子佳人小说虽然较多渲染诗词歌赋之才，但博取功名却是才子佳人终成眷属的关键。贾宝玉和林黛玉的恋爱绝对不是“郎才女貌”的旧套。贾宝玉的确有才，但他藐视功名利禄，不肯走“学而优则仕”的道路，谁跟他谈“仕途经济”，他就讨厌谁，即使是亲密如史湘云、薛宝钗



等，他也翻脸不认人。在一般人的眼中他是一个“呆子”，众多姐妹中唯有林黛玉理解他，认同他的率直的个性，同他一样反感虚伪、矫情和世俗实用主义。如果说佳人，林黛玉和薛宝钗在姿色和才情上都难分高下。贾宝玉最初对她们二人都很亲近，有时看见了宝姐姐就忘了林妹妹，但在经过了一段生活的体验，特别是经历了与周围封建环境的痛苦的矛盾冲突之后，他的爱情取向渐渐明朗起来，他疏远了规劝他走封建正途的薛宝钗，执着地倾爱“知己”者的林黛玉。他们的爱情是以叛逆封建的思想为基础的爱情。才子佳人小说描写才子佳人私订终身固然也是一种叛逆行为，但那只是婚姻的叛逆，并没有反叛封建主义的根本原则，那些才子通常都是封建社会中的有为青年，通常是科场上的魁首，也就是说他们与封建制度不存在根本的冲突，因而只要才子金榜题名，封建家庭最后总是承认了他们的违背“父母之命、媒妁之言”的婚姻，结局是大团圆。而贾宝玉、林黛玉的爱情却与封建家族的利益发生了根本性的冲突，林黛玉家庭的孤寒自然无助于贾家摆脱经济困境，更为严重的是林黛玉在助长贾宝玉的叛逆倾向，使得这位贾氏家族的命根子更加“败坏”下去，这种爱情是贾氏家族绝对不能容忍的。作为“老祖宗”的贾母，纵然十分疼爱自己的这位孤苦病弱的外孙女，也不可能选择她做贾宝玉的妻室。《红楼梦》叙述的爱情婚姻故事，表现了封建末期萌生出来的对个性自由的追求与封建制度的冲突，由这个冲突所造成的悲剧，深刻地揭示了封建社会的不合理，使读者预感到这个不合理的社会已经日暮途穷，正在走向灭亡。



《红楼梦》是中国古代小说艺术的顶峰。它的艺术成就首先表现在它塑造了众多光彩夺目的人物形象。贾宝玉、林黛玉、薛宝钗，还有王熙凤、史湘云、探春、尤二姐、尤三姐、袭人、晴雯、鸳鸯等等，都是个性鲜明，就像活动在我们身边的人物一样真切。这些性格内涵极其丰富的人物，在各自不同的地位上生活着；按照各自的生活哲学和思维方式，在贾氏家族内部的极为复杂的人际关系和利害冲突中行动着。不但行为方式和言谈口吻各具特点，就是他们的容貌、衣着和居室布置，也都各有不容混淆的个性特征。读者只要听到说话，或者看到居室陈设，就可以知道他是谁。刻画人物到达如此境界，不仅在中国文学，就是在世界文学中也是少见的。

《红楼梦》的艺术成就还表现在它的艺术结构的宏大和精致。整部小说犹如一个真实的世界，环绕着贾宝玉、林黛玉和薛宝钗的爱情婚姻纠葛，辐辏式展开的众多人物事件，互相勾连，互相牵制，互为因果，情节像生活一样了无痕迹地变化着，却又极具戏剧性地朝着悲剧的结局演进。《红楼梦》的世界就像生活本身一样的丰富、复杂、深厚和自然。这个艺术世界是作者曹雪芹精心创造的，然而毫无人工斧凿痕迹，一切都近于天然浑成，它标志《红楼梦》的艺术已达到臻于完美的最佳境界。

《红楼梦》是一部百科全书式的长篇小说。它以一个贵族家庭为中心展开了一幅广阔的社会历史图景。社会的各个阶级和阶层，上至皇妃国公，下至贩夫走卒，都有真实而生动的表现。封建末世的各种社会矛盾，奴隶和主子的对抗性



矛盾，家庭内部的嫡庶的矛盾和各种利害冲突，贵族经济和家庭后继无人的危机，封建主义与具有初步民主主义精神的叛逆倾向的矛盾，等等，都纽结着贯串在情节中。小说对贵族家庭的饮食起居各方面的生活细节，对园林建筑、车轿排场、服饰器用、岁时礼俗、饮食医药等等，都有具体细致的描写，具有极其丰富的文化内涵。《红楼梦》文化内涵的博大精深在世界文学史上是罕见的。

《红楼梦》以它的艺术魅力，在它以抄本传世之初，即博得广大读者的喜爱。程伟元在《红楼梦序》中说：“当时好事者每传抄一部，置庙市中，昂其价，得金数十，可谓不胫而走者矣。”1791年用活字印行之后，很快便风靡天下，并传至海外。《红楼梦》对青年的影响很大，据当时一些人的记载，有少女读《红楼梦》几近于痴迷，为宝玉、黛玉洒泪，甚而病倒，饮泣而瞑。《红楼梦》的悲剧引起封建时代渴求自由的青年们的共鸣，因此封建卫道者把它视为洪水猛兽，多次明令禁毁，一些封建文人则编造一些无稽之谈来诋毁曹雪芹，长期以来就有“少不读红楼”之说。但是《红楼梦》屡禁而不绝，流传越来越广。封建文人有感于《红楼梦》又不满于《红楼梦》，自嘉庆年间开始，陆续创作了形形色色的《红楼梦》续书，如《后红楼梦》、《续红楼梦》、《绮楼重梦》、《红楼复梦》、《红楼圆梦》、《红楼梦补》、《补红楼梦》、《红楼幻梦》等等，这些续书大抵站在封建名教立场，受因果报应观念的支配，企图改变《红楼梦》的悲剧性质，想方设法让林黛玉起死回生，制造各种各样的虚假的大团圆的结局。这是文学思潮上的对《红



红楼梦》的反动。

对《红楼梦》的评论和研究是从脂砚斋开始的。《红楼梦》早期抄本题为《脂砚斋重评石头记》，其实这些抄本上的批语不尽出自脂砚斋，还有畸笏叟、棠村、梅溪、松斋等等。但是以脂砚斋批语为多。脂砚斋生平不详，据他的批语的内容和口吻，可以知道他很熟悉曹雪芹创作《红楼梦》的情形，他与曹雪芹很亲近，曾参与过作品的修改。脂砚斋的思想比曹雪芹落后，并不真正理解《红楼梦》，他对作品的评论多有不当之处。然而脂砚斋的批语仍有重要的价值，它证明曹雪芹是《红楼梦》的作者，提供了曹雪芹生平家世的重要线索，披露了有关《红楼梦》的生活原型的一些材料和创作过程中的一些情况，还透露了曹雪芹原稿八十回以后的一些情节要点，就是对《红楼梦》的艺术分析也有一些独到之处。

脂砚斋以后，评论和研究《红楼梦》的人越来越多，这种评论和研究被人们称为“红学”。1919年“五四”运动以前，“红学”中影响最大的是评点派和索隐派。评点派以脂砚斋为代表，其后还有“护花主人”王雪香、“太平闲人”张新之、“大某山民”姚燮等。索隐派的代表性著作出现在清末民初，有王梦阮、沈瓶庵的《红楼梦索隐》，蔡元培的《石头记索隐》，邓狂言的《红楼梦释真》等。索隐派的具体主张各有不同，但在方法上是一致的。他们都认为《红楼梦》的人物情节只是作品主旨的幕障，人物情节都影射着历史真事，只有考索出作品所影射的真事，才能懂得《红楼梦》的真谛。这种方法几近于猜谜。“五四”运动中，以胡适的



《红楼梦考证》和俞平伯的《红楼梦辨》为代表的“新红学”派崛起，他们试图用科学的方法来解读《红楼梦》，极力扫除索隐派的梦呓，这是“红学”的一大进步。

中华人民共和国成立以后，“红学”发展更加迅猛，逐渐形成版本研究、思想艺术研究、后四十回研究、续书研究、文化研究、曹雪芹生平家世研究、红学史研究等等部门，使“红学”具备了更成熟的学术品格。

《红楼梦》在乾隆五十六年辛亥（1791年）萃文书屋排印以前，是以抄本形式流传的，现存有多种抄本。这些抄本的书名均作《脂砚斋重评石头记》，只有前八十回，而且各个抄本都有程度不同的残缺，有的还有个别回没有分好、尚缺回目，各抄本的正文文字和批语也有差异。重要的抄本有：

甲戌本。现存第一至第八回、第十三至第十六回和第二十五至第二十八回，总共十六回。第一回楔子述书名处记有“至脂砚斋甲戌抄阅再评，仍用《石头记》”一句，故称“甲戌本”。但本书不是甲戌抄阅再评的原本，它只是一个过录本。书中不仅有大量错字，而且抄有别的本子中的丁亥夏批语，可知它过录的时间当在丁亥（1767）年以后。此书有“凡例”五条，末系一诗曰：“浮生着甚苦奔忙，盛席华筵终散场。悲喜千般同幻渺，古今一梦尽荒唐。漫言红袖啼痕重，十年辛苦不寻常。”凡例及此诗为别本所无。此书还有一些重要批语也为别的抄本所无，它虽然只存十六回，但却有重要的价值。此本为刘铨福旧藏，卷末有刘铨福同治二年（1863年）跋、同治七年（1868年）跋，还有同治四年



(1865年)青士、椿馀跋。1927年胡适在上海购藏，1961年胡适以朱墨二色套版影印出版，此后中华书局上海编辑所、上海人民出版社、上海古籍出版社等相继出版影印本。

己卯本。这个抄本上有“己卯冬月定本”的题字，故称“己卯本”。己卯是乾隆二十四年（1759年），但此本并不是“己卯冬月定本”的原本，和其他脂评本一样，它也是一个过录本。不过此本是怡亲王府的抄本，抄成时间约在乾隆二十五年到三十五年之间，抄主和抄成的时间的确定，这一点是其他抄本所没有的特点。此本残存四十一回又两个半回，计存第一至第二十回，第三十一至第四十回，第五十五回下半回至第五十九回上半回，第六十一回至第七十回（内第六十四回、第六十七回系武裕庵在嘉庆年间据“乾隆抄本”补抄）。此本原为董康所藏，现藏北京图书馆，1980年上海古籍出版社影印出版。

庚辰本。此本存八册，每十回为一册，每册均有“脂砚斋凡四阅评过”八个字，自第五册起又加题“庚辰秋月定本”六个字，故称“庚辰本”。现存此本也是过录本，抄录时间在丁亥（1767年）夏以后。此本第十七、十八回未分开，标明“第十七至十八回”，只有一个回目。第十九回已分出，无回目。第二十二回未完成。第七册注明缺第六十四、第六十七回。全书共七十八回。此本前十回没有脂评。有部分抄手笔迹与己卯本同，一些题字及其行款与己卯本同，避“祥”（怡亲王允祥之名讳）字讳亦与己卯本同，此本与己卯本极可能有密切的关系。此书现藏北京大学图书馆，1955年由北京文学古籍刊行社用朱墨两色套版缩影出



版，其所缺之第六十四、第六十七两回则以己卯本补入。

戚序本。即“戚蓼生序本”，这个名称得自抄本卷首有戚蓼生之序。现存卷首有戚序的共有四个本子：张开模旧藏本、泽存书库旧藏本、有正书局石印大字本和小字本。所谓“戚序本”，实际上是这一组本子的合称。戚蓼生序没有署时，据有关资料，知道戚蓼生曾三次上京应试，最后于乾隆三十四年（1769年）登进士第，在京做官多年。他之获得抄本并写序，大约就在曹雪芹去世五六年之后，他第三次到京应试之时。清末民初，有正书局将张开模旧藏本影印出版，题《国初抄本原本〈红楼梦〉》，是为大字本。由于经过整理，此本并不是张开模旧藏本的原貌，故称“有正本”。这是脂评本中最早的印本。1920年有正书局又据初印本剪贴，改变行款，缩小字体，并对初印本的文字小作改动，这就是有正小字本。1973年北京人民文学出版社影印有正大字本，影印时将第十三回末原版误重的第十五回总评除去，从而改正了原版的一个明显错误。

舒序本。即“舒元炜序本”。此本卷首有舒元炜序，署时为乾隆五十四年（1789年）。它是现存各抄本中唯一可以确定过录年代的本子。这个抄本原为八十回，现仅存第一至第四十回。舒元炜序中说，它的原底本仅存五十三回，其余的二十七回，乃据邻家某个本子配齐。序中还提到一百二十回本，说明在程伟元、高鹗初刊《红楼梦》之前两年多，就已有后四十回在社会流传，这无疑为研究后四十回的作者及成书提供了重要线索。

《红楼梦》早期抄本，除上述几种外，还有“蒙古王府



本”（书目文献出版社 1987 年影印）、“列宁格勒藏本”（中华书局 1986 年影印）、“甲辰本”（书目文献出版社 1989 年影印）“郑振铎藏本”（中华书局“古本小说丛刊”第十五辑影印，1991 年）等等。

除上述抄本（脂评本）系统外，《红楼梦》版本的另一个系统，是程伟元、高鹗所刊行的一百二十回本《红楼梦》。乾隆五十六年（1791 年）萃文书屋初刊木活字本，一般称为“程甲本”；次年重排出版的为“程乙本”。“程乙本”与“程甲本”的文字颇有一些不同，而两个版本出版的时间虽然跨年度，实际相距只有七十天。

从“脂评本”到“程本”，是怎样演变的呢？关于这个问题，由于材料太少，一时难以得到满意的答案，不过“甲辰本”的现象值得一提。“甲辰本”又称“梦觉主人序本”，它是早期抄本中首先题名《红楼梦》的本子，全书的文字相对其他抄本，很显然作了较多改动，而这些改动大都被“程本”继承下来了。所以，可以肯定，“甲辰本”是早期抄本演变到“程本”的中间环节的本子。“程本”印行以后，早期抄本渐渐不传。1921 年上海亚东书局标点排印“程乙本”之后，“程乙本”便成为最通行的《红楼梦》版本。

本译本为一百二十回，其中前八十回以“戚蓼生序本”有正大字本为底本，后四十回则以人民文学出版社 1974 年出版印行的“程乙本”校订本为底本，并参照其他版本对个别地方作了校改或补正。

《红楼梦》版行以后，很快传至海外。从 19 世纪 40 年代至今，《红楼梦》已有英、德、法、日、俄、意、匈牙利、



罗马尼亚、朝鲜、越南、泰等文字的译本。

英文片断翻译《红楼梦》早在 19 世纪 40 年代就开始了，英国驻中国宁波领事馆领事罗伯特·汤姆（Robert Thom）选译了《红楼梦》中的几段文字，题为《红楼之梦》（The Dream of the Red Chamber），发表在 1842 年宁波版《中国话》（The Chinese Speaker）。而最早系统用英文翻译《红楼梦》的是英国驻澳门领事馆副领事 H·裘里（H·Bencraft Joly），内容为第一回至第五十六回。此译本于 1892 年由香港凯莱·华希幻门商务印刷厂出版。第一个《红楼梦》全书的英文节译本 1927 年出版于纽约，译者王良志。接着又有王际真的英文节译本 1929 年在伦敦出版，同年又在纽约多伯里台·杜兰公司出版。第一部英文全译本的译者是戴维·霍克斯（David Hawkes），这个全译本一百二十回，1974 年由英国企鹅有限公司开始出版。最早的德文节译本于 1932 年由德国莱比锡岛社出版，译者是德国的弗兰茨·库恩（F·Kuhn）。这个译文在欧洲很有影响，多年来不断修订和重印，并被转译成英、法、意、荷兰、匈牙利等国文字。《红楼梦》一百二十回法文全译本由李治华和他的夫人雅歌·阿雷札艺思（Jacqueline Alezais）合译，1981 年巴黎伽利玛出版社出版，列入《东方文学》丛书。《红楼梦》一百二十回俄文全译本于 1958 年由苏联国家文学出版社出版，译者是帕纳秀克（В·А·Панасюк）。日本翻译《红楼梦》从 19 世纪就开始了。脂评本八十回的日文全译本由东京国民文库出版于 1920-1922 年，译者是幸田露伴、平冈龙城。一百二十回本的全译本由松枝茂夫翻译，前八十回以“有正本”

为底本，后四十回以“程乙本”为底本，1951年译完，由岩波书店出版。此外，还有伊藤漱平的一百二十回全译本，增田涉、松枝茂夫、常石茂合译的一百二十回全译本。朝鲜文的一百二十回全译本由韩国乙酉文化社1969年出版，译者是李周洪。越南文的一百二十回全译本由越南河内出版社1962—1963年出版，译者是武培煌等。中国外文出版社系统地出版了《红楼梦》的英文版(1978年)、西班牙语版(1992年)、朝鲜文版(1978年)和阿拉伯文版(1993年)。各个语种的译本，使《红楼梦》获得世界更多的读者的欣赏和理解，真正成为世界人民的宝贵的精神财富，这些译本对人类文化的贡献将永远载入史册。

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INTRODUCTION

In a book called *Folk Ballads of the Capital*, published in the early 19th century during the Jiaqing reign period of the Qing Dynasty, we find the following two lines: “One can not call himself erudite / Without touching upon *Red Mansions* in his talk.” In fact, *A Dream of Red Mansions* is a controversial work, so much so that when discussing it even the best of friends almost come to blows. Two hundred years have passed since its first appearance, and yet this novel is still a hot topic of conversation among the Chinese people, and criticism and research concerning it have crystallized into a specialized branch of study, whimsically referred to as “Redology.”

A Dream of Red Mansions is rich in ideas and concepts. It is a multifaceted world of art into which the more one delves the more one finds. The charm of the novel lies, in short, in its revealing youth fully and truthfully, in its uncovering the naivete, zeal, grace and tenderness of the younger generation. Although the era in which the protagonists of the novel Jia Baoyu and Lin Daiyu lived, together with its social conditions and cultural environment, has long since vanished, their dreams and longings, together with those of the young ladies of the Grand View Garden, still strike a sympathetic chord in the hearts of the people of today.

The author of *A Dream of Red Mansions* is Cao Xueqin (1715?-1763?). His personal name was Zhan, and his style (name adopted by a man at his coming of age), Mengruan. He was also known as Xueqin, Qinpu or Qinxi. His ancestral home was in what is now Liaoyang City, in Northeast China, and his forebears, although Han Chinese themselves, had been accepted into the Manchu Right White Banner. For three successive generations, a period of some 60 years, his ancestors had held the post of Textile Commissioner in Jiangning (present-day Nanjing). His paternal great grandmother, surnamed Sun, had been nursemaid to the infant who was later to become the Kangxi emperor, and his grandfather, Cao Yin, had been the future emperor’s study companion and close attendant, accompanying him when he came to the throne on four of his six

inspection tours of the south, a singular honor. After the death of Cao Yin, the family, under the headship of Cao Xueqin's father Cao Fu, continued to enjoy the emperor's favor, but when the Yongzheng emperor ascended the throne, Cao Fu was removed from his office and punished on charges of financial mismanagement and incompetence in the management of courier stations. The family property was confiscated, and the Caos' halcyon days came to an end. They moved to Beijing. Cao Xueqin, who had spent his childhood in pampered luxury, now shared the family's fate of a wretched existence. Dogged by poverty, he eventually moved to a rustic hovel on the western outskirts of the capital. The death of his young son in 1762 was a crushing blow to Cao, from which he never recovered, and on February 12, 1763 he himself passed away.

There is no reliable documentary evidence for the exact dates of Cao Xueqin's birth and death, and scholars are divided on the subject. There are three theories regarding the date of his death, namely, the "Renwu" theory (the 27th year of the Qianlong reign period, 1762), the "Kuiwei" theory (the 28th year of Qianlong, 1763) and the "Jiashen" theory (the 29th year of Qianlong, 1764). Regarding the year of his birth, it can be calculated from the fact that he had not reached the age of fifty when he died.

Cao Xueqin was haughty by nature, but an extremely talented literary man. His friend Dun Cheng compared his poems to those of the Tang Dynasty poet Li He, describing them as bold, solid and having the cold glitter of a knife blade. Unfortunately, all that survives of Cao's poetry is two lines of a poem dedicated to a play adapted by Dun Cheng from the famous Tang Dynasty poet Bai Juyi's long narrative poem *Song of a Lute Player*. Cao was also a painter who liked painting stones, in a style described by another friend, Dun Min, as sturdy. But Cao Xueqin's fame rests on his magnificent achievement in writing the full-length novel *A Dream of Red Mansions*.

We know little about the process of the novel's creation. In the "Author's Preface," Cao says, "In this busy, dusty world, having accomplished nothing, I suddenly recalled all the girls I had known, considering each in turn, and it dawned on me that all of them surpassed me in behavior and understanding; that I, shameful to say, for all my masculine dignity, fell short of the gentler sex. But since this could never be rem-



edied, it was no use regretting it. There was really nothing to be done.

“I decided then to make known to all how I, though dressed in silks and delicately nurtured thanks to the Imperial favor and my ancestors’ virtue, had nevertheless ignored the kindly guidance of my elders as well as the good advice of teachers and friends, with the result that I had wasted half my life and not acquired a single skill. But no matter how unforgivable my crimes, I must not let all the lovely girls I have known pass into oblivion through my wickedness or my desire to hide my shortcomings.

“Though my home is now a thatched cottage with matting windows, earthen stove and rope-bed, this shall not stop me from laying bare my heart. Indeed, the morning breeze, the dew of night, the willows by my steps and the flowers in my courtyard inspire me to wield my brush. Though I have little learning or literary talent, what does it matter if I tell a tale in rustic language to leave a record of all those lovely girls. This should divert readers too and help distract them from their cares.”

From this we know that *A Dream of Red Mansions* was written in circumstances of dire poverty, after Cao had suffered the decline of his family fortunes from its heyday of power and affluence. His life experiences not only provided the material for the novel, they also raised his awareness and tempered his character. In Chapter One, he says that he spent ten years writing and revising the novel. In an early handwritten copy of the novel, under the title *The Tale of the Stone* (Jiaxu edition), it says in Chapter One: “Pages full of fantastic talk penned with bitter tears / All men call the author mad, none his message hears.” There is this marginal note on this: “Only one who can hear the message has bitter tears and this book was written through the tears. On the threshold of the year 1762, the author died, his tears all spent, before the book was completed.” The extant early handwritten copies all contain only the first 80 chapters. It is said that Cao wrote more chapters, but unfortunately they have not survived. The last 40 chapters of the present 120-chapter version were added by a later hand. In the preface to the 1791 edition, Cheng Weiyuan and Gao E say that the last 40 chapters were bought from a second-hand market, and that they merely edited them. However, some scholars are of the opinion that Gao E actually wrote the last 40



chapters, and that the story of the second-hand market was just a smokescreen. Although the last 40 chapters are clearly not up to the standard of the first 80 either philosophically or artistically, they round out the novel, tie up the loose ends of the plot and complete the sense of tragedy. Their creation was a lasting accomplishment; the fact that the 120-chapter version of the novel has been enjoyed by readers for over 200 years amply attests to this. As Cheng and Gao had revised Cao's first 80 chapters when publishing the 120-chapter version, it is necessary to compare the 120-chapter version with the early editions of the novel, before Cao Xueqin's original work can be seen in its true light.

A Dream of Red Mansions charts the course of prosperity and decline of an aristocratic family. It is a tragedy of love and marriage. The hero of the novel is Jia Baoyu, a direct descendant of the Jia family of the Rong Mansion. An intelligent boy of excellent breeding, he is the heir of the Jia family. However, he has no inclination for the aristocratic way of life, which he finds hypocritical, hateful and corrupt. To him, pure beauty is to be found in young girls, including low-born servant girls. He says: "Girls are made of water, men of mud. I feel clean and refreshed when I am with girls but find men dirty and stinking." Apart from the customary morning and evening salutation to his grandmother and parents, Jia Baoyu does his best to avoid taking part in the pastimes and activities of others of his station, and detests the pursuit of rank and wealth indulged in by other young gentlemen. His sole delight is mingling with the innocent and guileless young girls of the household in the Grand View Garden. He says to them: "In my own case, if I had any luck I should die now with all of you around me; still better if your tears for me were to become a great stream and float my corpse away to some quiet spot deserted even by crows or any other birds, to vanish with the wind, never again to be born as a human being. That's how I should like to die." By nature, Jia Baoyu has a deep aversion to feudal society. He is quite unmoved when his elders castigate him for his heretical inclinations and others consider him mad; on the contrary his rebellious nature becomes more ardent and firm under the impact of constant feudal oppression, culminating in his falling in love with Lin Daiyu and his marriage with Xue Baochai.

Marriage in feudal times was not based on love, but on considerations of family advantage. The Jias, although they have been a distinguished



clan for generations, are in decline, not only economically — the income from their estates is no longer sufficient to support their lavish lifestyle — but more importantly, they are in decline morally and spiritually. Nowhere in the whole clan is mere a scion who gives them so much hope for their future prosperity as Jia Baoyu. In this situation, the Jias determine to marry him off to Xue Baochai, who comes from a noble and very proper family. They see her as the very person not only to assist them with money but also to steer Baoyu back onto the road of feudal rectitude. The problem is that Baoyu does not love Xue Baochai, although she is an intelligent and beautiful girl, as her character is the opposite of his, being inclined to the ways of feudal orthodoxy. Baoyu has lost his heart to the frail Lin Daiyu, an orphan being brought up by her maternal grandmother, the matriarch of the household. Lin Daiyu manages to keep her self-respect in the midst of the grand and snobbish Jias, warding off slights and bullying with her candid and carping tongue. Her staunch, defiant character matches that of Baoyu well. The early period of the love between Jia Baoyu and Lin Daiyu has a childish naivete about it, but as they become more aware of their feelings their love ripens. However, as the fortunes of the Jia family worsen, the head of the household grows daily more anxious to correct Baoyu's waywardness so that the boy can restore the situation, hinting time and again that Baoyu and Baochai would make a perfect match and tightening the restrictions on Baoyu's freedom. The bonds of feudal oppression tighten around Baoyu and Daiyu. In this situation, Daiyu's health, always precarious, begins to fail rapidly. Eventually she dies of love and grief. Cao Xueqin's original intention was to have Baoyu marry Baochai immediately after Daiyu's death, only to find that he can not forget his sweetheart. He cannot live with Baochai, and finally leaves the family home. The "perfect match" turns into a tragedy.

Love Stories of talented young scholars and beautiful girls abounded in the Shunzhi and Kangxi reign periods, such as *The Cold Swallow of Pingshan* (*Ping Shan Leng Yan*) and *The Story of the Soulmate* (*Hao Qiu Zhuan*). How does *A Dream of Red Mansions* differ from them? First of all, the author places the convoluted love and marriage plot in a realistic, complex and concrete social setting, which is not merely a stage



and backdrop for the tragedy; the Jia family and its mansion also has an intimate connection with the birth, development and conclusion of this tragedy of love and marriage. The novel traces the roots of the emotional tragedy by means of describing the interactions between the love and marriage aspect of the plot and the social environment, including the mansion and its inhabitants. Secondly, Cao Xueqin treats the love affair between Jia Baoyu and Lin Daiyu differently from the way such matters are treated in the traditional genre of novels featuring talented young scholars and beautiful girls. In the latter novels the characters are one-dimensional — the girls are invariably beautiful, intelligent and cultured, and the young men are invariably masters of poetry and other literary accomplishments, and are eager to gain fame. Moreover, even though literary talent is prominent in these novels, in the end it is the young men's winning rank and honor which is the key to his union in marriage with the girl of his heart. The love affair between Jia Baoyu and Lin Daiyu is certainly not from this typecast mold. Baoyu is a talented person, but he scorns fame and fortune, and refuses to pursue an official position through the imperial examination system, resolutely rebuffing all — even intimates like Shi Xiangyun and Xue Baochai — when they urge him to be ambitious. In the eyes of most other people, Baoyu is a dullard. Of all the young ladies in the household, only Lin Daiyu understands him, sympathizing with his straightforward nature, and his loathing of hypocrisy, affectation and worldly calculation. Lin Daiyu and Xue Baochai are equally charming physically and intellectually, and Baoyu was attracted to both of them at first. In fact, for a while he clung to Xue Baochai, putting aside Lin Daiyu. But as he gains more experience of life, especially after he underwent the painful clash of feudal contradictions in his surroundings, the real objective of his love becomes clear, and he gradually distances himself from Xue Baochai, who has been urging him to adapt himself to the feudal mores, and he cleaves once more to his true soulmate Lin Daiyu. The foundation of their love is their mutual opposition to feudal thinking. The heroes and heroines of the other popular novels too have their struggles to exert control over their own lives, but their opposition is to the marriage conventions of the time, and certainly not to the basic principles of feudalism. In actual fact, the heroes of these novels are all



paragons of what promising young men in feudal society were supposed to be like. There is in them no real opposition to the feudal system. They mostly excel in the imperial examinations, and when they do so their families become reconciled to their unconventional choices of marriage partners, and in the end harmony reigns. The love between Baoyu and Daiyu, on the other hand, represents a fundamental challenge to the interests of the feudal family. As an orphan, Lin Daiyu has no family connections who can help the Jia family financially; more importantly, she aids and abets Baoyu in his rebellion against feudal mores, leading him down a path that spells ruin for the family. So the Lady Dowager, the head of the Jia family, despite loving her sickly young relative dearly, regards her as completely unsuitable as a marriage partner for Baoyu. The tale of love and marriage in *A Dream of Red Mansions* is an account of the burgeoning of a trend toward pursuit of personal freedom and opposition to the feudal system as a whole as the feudal period was entering its closing phase in China. The tragedy produced by this antagonism clearly reveals the irrationality of feudal society and conveys to the reader a sense of its looming demise.

A Dream of Red Mansions is the peak of the art of the novel in ancient China. Its artistic achievement is displayed first of all in its dazzling array of characters. Jia Baoyu, Lin Daiyu, Xue Baochai, Wang Xifeng, Shi Xiangyun, Tanchun, Second Sister You, Third Sister You, Xiren, Qingwen, Yuanyang and the others all have their distinct personalities and are as true to life as if they were living amongst us. These richly complex characters with their different stations in life and divergent views and philosophies act out an intricate pattern of human relationships and conflicts within the Jia family mansion. Apart from their distinct ways of acting and speaking, and the peculiarities of their appearances, dress and living arrangements, these people all have clear character traits. The reader knows who is who just by their manner of speaking or the layouts of their rooms. Such character delineation is a rare accomplishment not only in Chinese literature but in the whole field of world literature.

The literary merit of *A Dream of Red Mansions* is also displayed in the grandness and exquisiteness of its artistic structure. The novel is a microcosm of the world of its time, revolving around the love between Jia



Baoyu and Lin Daiyu and Xue Baochai. The host of personages and events converge on, link and restrict each other to make the plot develop smoothly in a chain of cause and effect, as the tragedy moves dramatically and inexorably to its climax. The world of *A Dream of Red Mansions* is as rich, complicated, deep and natural as life itself. Though created by Cao Xueqin, the novel betrays no trace of craftsmanship, but presents itself as a natural and spontaneous entity, and it is this aspect that marks it as a sublime work of art.

A Dream of Red Mansions is an encyclopedic novel. Centered on an aristocratic family, it unrolls a panorama of social history. Every grade and station of Chinese society of that time — from an imperial consort to peddlers and messenger boys — are presented in a true-to-life fashion. In addition, all the social contradictions which emerged toward the end of the feudal period are threaded through the plot: for instance, the conflict between master and slave, that between the master of the house's legal wife and his concubines, the economic crisis in a noble clan in the absence of an heir, and that between feudalism and the newly sprouting spirit of democracy. The novel also provides a wealth of details concerning aristocratic households in those days — garden architecture, the equipage of carriages, clothing and ornaments, customs and etiquette, food and drink, medicines, etc. Indeed, the cultural reference content of *A Dream of Red Mansions* is of a kind rarely seen in the history of world literature.

A Dream of Red Mansions attracted the interest of a wide range of readers as soon as it began to circulate in hand-copied form. In his "Preface to *A Dream of Red Mansions*," Cheng Weiyuan says, "At that time, people would place a copy in a market place and charge an exuberant price for it. In no time, the novel got a great fame." Following its publication in moveable type in 1791, *A Dream of Red Mansions* spread like wildfire, even beyond the borders of China. The novel had a particularly profound impact on young people, with young women weeping, swooning and being driven almost to distraction while reading the poignant love story of Baoyu and Daiyu. The tragedy of *A Dream of Red Mansions* resonated in the hearts of young people in feudal society, who were ardently yearning for freedom, with the result that the guardians of feudal morality regarded the novel with horror and several times banned it or



destroyed copies. Some orthodox literary figures even slandered Cao Xueqin himself, and for a long time it was said that “young people must refrain from reading ‘*Red Mansions*’.” Despite the bans, the novel spread. Though they frowned upon the novel, feudal literati were fascinated with it in spite of themselves. From the Jiaqing reign period on sequels appeared, such as *The Later Dream of Red Mansions*, *Sequel to A Dream of Red Mansions*, *Dreaming Again Among Gorgeous Mansions*, *More Red Mansion Dreams*, *A Dream of Red Mansions Supplement*, *The Expanded Dream of Red Mansions* and *A Red Mansions Fantasy*. These imitations were written under the inspiration of Confucian ethics and the outlook that believed in retribution for sin and rewards for virtue. They tried to change the nature of the tragedy by getting Lin Daiyu to come back to life and concocting all sorts of happy reunions, representing an ideological tide of reaction to *A Dream of Red Mansions*.

Criticism and studies of *A Dream of Red Mansions* started with Zhi Yanzhai (a pseudonym). The title of the novel when it first appeared in handwritten copies was *The Tale of the Stone with Commentary by Zhi Yanzhai*. In fact, Zhi Yanzhai was not the only commentator; others were Ji Husou, Tang Cun, Mei Xi and Song Zhai (all pseudonyms). However, Zhi Yanzhai was the most prolific commentator. Few details are known about Zhi Yanzhai’s life, but from the content and language of his comments we can surmise that he knew Cao Xueqin well, was very familiar with the circumstances of the writing of *A Dream of Red Mansions* and had participated in its revision. But Zhi Yanzhai’s ideological standpoint was not as progressive as Cao’s; he did not fully appreciate *A Dream of Red Mansions* and there are many places where his appraisal goes astray. Nevertheless, his comments are of value: He confirms that Cao Xueqin was the author of the novel, and gives some clues to his life and family background; he provides some details concerning the birth of the novel and the process of its creation. He also sheds light on some essential points of the plot in Cao Xueqin’s additional chapters to the original 80-chapter version of the novel, and makes some unique literary analyses of it.

Zhi Yanzhai was followed by a host of other critics and commentators in a field which came to be called “Redology.” Prior to the May 4th Movement of 1919, the two most influential schools of Redology were



the Pingdian (commentating) and Suoyin (Tracing Out the Hidden) schools. The former were represented by Zhi Yanzhai, who was followed by “Guardian of the Flowers” Wang Xuexiang, “Gentleman of Leisure” Zhang Xinzhi and “Man of Mount Damei” Yao Xie. Works representative of the latter school appeared at the end of the Qing Dynasty and in the early Republican period. These included *Tracing Out the Hidden Meanings of “A Dream of Red Mansions”* by Wang Mengruan and Shen Ping’an, *Tracing Out the Hidden Meanings of “The Tale of the Stone”* by Cai Yuanpei and *An Interpretation of “A Dream of Red Mansions”* by Deng Kuangyan. The opinions of the exponents of the Suoyin school differed, but their methods were identical. They all considered that the human features of the plot masked the main purport of the novel, and actually reflected historical realities. So the only way to understand *A Dream of Red Mansions* was to uncover what these realities were. This method amounted to little more than indulging in guessing games. During the May 4th Movement the “New Redologist” school emerged, represented by Hu Shi’s *A Textual Criticism of “A Dream of Red Mansions”* and Yu Pingbo’s *A Discussion of “A Dream of Red Mansions.”* This was a progressive step in Redology, as the new school attempted to use a scientific method to interpret the novel, at the same time sweeping away the vagaries of the Suoyin school.

Following the establishment of the People’s Republic of China in 1949, progress in Redology grew apace. Research was carried out into every aspect of the novel: its editions, its ideological and artistic content, the last 40 chapters, the sequels, the literary content, Cao Xueqin’s life and family background, the history of Redology, etc., bringing this field of study to maturity.

Before it was printed by the Cuiwen Publishing House in the 56th year of the Qianlong reign period (1791), *A Dream of Red Mansions* was circulated in handwritten copies, many of which have survived, all bearing the title *The Tale of the Stone with Commentary by Zhi Yanzhai*. These volumes contain only the first 80 chapters, and have omissions here or there. Some of the chapters are not clearly demarcated, lacking chapter headings, and in all of them the texts and the commentaries differed to varying degrees. The most important of these handwritten copies are:

The Jiaxu version. Only 16 chapters are extant — chapters 1-8, 13-16



and 25-28. It gets its name from the preface, which contains the statement: "Copied and edited with commentary by Zhi Yanzhai in the year Jiayu (1754)." This text, however, is not the original Jiayu version, but a copy. Not only does it contain a lot of erroneous characters, but some of the commentary by Ding Haixia from another version has got mixed in with it, which dates it to some time after the year Dinghai (1767). There is a preface of five items, the last of which is in verse, and reads, "This fleeting life is filled with grief and bustle / The banquet guests must in the end disperse / Joys and sorrows fade in the twinkling of an eye / Olden days and modern, like an absurd dream they die / Cheerful discourse, gorgeous beauties change to wounds and weeping / Ten years toil and labor is a record worth keeping." This preface and poem are found in no other version of the work. The Jiayu version contains some important items of commentary not found in other handwritten copies either, making it valuable despite its shortness. This copy was kept in the depository of Liu Quanfu, and bears a postscript by the latter dated the second year of the Tongzhi reign period (1863), one dated the seventh year of Tongzhi (1868) and one dated the fourth year of Tongzhi (1865) and signed by Qing Shi and Chun Yu. In 1927, Hu Shi purchased the collection in Shanshai, which included this text, and in 1961 he published a photocopied version, printed in red and black. Since then, other photocopied editions have been published by the Shangshai Zhonghua Book Company, the Shanghai People's Publishing House and the Shanghai Chinese Classics Publishing House.

The Jimao version. This text is so called because it bears the inscription "Definitive edition of the winter of Jimao." Jimao was the 24th year of the Qianlong reign period (1759). The extant text is not the original, but a copy, and like all the others has a commentary by Zhi Yanzhai. It was copied by someone in Prince Yi's mansion between the 25th and 35th year of Qianlong (1760-1770), which details are missing from other versions. It consists of 41 and two half chapters — chapters 1-20, 31-40, the second half of Chapter 55 and the first half of Chapter 59 and chapters 61-70 (chapters 64 and 67 were copied by Wu Yu'an in the Jiaqing reign period (1796-1820) from the Qianlong version. Originally in the collection of Dong Kang, the Jimao version is now kept in the National Library of

China. In 1980, the Shanghai Chinese Classics Publishing House published a photocopied edition.

The Gengchen version. This is in eight volumes, each containing 10 chapters. Each volume bears the inscription “Commentary by Zhi Yanzhai,” and from Volume Five to Volume Eight the rubric “Definitive edition of the autumn of Gengchen,” hence the name. This is also a copy, made sometime after the summer of the year Dinghai (1767). Chapters 17 and 18 come under one chapter heading. Chapter 19 is separate, but has no chapter heading. Chapter 22 is incomplete. Volume Seven contains a note saying chapters 64 and 67 are missing. So there are 78 chapters altogether in this version, from the first ten of which the Zhi Yanzhai commentary is missing. There are places where the scribe’s hand is the same as that of the Jimao version, and some of the titles and layout are the same as those of the Jimao version, as is the avoidance of the character “xiang” (祥), which was taboo as it was part of the name of Yunxiang, Prince Yi. All these things indicate a close connection with the Jimao version. The Gengchen text is now housed in the Beijing University Library. In 1955, the Beijing Ancient Literature Press published a reduced-size version in red and black, with the missing chapters 64 and 67 supplied from the Jimao version.

The Qi prefaced version. This text gets its name from the fact that it carries the words “Preface by Qi Liaosheng.” There are four copies of this version extant — one from the collection of Zhang Kaimo, one from the Zecun Book Depository, and a large and small lithographic version published by the Youzheng Book Company. These texts are not dated, but we know from other sources that the compiler, Qi Liaosheng, passed the imperial examination in the capital on his third attempt in the 34th year of Qianlong (1769), and served in an official capacity in Beijing for many years. He made a copy of *A Dream of Red Mansions* and added a preface probably five or six years after the death of Cao Xueqin, when he went to the capital for his third examination attempt. Following the fall of the Qing Dynasty and the rise of the Republic, the Youzheng Book Company published a large-type edition of the version from the Zhang Kaimo collection, titled “*A Dream of Red Mansions*” in the *Original Handwritten Version to Greet the New Republic*. As it had gone through





extensive revision, it was called the “Youzheng edition.” This was the first printing of a version of the novel with commentary by Zhi Yanzhai. In 1920 the same company issued a reduced-size version with a changed layout and some literal alterations, which became known as the “Youzheng small edition.” In 1973, the Beijing People’s Literature Publishing House published a photocopied version of the Youzheng large-type edition, in the process removing a serious error in which the general commentary to Chapter 15 had appeared in Chapter 13.

The Shu prefaced version. This version carries a preface by Shu Yuanwei, and appeared in the 54th year of Qianlong (1789). It is the only extant handwritten version that can be dated definitely. It had the original 80 chapters, but only chapters 1 to 40 have survived. In his preface, Shu Yuanwei says that the version he copied only had 53 chapters; the other 27 chapters he copied from a neighbor’s copy of the novel. The preface also mentions the 120-chapter version, which shows that a couple of years before the expanded version of *A Dream of Red Mansions* published by Cheng Weiyuan and Gao E appeared, the last 40 chapters were already circulating among the public, an important reference for researchers into the provenance of the last 40 chapters.

Other early hand-copied versions of *A Dream of Red Mansions* include the Mongol Prince mansion edition (photocopied edition issued by the Bibliography and Document Publishing House in 1987), the Leningrad Collection version (photocopied edition issued by the Zhonghua Book Company in 1986), the Jiachen version (photocopied edition published by the Bibliography and Document Publishing House in 1989) and the Zheng Zhenduo Collection version (photocopied as Number 15 in the Ancient Novels Series by the Zhonghua Book Company in 1991).

Apart from the hand-copied versions of *A Dream of Red Mansions* in 80 chapters and with commentary by Zhi Yanzhai, there is the 120-chapter version published by Cheng Weiyuan and Gao E. The first printing of this version was in 1791 by the Cuiwen Publishing House using moveable type. This is commonly known as the “first Cheng” version, while the edition brought out in the following year is known as the “second Cheng” version. The type used in the two versions is slightly different, although they were published only 70 days apart.

The reference materials are too scanty to allow a satisfactory account to be given of the process of evolution of *A Dream of Red Mansions* from the Zhi Yanzhai version to the Cheng versions. However, it is worth dwelling on the Jiachen version, also known as the “Version Prefaced by the Master Awakening from a Dream.” This was the first handwritten version of the novel to bear the title *A Dream of Red Mansions*. It contains many literal amendments, most of which have been carried over by the Cheng versions, so we can be fairly sure that the Jiachen version is a link in the chain of development of the novel in the Cheng version stage, marked by the gradually demise of handwritten copies. The standard version of *A Dream of Red Mansions* used today is the punctuated edition of the “second Cheng” version published in 1921 by the Shanghai Yadong Book Company.

The present translation is that of the Youzheng large-type version carrying the preface by Qi Liaosheng for the first 80 chapters, and the last 40 chapters are those of the revised “second Cheng” version published by the People’s Literature Publishing House in 1974. Amendments and supplements have been made with reference to other versions of the novel.

The fame of *A Dream of Red Mansions* quickly spread abroad. Since the 1840s, the novel has been published in many foreign languages, including English, German, French, Japanese, Russian, Italian, Hungarian, Romanian, Korean, Vietnamese and Thai.

The first English-language version appeared as early as in the 1840s, when Robert Thom, the British consul in Ningbo, translated several extracts from it, under the title *The Dream of the Red Chamber*, and published it in the Ningbo journal *The Chinese Speaker* in 1842. The first attempt at a systematic translation was that of H. Bencraft Joly, the British deputy consul in Macao, who translated the first 56 chapters. It was published in Hong Kong in 1892 by Kelly and Walsh. The first abridged translation into English of the complete edition of the novel, by Wang Liangzhi, was published in New York in 1927. Another abridged translation, by Wang Jizhen, was published in English in London in 1929 and in New York by Doubleday in the same year. In 1974, a complete translation of the 120-chapter version, the first ever, by David Hawkes was published in England by Penguin Books Ltd. The first German version of



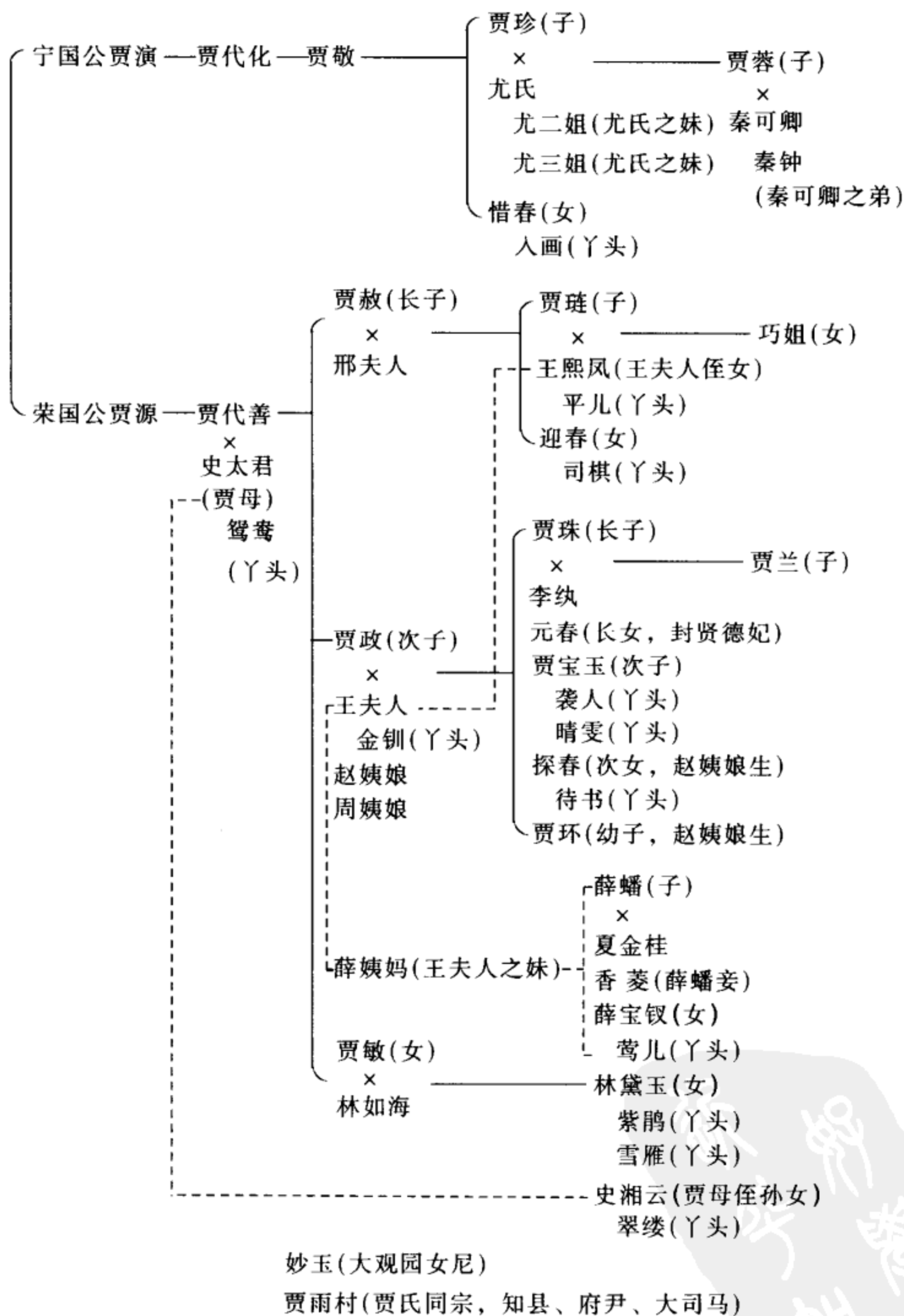
the novel, by F. Kuhn, was published by a Leipzig Insel-Verlag in Germany in 1932. This translation had enormous influence in Europe, and it underwent many amendments and reprintings, and was the basis for further translations into English, French, Italian, Dutch and Hungarian. A French version of the novel, translated by Li Tche-houa and his wife Jacqueline Alézais, was published by Gallimard in Paris in 1981, as part of its Oriental Literature Series. A Russian version of the 120-chapter novel by V. A. Panasyuk was published by the former Soviet Union's State Art and Literature Publishing House in 1958. Japanese versions of *A Dream of Red Mansions* appeared as early as in the 19th century. A complete translation of the 80-chapter version done by Rohan Koda and Ryujo Hiraoka was published by the Tokyo Kokuminbunko in 1920 and 1922, and of the 120-chapter version translated by Shigeo Matsue was published by Yiwanami in 1951. The first 80 chapters were based on the "Youzheng" edition, and the last 40 on the "second Cheng" edition. Other Japanese translations of the 120-chapter version include one by Sohei Ito and another jointly by Wataru Masuda, Shigeo Matsue and Shigeru Tokoishi. The 120-chapter version of the novel was translated into the Korean language by Li Juhong and published by the Eulyoo Literature Company in 1969. A Vietnamese-language version of the 120-chapter novel, translated by Vo Bội Hoàng and several other translators was published by the Hanoi Publishing Company in 1962-63. The Foreign Languages Press of China also published the English edition (in 1978), Korean edition (in 1978), Spanish edition (in 1992) and Arabic edition (in 1993). All these translations have helped to increase appreciation of *A Dream of Red Mansions* among readers worldwide and establish the novel as a true jewel in the store of mankind's cultural wealth, thereby making an indelible historical contribution to human civilization.

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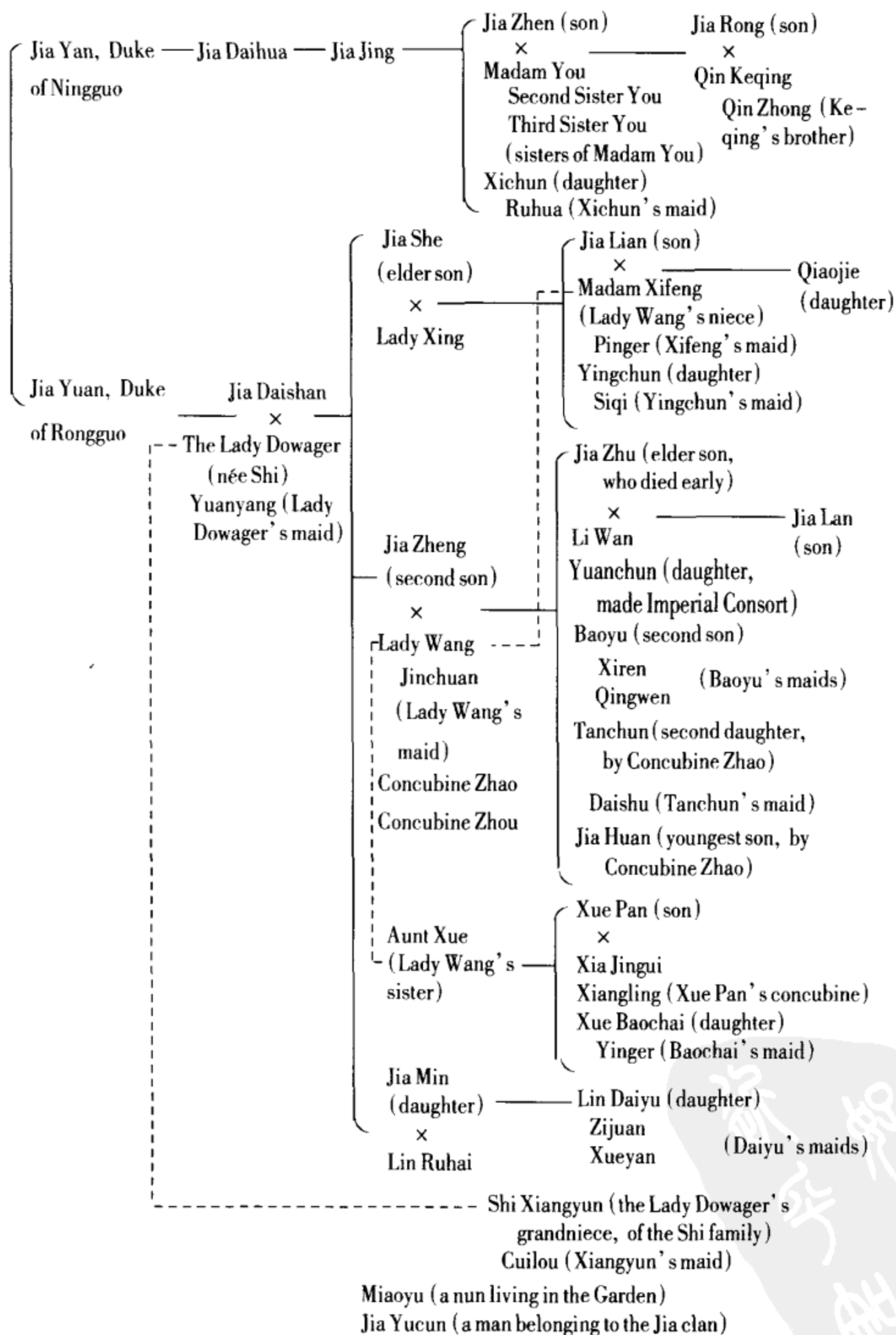


《红楼梦》主要人物关系表



注：×表示夫妇关系；虚线表示姻联

CHIEF CHARACTERS IN THE NOVEL AND THEIR RELATIONSHIPS



The × denotes that the two are husband and wife;
the dotted line indicates a relative from a married woman's parental home.

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第一回

甄士隐梦幻识通灵 贾雨村风尘怀闺秀

此开卷第一回也。作者自云，因曾历过一番梦幻之后，故将真事隐去，而借“通灵”之说，撰此《石头记》一书也，故曰“甄士隐”云云。但书中所记何事何人？自又云：“今风尘碌碌，一事无成，忽念及当日所有之女子，一一细考较去，觉其行止见识，皆出于我之上。何我堂堂须眉，诚不若彼裙钗哉？实愧则有余，悔又无益之大无可如何之日也！当此，则自欲将已往所赖天恩祖德，锦衣纨绔之时，饫甘餍肥之日，背父兄教育之恩，负师友规谈之德，以致今日一技无成、半生潦倒之罪，编述一集，以告天下人。我之罪固不免，然闺阁中本自历历有人，万不可因我之不肖，自护己短，一并使其泯灭也。虽今日之茅椽蓬牖，瓦灶绳床，其晨夕风露，阶柳庭花，亦未有妨我之襟怀笔墨者，虽我未学，下笔无文，又何妨用假语村言，敷演出一段故事来，亦可使闺阁昭传，复可悦世之目，破人愁闷，不亦宜乎？”故曰“贾雨村”云云。





Chapter 1

Zhen Shiyin in a Dream Sees the Jade of Spiritual Understanding Jia Yucun in His Obscurity Is Charmed by a Maid

This is the opening chapter of the novel. In writing this story of the Stone the author wanted to record certain of his past dreams and illusions, but he tried to hide the true facts of his experience by using the allegory of the jade of “Spiritual Understanding.” Hence his recourse to names like Zhen Shiyin.¹ But what are the events recorded in this book, and who are the characters? About this he said:

“In this busy, dusty world, having accomplished nothing, I suddenly recalled all the girls I had known, considering each in turn, and it dawned on me that all of them surpassed me in behaviour and understanding; that I, shameful to say, for all my masculine dignity, fell short of the gentler sex. But since this could never be remedied, it was no use regretting it. There was really nothing to be done.

“I decided then to make known to all how I, though dressed in silks and delicately nurtured thanks to the Imperial favour and my ancestors’ virtue, had nevertheless ignored the kindly guidance of my elders as well as the good advice of teachers and friends, with the result that I had wasted half my life and not acquired a single skill. But no matter how unforgivable my crimes, I must not let all the lovely girls I have known pass into oblivion through my wickedness or my desire to hide my shortcomings.

“Though my home is now a thatched cottage with matting windows, earthen stove and rope-bed, this shall not stop me from laying bare my heart. Indeed, the morning breeze, the dew of night, the willows by my steps and the flowers in my courtyard inspire me to wield my brush. Though I have little learning or literary talent, what does it matter if I tell a tale in rustic language to leave a record of all those lovely girls. This should divert readers too and help distract them from their cares. That is why I use the other name Jia Yucun.”²



列位看官，你道此书何来？说起根由，虽近荒唐，细按则深有趣味。待在下将此来历注明，方使阅者了然不惑。

原来女娲氏炼石补天之时，于大荒山无稽崖炼成高经十二丈、方经二十四丈顽石三万六千五百零一块。娲皇氏只用了三万六千五百块，只单单剩了一块未用，便弃在此山青埂峰下。谁知此石自经煅炼之后，灵性已通，因见众石俱得补天，独自己无材不堪入选，遂自怨自叹，日夜悲啼惭愧。

一日，正当嗟悼之际，俄见一僧一道远远而来，生得骨格不凡，丰神迥异，来至石下，席地而坐长谈。见一块鲜明莹洁美玉，且又缩成扇坠大小的可佩可拿。那僧托于掌上，笑道：“形体倒也是个宝物了！还只没有实在好处，须得再镌上数字，使人一见便知是奇物方妙。然后好携你到那隆盛昌明之邦，诗礼簪缨之族，花柳繁华之地，温柔富贵之乡去安身乐业。”石头听了，喜不能禁，乃问道：“不知赐了弟子那几件奇处，又不知携了弟子到何地方？望乞明示，使弟子不惑。”那僧笑道：“你且莫问，日后自然明白的。”说着，便袖笼了这石，同那道人飘然而去，竟不知投奔何方何舍。

后来，又不知过了几世几劫，因有个空空道人访道求





Do you know, Worthy Readers, where this book comes from? The answer may sound fantastic, yet carefully considered is of great interest. Let me explain, so that there will be no doubt left in your minds.

When the goddess Nu Wa melted down rocks to repair the sky, at Baseless Cliff in the Great Waste Mountain she made thirty-six thousand five hundred and one blocks of stone, each a hundred and twenty feet high and two hundred and forty feet square. She used only thirty-six thousand five hundred of these and threw the remaining block down at the foot of Blue Ridge³ Peak. Strange to relate, this block of stone after tempering had acquired spiritual understanding. Because all its fellow blocks had been chosen to mend the sky and it alone rejected, it lamented day and night in distress and shame.

One day as the Stone was brooding over its fate, it saw approaching from the distance a Buddhist monk and Taoist priest, both of striking demeanour and distinguished appearance. They came up to the Stone and sat down to chat.

When they saw the pure translucent Stone which had shrunk to the size of a fan-pendant, the monk took it up on the palm of his hand and said to it with a smile:

“You look like a precious object, but you still lack real value. I must engrave some characters on you so that people can see at a glance that you’re something special. Then we can take you to some civilized and prosperous realm, to a cultured family of official status, a place where flowers and willows flourish, the home of pleasure and luxury where you can settle down in comfort.”

The Stone was overjoyed.

“May I trouble you to enlighten me,” it said, “as to what wonderful merits you will bestow on me? And where do you mean to take me?”

“Don’t ask.” The monk smiled. “You’ll find out all in good time.”

With that he tucked the Stone into his sleeve and hurried off with the Taoist. But where they went no one knows.

After no one knows how many generations or aeons, a Taoist known as Reverend Void, searching for the Way and immortality, came to Great



仙，忽从这大荒山无稽崖青埂峰下经过，忽见一大石上字迹分明，编述历历。空空道人乃从头一看，原来就是无材补天，幻形入世，蒙茫茫大士、渺渺真人携入红尘，历尽离合悲欢、炎凉世态的一段故事。后面又有一首偈云：

无材可去补苍天，枉入红尘若许年。

此系身前身后事，倩谁记去作奇传？

诗后便是此石坠落之乡，投胎之处，亲自经历的一段陈迹故事。其中家庭闺阁琐事，以及闲情诗词倒还全备，或可适趣解闷；然朝代年纪，地舆邦国却失落无考。

空空道人遂向石头说道：“石兄，你这一段故事，据你自己说有些趣味，故编写在此，意欲问世传奇。据我看来，第一件，无朝代年纪可考；第二件，并无大贤大忠，理朝廷、治风俗的善政，其中只不过几个异样女子，或情或痴，或小才微善，亦无班姑、蔡女之德能。我纵抄去，恐世人不爱看呢。”石头笑曰：“我师何太痴也！若云无朝代可考，今我师竟假借汉唐等年纪添缀，又有何难？但我想，历来野史，皆蹈一辙，莫如我不借此套者，反倒新奇别致，不过只取其事体情理罢了，又何必拘拘于朝代年纪哉！市井俗人喜看理治之书者甚少，爱看适情闲文者特多。历来野史，或讪谤君相，或贬人妻女，奸淫凶恶，不可胜数。更有一种风月笔





Waste Mountain, Baseless Cliff and the foot of Blue Ridge Peak. His eye fell on the inscription on a large stone which was still discernible and he read it through. It was an account of the Stone's rejection for repairing heaven, its transformation and conveyance to the world of men by the Buddhist of Infinite Space and the Taoist of Boundless Time, and the joys and sorrows, partings and encounters, warm and cold treatment from others it had experienced there. On its back was a Buddhist verse:

Unfit to mend the azure sky,
I passed some years on earth to no avail;
My life in both worlds is recorded here;
Whom can I ask to pass on this romantic tale?

There followed the name of the region where the Stone fell, the place of its incarnation, and the story of its adventures — including trivial family affairs and light verses written to amuse idle hours. The dynasty, year and country's name were, however, obliterated.

The Reverend Void said to the Stone: "Brother Stone, you seem to think that your tale recorded here is interesting enough to merit publication. In my view, in the first place, there is no way of finding out the dynasty and the year; in the second, there is nothing here about worthy and loyal ministers and how they regulated the government and public morality. There are merely some girls remarkable only for their passion or folly, or else for their small gifts and trifling virtues which cannot even compare with those of such talented ladies as Ban Zhao or Cai Yan.⁴ Even if I were to transcribe it, it would hardly arouse much interest."

"How can you be so dense, master?" protested the Stone with a smile. "If there's no way of finding out the date, you can easily ascribe this tale to some time in the Han or Tang Dynasty. But since all novels do that, I think my way of dispensing with this convention and just dealing with my own adventures and feelings is more original. Why insist on a certain dynasty or definite date? Besides, most common people of the market-place much prefer light literature to improving books. The trouble is that so many romances contain slanderous anecdotes about sovereigns and ministers or cast aspersions upon other men's wives and daughters so that they are packed with sex and violence. Even worse are those writers of the breeze-and-moonlight school, who corrupt the young with



墨，其淫污秽臭，屠毒笔墨，坏人子弟，又不可胜数。至若佳人才子等书，则又千部共出一套，且其中终不能不涉于淫滥，以致满纸潘安、子建，西子、文君，不过作者要写出自己的那两首情诗艳赋来，故假拟出男女二名姓，又必旁出一小人其间拨乱，亦如剧中之小丑然。且鬻婢开口即者也之乎，非文即理。故逐一看去，悉皆自相矛盾、大不近情理之说，竟不如我半世亲睹亲闻的这几个女子，虽不敢说强似前代书中所有之人，但事迹原委，亦可以消愁破闷；也有几首歪诗熟词，可以喷饭供酒。至若离合悲欢，兴衰际遇，则又追踪躐迹，不敢稍加穿凿，徒为供人之目而反失其真传者。今之人，贫者日为衣食所累，富者又怀不足之心，纵一时稍闲，又有贪淫恋色、好货寻愁之事，那里有工夫去看那理治之书？所以我这一段事，也不愿世人称奇道妙，也不要世人喜悦检读，只愿他们当那醉饱淫卧之时，或避世去愁之际，把此一玩，岂不省了些寿命筋力？就比那谋虚逐妄，却也省了口舌是非之害，腿脚奔忙之苦。再者，亦令世人换新眼目，不比那些胡牵乱扯，忽离忽遇，满纸才人淑女，子建、文君，红娘、小玉等通共熟套之旧稿。我师以为何如？”

空空道人听了此语，思忖半晌，将这《石头记》再细阅一遍，因见上面虽有指奸责佞，贬恶诛邪之语，亦非伤时骂世之旨；及至君仁臣良，父慈子孝，凡伦常所关之处，皆是





pornography and filth. As for books of the beauty-and-talented-scholar type, a thousand are written to a single pattern and none escapes bordering on indecency. They are filled with allusions to handsome, talented young men and beautiful, refined girls in history; but in order to insert a couple of his own love poems, the author invents stereotyped heroes and heroines with the inevitable low character to make trouble between them like a clown in a play, and makes even the slave girls talk pedantic nonsense. So all these novels are full of contradictions and absurdly unnatural.

“Much better are the girls I have known myself during my young days. I wouldn’t presume to rank them as superior to all the characters of earlier works, yet their stories may serve to dispel boredom and care while the few doggerels I have inserted may raise a laugh and add zest to wine. As for the scenes of sad partings and happy meetings, prosperity and decline, these are all true to fact and not altered in the slightest to cause a sensation or depart from the truth.

“At present the daily concern of the poor is food and clothing, while the rich are never satisfied. All their leisure is taken up with amorous adventures, material acquisition or trouble-making. What time do they have to read political and moral treatises? I neither want people to marvel at this story of mine, nor do I insist that they should read it for pleasure; I only hope they may find distraction here when they are sated with food and wine or searching for some escape from worldly cares. By glancing over it in place of other vain pursuits, they may save their energies and prolong their lives, sparing themselves the harm of quarrels and arguments, or the trouble of chasing after what is illusory.

“Besides, this story offers readers something new, unlike those hackneyed and stale hodge-podges of sudden partings and encounters which teem with talented scholars and lovely girls — Cao Zijian, Zhuo Wenjun, Hongniang, Xiaoyu⁵ and the like. What do you say, master?”

The Reverend Void thought it over, then carefully reread *The Tale of the Stone*. He found in it both condemnation of treachery and criticism of flattery and evil, but it was clearly not written to pass censure on the times. Moreover it surpassed other books in its voluminous accounts of benevolent princes, good ministers, kind fathers and filial sons, and all



称功颂德，眷眷无穷，实非别书可比。虽其中大旨谈情，亦不过实录其事，又非假拟妄称，一味淫邀艳约、私订偷盟之可比。因毫不干涉时世，方从头至尾抄录回来，问世传奇。从此空空道人因空见色，由色生情，传情人色，自色悟空，遂易名为情僧，改《石头记》为《情僧录》。东鲁孔梅溪则题曰《风月宝鉴》。后因曹雪芹于悼红轩中披阅十载，增删五次，纂成目录，分出章回，则题曰《金陵十二钗》。并题一绝云：

满纸荒唐言，一把辛酸泪！
都云作者痴，谁解其中味？

出则既明，且看石上是何故事。按那石上书云：

当日地陷东南，这东南一隅有处曰姑苏，有城曰阊门，最是红尘中一二等富贵风流之地。这阊门外有个十里街，街内有个仁清巷，巷内有个古庙，因地方窄狭，皆呼作葫芦庙。庙旁住着一家乡宦，姓甄，名费，字士隐。嫡妻封氏，情性贤淑，深明礼义。家中虽不甚富贵，然本地便也推他为望族了。因这甄士隐禀性恬淡，不以功名为念，每日只以观花修竹，酌酒吟诗为乐，倒是神仙一流人品。只是一件不





matters pertaining to proper human relations, as well as eulogies of virtuous deeds. Although the main theme was love, it was simply a true record of events, superior to those sham meretricious works devoted to licentious assignations and dissolute escapades. Since it did not touch at all on current events he copied it out from beginning to end and took it away to find a publisher.

Since all manifestations are born of nothingness and in turn give rise to passion, by describing passion for what is manifest we comprehend nothingness. So the Taoist changed his name to the Passionate Monk and changed the title of the book from *The Tale of the Stone* to the *Record of the Passionate Monk*.

Kong Meixi of eastern Lu⁶ suggested the title *Precious Mirror of Love*. Later Cao Xueqin in his *Mourning-the-Red Studio* pored over the book for ten years and rewrote it five times. He divided it into chapters, furnished headings for each, and renamed it *The Twelve Beauties of Jinling*. He also inscribed on it this verse:

Pages full of fantastic talk
Penned with bitter tears;
All men call the author mad,
None his message hears.

Now that the origin of the story is clear, let us see what was recorded on the Stone.

Long ago the earth dipped downwards in the southeast, and in that southeast part was a city named Gusu⁷; and the quarter around Changmen Gate of Gusu was one of the most fashionable centres of wealth and nobility in the world of men. Outside this Changmen Gate was a certain Ten-li Street, off which ran the Lane of Humanity and Purity; and in this lane stood an old temple, which being built in such a narrow space was known from its shape as Gourd Temple. Beside this temple lived a gentleman named Zhen Fei, whose courtesy name was Shiyin. His wife, née Feng, was a worthy virtuous woman with a strong sense of propriety and right. Although neither very rich nor noble, their family was highly regarded in that locality.

Zhen Shiyin had a quiet disposition. Instead of hankering after wealth



足，如今年已半百，膝下无儿，只有一女，乳名英莲，年方三岁。

一日，炎夏永昼，士隐于书房中闲坐，至手倦抛书，伏几少憩，不觉朦胧睡去。梦至一处，不知是何地。忽见那厢来了一僧一道，且行且谈。只听道人问道：“你携了这蠢物，意欲何往？”那僧笑道：“你放心，如今现有一段风流公案，正该结了，这一干风流冤家，尚未投胎入世。趁此机会，就将此蠢物夹带于中，使他去经历。”那道人道：“原来近日风流冤孽，又将造劫历世去不成？但不知落于何方何处？”那僧笑道：“此事说来好笑，竟是千古未闻的罕事。只因西方灵河岸上三生石畔，有绛珠草一株，时有赤瑕宫神瑛侍者，日以甘露灌溉，这绛珠草始得久延岁月。后来既受天地精华，复得雨露滋养，遂得脱却草胎木质，得换人形，仅修成个女体，终日游于离恨天外，饥则食蜜青果为膳，渴则饮灌愁海水为汤。只因尚未酬报灌溉之德，故其在五内便郁结成一段缠绵不舒之意。近日，这神瑛侍者凡心偶炽，乘此昌明太平朝世，意欲下凡，造历幻缘，已在警幻仙子案前挂了号。警幻亦曾问及，灌溉之情未偿，趁此倒可了结的。那绛珠仙子道：‘他是甘露之惠，我并无此水可还。他既下世为人，我也去下世为人，但把我一生所有的眼泪还他，也偿还的过他了。’因此一事，就勾出多少风流冤家来，陪他们去了结此

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or rank, he was quite happy tending flowers, growing bamboos, sipping wine or writing poems — spending his time very much like an immortal. One thing alone was lacking: he was now over fifty but had no son, only a three-year-old daughter named Yinglian.

One long hot summer day as Shiyin was sitting idly in his study, the book slipped from his hand and, leaning his head on the desk, he fell asleep.

In dream he travelled to an unknown place, where he suddenly noticed a monk and a Taoist approaching, talking together. He heard the Taoist ask:

“Where do you mean to take that stupid object?”

“Don’t worry,” replied the monk. “A love drama is about to be enacted, but not all its actors have yet been incarnated. I’m going to slip this silly thing in among them to give it the experience it wants.”

“So another batch of amorous sinners are bent on making trouble by reincarnation,” commented the Taoist. “Where will this drama take place?”

“It’s an amusing story.” The monk smiled. “You’ve never heard anything like it. In the west, on the bank of the Sacred River, beside the Stone of Three Incarnations there grew a Vermilion Pearl Plant which was watered every day with sweet dew by the attendant Shen Ying in the Palace of Red Jade. As the months and years went by and the Vermilion Pearl Plant imbibed the essences of heaven and earth and the nourishment of rain and dew, it cast off its plant nature and took human form, albeit only that of a girl. All day long she roamed beyond the Sphere of Parting Sorrow, staying her hunger with the fruit Secret Love and quenching her thirst at the Sea of Brimming Grief. But her heart was heavy because she had not repaid the care lavished on her.

“Just then, as it happened, Shen Ying was seized with a longing to assume human form and visit the world of men, taking advantage of the present enlightened and peaceful reign. He made his request to the Goddess of Disenchantment, who saw that this was a chance for Vermilion Pearl to repay her debt of gratitude.

“‘He gave me sweet dew,’ said Vermilion Pearl, ‘but I’ve no water to repay his kindness. If he’s going down to the world of men, I would like to go too so that if I repay him with as many tears as I can shed in a



案。”那道人道：“果真是罕闻。实未闻有还泪之说。想来这一段故事，比历来风月故事更为琐碎细腻了。”那僧道：

“历来几个风流人物，不过传其大概以及诗词篇章而已；至家庭闺阁中一饮一食，总未述记。再者，大半风月故事，不过偷香窃玉，暗约私奔而已，并不曾将儿女之真情发泄一二。想这一干人入世，其情痴色鬼、贤愚不肖者，悉与前人传述不同矣。”那道人道：“趁此何不你我也去世上度脱几个，岂不是一场功德？”那僧道：“正合吾意。你且同我到警幻仙子宫中，将这蠢物交割清楚。等这一干风流孽鬼下世已完，你我再去。如今虽已有一半落尘，然犹未全集。”道人道：“既如此，便随你去来。”

却说甄士隐俱听的明白，但不知所云“蠢物”系何东西。遂不禁上前施礼，笑问道：“二仙师请了。”那僧道也忙答礼相问。士隐因说道：“适闻仙师所谈因果，实人世罕闻者。但弟子愚浊，不能洞悉明白，若蒙大开痴顽，备细一闻，弟子则洗耳谛听，稍能警省，亦可免沉沦之苦。”二仙笑道：“此乃玄机不可预泄者。到那时只不要忘了我二人，可便跳出火坑矣。”士隐听了，不便再问。因笑道：“玄机不可预泄，但适云‘蠢物’，不知为何，或可一见否？”那僧道：





lifetime I may be able to clear this debt.’

“This induced many other amorous spirits who had not atoned for their sins to accompany them and take part in this drama.”

“That certainly is odd,” remarked the Taoist. “I’ve never heard of repayment with tears before. I imagine this story should have more fine points than the usual run of breeze-and-moonlight tales.”

“The old romances give us only outlines of their characters’ lives with a number of poems about them,” said the monk. “We’re never told the details of their intimate family life or daily meals. Besides, most breeze-and-moonlight tales deal with secret assignations and elopements, and have never really expressed the true love between a young man and a girl. I’m sure when these spirits go down to earth, we’ll see lovers and lechers, worthy people, simpletons and scoundrels unlike those in earlier romances.”

“Why don’t you and I take this chance to go too and win over a few of them? That would be a worthy deed.”

“Exactly what I was thinking. But first we must take this stupid object to the palace of the Goddess of Disenchantment and clear all the formalities. After all these romantic souls have gone down we can follow. So far only half of them have descended to earth.”

“In that case I’m ready to go with you,” said the Taoist.

Zhen Shiyin had heard every word of their conversation but did not know what was meant by the “stupid object.” He could not resist accosting them with a bow.

“Greetings, immortal masters!” he said with a smile.

When they had returned his greeting he continued: “Rare indeed is the opportunity to listen to such a discussion of cause and effects as I have just heard. But I am too dull to grasp it. If you would kindly elucidate to enlighten me, I promise to listen most attentively. For profiting by your wisdom may prove my salvation.”

“This is a mystery which we cannot divulge.” The two immortals smiled. “When the time comes, think of us. Then you may be able to escape from the fiery pit.”

Shiyin could hardly press them. “I mustn’t probe into a mystery,” he said, “but could you show me that object you mentioned just now?”

“若问此物，倒有一面之缘。”说着，取出递与士隐。士隐接了看时，原来是块美玉，上面字迹分明，镌着“通灵宝玉”四字，后面还有几行小字。正欲细看时，那僧便说已到幻境，便强从手中夺了去，与道人竞过一大石牌坊，上书四字，乃是“太虚幻境”。两边又有一副对联，道是：

假作真时真亦假，无为有处有还无。

士隐意欲也跟了过去，方举步时，忽听一声霹雳，有若山崩地陷。士隐大叫一声，定睛一看，只见烈日炎炎，芭蕉冉冉，梦中之事便忘了对半。又见奶母正抱了英莲来，士隐见女儿越发生得粉妆玉琢，乖觉可喜，便伸手接来，抱在怀中，逗他玩耍一回，又带至街前，看那过会的热闹。方欲进来时，只见从那边来了一僧一道，那僧则癞头跣足，那道则跛足蓬头，疯疯癫癫，挥霍谈笑而至。及至到了他门前，看见士隐抱着英莲，那僧便大哭起来，又向士隐道：“施主，你把这有命无运，累及爹娘之物，抱在怀中作甚？”士隐听了，知是疯话，也不去睬他。那僧还说：“舍我罢，舍我罢！”士隐不耐烦，便抱女儿要进去，那僧乃指着他大笑，口念了四句言词道：

惯养娇生笑你痴，菱花空对雪澌澌。





"If you want to know, you are destined in your life to meet with it," said the monk.

With that he produced a beautiful piece of translucent jade and handed it to Shiyin. On the obverse were carved the words Precious Jade of Spiritual Understanding. Before Shiyin could look carefully at the columns of smaller characters on the reverse the monk snatched it away from him saying:

"We've reached the Land of Illusion."

He passed with the Taoist through a large stone archway on which was inscribed: Illusory Land of Great Void. A couplet on the two pillars read:

When false is taken for true, true becomes false;
If non-being turns into being, being becomes non-being.

Shiyin was starting after the two immortals when he heard a fearful crash, as if mountains had collapsed and the earth split asunder. With a cry he woke up and stared about him. There was the fiery sun still blazing down on the rustling plantain leaves. Already half of his dream had slipped his mind.

The nurse came up then with Yinglian in her arms, and it struck Shiyin that his daughter was growing prettier and more lovable every day. He picked her up and played with her for a while, then took her to the gate to watch a religious procession pass by. He was just about to go in again when a monk and a Taoist priest drew near, laughing and gibbering like two maniacs. The monk was barefooted, his head scabby; the priest, lame with tangled, tousled hair. When they reached Shiyin's gate and saw the child in his arms, the monk burst into lamentations.

"Why are you carrying that ill-fated creature, sir?" he asked. "She will bring nothing but trouble to her parents."

Shiyin thought the man was raving and paid no attention.

"Give her to me!" cried the monk. "Give her to me!"

Losing patience, Shiyin clasped his daughter more tightly and was turning to reenter the house when the monk pointed at him and let out a roar of laughter. He then declaimed:

"Fool, to care for this tender child:



好防佳节元宵后，便是烟消火灭时。

士隐听得明白，心下犹豫，意欲问他们来历。只听道人说道：“你我不必同行，就此分手，各干营生去罢。三劫后，我在北邙山等你，会齐了，同往太虚幻境销号。”那僧道：“妙极，妙极！”说毕，二人一去，再不见个踪迹了。士隐心中，此时自忖，这两个人必有来历，该试一问，如今悔却晚也。

这士隐正痴想，忽见隔壁葫芦庙内，寄居一穷儒：姓贾名化，字时飞，别号雨村者，走了出来。这贾雨村原系胡州人氏，原是诗书仕宦之族，因他生于末世，父母祖宗根基一尽，人口衰微，只剩得他一身一口，在家乡无益，因进京求取功名，再整基业。自前岁来此，又淹蹇住了，暂在庙中安身，每日卖字作文为生，故士隐常与他交接。当下雨村见了士隐，忙施礼陪笑道：“老先生倚门仁望，敢是街市上有甚新闻否？”士隐笑道：“非也。适因小女啼哭，引他出来作耍，正是无聊之甚。兄来得正妙，请入小斋一谈，彼此皆可消此永昼。”说着，便令人送女进去，自携了雨村来至书房中。小童献茶。方谈得三五句话，忽家人飞报：“严老爷来拜。”士隐慌的忙起身谢罪，道：“恕诳驾之罪，略坐，弟即来陪。”雨村忙起身亦让道：“老先生请便。晚生乃常造之客，稍候何妨。”说着，士隐已出前庭去了。





An image in the mirror, snow melting away.
Beware what will follow the Lantern Feast,
The vanishing like smoke when the fire burns out.”

Shiyin, hearing this clearly, wondered what it meant. Before he could ask, the Taoist told the monk:

“This is where our paths divide. Each must go about his own business. Three aeons from now I shall wait for you at Mount Beimang, and together we can go to the Land of Illusion to have this affair expunged from the register.”

“Very good,” said the monk.

Then both vanished without a trace.

Shiyin realized then that these were no ordinary men and regretted not having questioned them. His rueful reflections were cut short by the arrival of a poor scholar who lived next door in Gourd Temple. His name was Jia Hua⁸, his courtesy name Shifei, and his pen-name Yucun. A native of Huzhou, he was the last of a line of scholars and officials. His parents had exhausted the family property and died leaving him alone in the world. Since nothing was to be gained by staying at home, he had set out for the capital in the hope of securing a position and restoring the family fortunes. But by the time he had reached here a couple of years ago his money had run out and he had gone to live in the temple where he made a precarious living by working as a scrivener. For this reason Shiyin saw a good deal of him.

Having greeted Shiyin, Yucun asked, “What are you watching from your gate, sir? Is there any news in town?” “Nothing,” was the reply. “My little girl was crying, so I brought her out to play. You couldn’t have arrived at a better moment, as I was feeling thoroughly bored. Come in and help me while away the long summer day.”

He told a servant to take his daughter inside, and led Yucun into his study, where a boy served tea. They had not exchanged many remarks when a servant hurried in to announce the arrival of a certain Mr. Yan.

Then Shiyin excused himself, saying, “Forgive my rudeness. Do you mind waiting here for a few minutes?”

“Don’t stand on ceremony, sir,” said Yucun, rising. “I am a regular guest here, I don’t mind waiting.”

这里雨村且翻弄书籍解闷。忽听窗外有女子嗽声，雨村遂起身往窗外一看，原来是一个丫鬟，在那里撷花，生得仪容不俗，眉目清朗，虽无十分姿色，却亦有动人之处。雨村不觉看得呆了。那甄家丫鬟撷了花，方欲走时，猛抬头见窗内有人，敝巾旧服，虽是贫窘，然生得腰宽背厚，面阔口方，更兼剑眉星眼，直鼻权腮。这丫鬟忙转身回避，心下乃想：“这人生得这样雄壮，却又这样褴褛，想他定是我家主人常说的什么贾雨村了，每有意帮助周济，只是无甚机会。我家并无这样贫窘亲友，想定是此人无疑了，怪道又说他必非久困之人。”如此想来，不免又回头两次。雨村见他回头，便自为这女子心中有意于他，便狂喜不尽，自为此女子必是个巨眼英豪，风尘中之知己也。一时小童进来，听得前面留饭，不可久待，遂从夹道中自便出门去了。士隐待客既散，知雨村自便，也不去再邀了。

一日，早又中秋佳节。士隐家宴已毕，乃具一席于书房，却自己步月至庙中，来邀雨村。原来雨村自那日见了甄家之婢曾回顾他两次，自为是个知己，便时刻放在心上。今又值中秋，不免对月有怀，因而口占五言一律云：

未卜三生愿，频添一段愁。

闷来时敛额，行去几回头。

自顾风前影，谁堪月下俦？



So after Shiyin went to the front room Yucun passed the time by leafing through some books, until he heard a young woman coughing outside. He slipped over to the window and looked out. It was a maid picking flowers. She had uncommon features, bright eyes and graceful eyebrows, and although no great beauty she possessed considerable charm. Yucun stared at her, spell-bound.

Just as she was leaving with her flowers, the girl abruptly looked up and caught sight of him. His clothes were shabby yet he was powerfully built with an open face, firm lips, eyebrows like scimitars, eyes like stars, a straight nose and rounded cheeks. She turned away thinking to herself, "He's a fine-looking man for all his tattered clothes. This must be the Jia Yucun my master keeps talking about, whom he'd gladly help if only he had the chance. Yes, I'm sure it's him, our family has no other friends who are poor. No wonder my master also says he's a man who won't remain long in this plight." She could not resist looking back a couple of times.

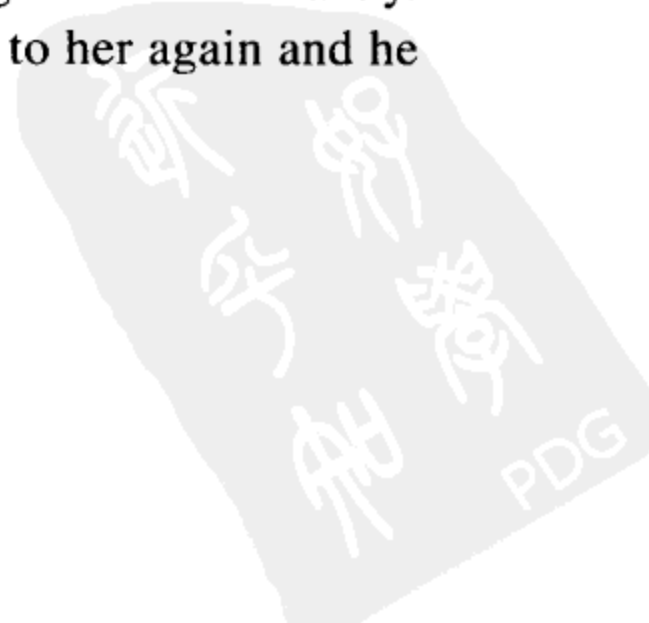
Yucun seeing this was overjoyed, thinking that she must have taken a fancy to him. He decided that she had good judgement and was one of the few who could appreciate him in his obscurity.

Presently the boy came back and let Yucun know that the guest was staying to a meal. Since this made it out of the question to wait any longer, Yucun went through a passage to the side gate and left. And after the departure of Mr. Yan, Shiyin did not trouble to invite him back.

In time the Mid-Autumn Festival came round. After the family meal, Shiyin had another table laid in his study and strolled over in the moonlight to the temple to invite Yucun over.

Ever since the Zhens' maid had looked back that day, Yucun flattered himself that she was well-disposed to him and thought of her constantly. As he gazed at the full moon, his thoughts turned to her again and he declaimed this verse:

"Not yet divined the fate in store for me,
Good reason have I for anxiety,
And so my brows are knit despondently;
But she, as she went off, looked back at me.
My shadow in the wind is all I see,





蟾光如有意，先上玉人楼。

雨村吟罢，因又思及平生抱负，苦未逢时，乃又搔首对天长叹，后高吟一联曰：

玉在匡中求善价，钗于奁内待时飞。

恰值士隐走来听见，笑道：“雨村兄真抱负不浅也！”雨村忙笑道：“岂敢！不过偶吟前人之句，何敢狂诞至此。”因问：

“老先生何兴至此？”士隐笑道：“今夜中秋，俗谓‘团圆之节’，想尊兄旅寄僧房，不无寂寥之感，故特具小酌，邀兄到敝斋一饮，不知可纳芹意否？”雨村听了，并不推辞，便笑道：“既蒙谬爱，何敢拂此盛意？”说着，便同士隐复过这边书院中来。

须臾茶毕，早已设下杯盘，那美酒佳肴自不必说。二人归坐，先是款斟漫饮，渐次谈至兴浓，不觉飞觥限罍起来。当时街坊上家家箫管，户户弦歌，当头一轮明月，飞彩凝辉，二人愈添豪兴，酒到杯干。雨村此时已在七八分酒意，狂兴不禁，乃对月当杯，口号一绝云：

时逢三五便团圆，满把晴光护玉栏。

天上一轮才捧出，人间万姓仰头看。

士隐听了，大叫：“妙哉！吾每谓兄必非久居人下者，今所吟之句，飞腾之兆已见，不日可得接履于云霓之上矣。可贺，可贺！”乃亲斟一斗为贺。雨村因干过，叹道：“非晚生酒后



Will she by moonlight keep me company?
If sensibility were in its power
The moon should first light up the fair one's bower."

Having recited this, Yucun ruffled his hair and sighed as he reflected how far he was from realizing his ambitions. He chanted the couplet:

"The jade in the box hopes to fetch a good price,
The pin in the casket longs to soar on high."

He was overheard by Shiyin, who arrived just then.

"I see you have high ambitions, Brother Yucun!" he joked.

"Not in the least," replied Yucun, somewhat embarrassed. "I was merely reciting some lines by a former poet. I don't aspire so high. To what do I owe the pleasure of this visit?"

"Tonight is mid-autumn, commonly known as the Festival of Reunion. It occurred to me that you might be feeling lonely in this temple, brother. I've prepared a little wine in my humble place and wonder if you'd condescend to share it?"

Yucun needed no urging.

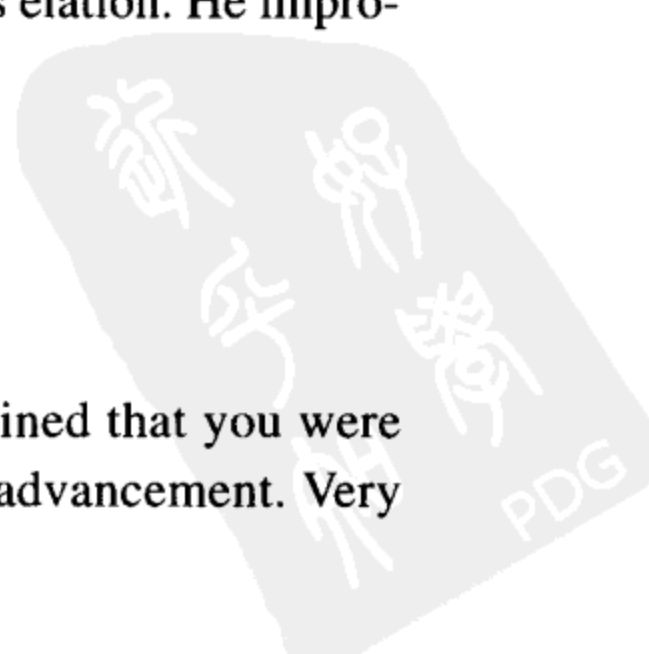
"You lavish too much kindness on me, sir," he said, "Nothing would please me better."

They went to the court in front of Shiyin's study. Soon they had finished their tea and sat down to a collation of choice wine and delicacies. At first they sipped slowly, but their spirits rose as they talked and they began to drink more recklessly. The sound of flutes and strings could be heard from all the houses in the neighbourhood; everywhere was singing; and overhead the bright moon shone in full splendour. The two men became very merry and drained cup after cup.

Yucun, eight-tenths drunk, could not suppress his elation. He improvised a quatrain to the moon and declaimed it:

"On the fifteenth the moon is full,
Bathing jade balustrades with her pure light;
As her bright orb sails up the sky
All men on earth gaze upwards at the sight."

"Excellent!" cried Shiyin. "I've always maintained that you were cut out for great things. These lines foretell rapid advancement. Very



狂言，若论时尚之学，晚生也或可去充数沽名，只是目今行囊路费一概无措，神京路远，非赖卖字撰文即到者。”士隐不待说完，便道：“兄何不早言。愚每有此心，但每遇兄时，兄并未谈及，愚故未敢唐突。今既及此，愚虽不才，‘义利’二字却还识得。且喜明岁大比，兄宜作速入都，春闱一战，方不负兄之所学也。其盘费余事，弟自代为处置，亦不枉兄之谬识矣！”当下即命小童进去，速封五十两白银，并两套冬衣。又云：“十九日乃黄道之期，兄可即买舟西上，待雄飞高举，明冬再晤，岂非大快之事耶！”雨村收了银衣，不过略谢一语，并不介意，仍是吃酒谈笑。那天已交三更，二人方散。

士隐送雨村去后，回房一觉，直至红日三竿方醒。因思昨夜之事，意欲再写两封书与雨村带至神都，使雨村投谒个仕宦之家为寄足之地。因使人过去请时，那家人去了回来言，和尚说，贾爷今日五鼓已进京去了，也曾留下话与和尚，转达老爷，说：“读书人不在黄道黑道，总以事理为要，不及面辞了。”士隐听了，也只得罢了。

真是闲处光阴易过，倏忽又是元宵佳节矣。因士隐命家人霍启抱了英莲去看社火花灯，半夜中，霍启因要小解，便将英莲放在一家门槛上坐着。待他小解完了来抱时，那有英莲的踪影？急得霍启直寻了半夜，至天明不见，那霍启也就不敢回来见主人，便逃往他乡去了。那士隐夫妇见女儿一夜



soon you will be treading upon the clouds. Let me congratulate you.”

He filled another large cup. Yucun tossed it off and then sighed.

“Don’t think this is just drunken talk,” he said. “I’m sure I could acquit myself quite creditably in the examinations; but I have no money in my wallet for travelling expenses and the capital is far away. I can’t raise enough as a scrivener....”

“Why didn’t you say so before?” interposed Shiyin. “I’ve often wondered about this, but since you never mentioned it I didn’t like to broach the subject. If that’s how things are, dull as I am at least I know what’s due to a friend. Luckily the Metropolitan Examinations are coming up next year. You must go as fast as you can to the capital and prove your learning in the Spring Test. I shall count it a privilege to take care of the travelling expenses and other business for you.”

He sent his boy in to fetch fifty taels of silver and two suits of winter clothes.

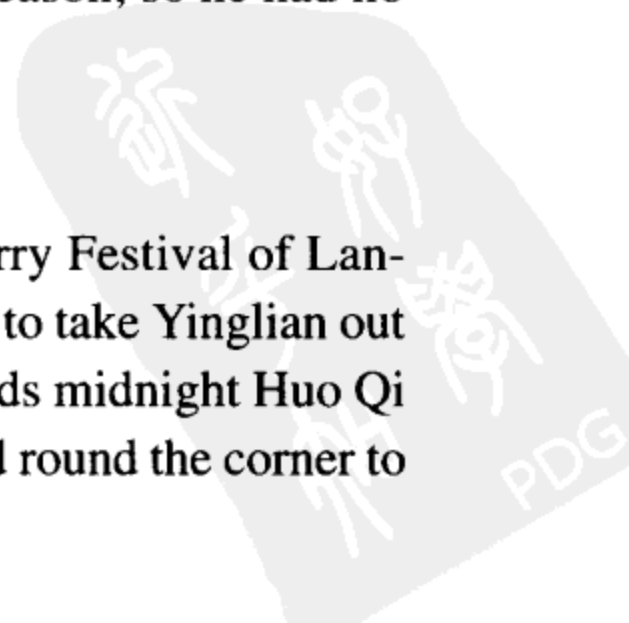
“The nineteenth is a good day for travelling,” he continued. “You can hire a boat then and start your journey westward. How good it will be to meet again next winter after you have soared up to dizzy heights.”

Yucun accepted the silver and clothes with no more than perfunctory thanks, then said no more of the matter but went on feasting and talking. They did not part until the third watch, when Shiyin saw his friend off and returned to his room to sleep until the sun was high in the sky. Then, remembering the previous night’s business, he decided to write Yucun two letters of introduction to certain officials in the capital who might put him up.

But the servant sent to ask his friend over bought back word, “The monk says that Mr. Jia left for the capital at the fifth watch this morning. He asked the monk to tell you that scholars are not superstitious about lucky or unlucky days but like to act according to reason; so he had no time to say goodbye in person.”

This Shiyin had to accept.

Uneventful days pass quickly. In a flash the merry Festival of Lanterns came round and Shiyin told his servant Huo Qi to take Yinglian out to see the fireworks and ornamental lanterns. Towards midnight Huo Qi set the little girl down on a doorstep while he stepped round the corner to





不归，便知有些不妥，再使几人去寻找，回来皆云音信全无。夫妇二人，半世只生此女，一旦失落，岂不思想，因此昼夜啼哭，几乎不曾寻死。看看一月，士隐先就得了一病；当时封氏孺人也因思女构疾，日日请医调治。

不想这一日三月十五，葫芦庙炸供，那些和尚不加小心，致使油锅火逸，便烧着窗纸。此方人家，多用竹壁，大抵也因劫数，于是接二连三，牵五挂六，将一条街烧如火焰山一般。彼时虽有军民来救，那火已成了势，如何救得下？直烧了一夜，方渐渐的熄去，也不知烧了几家。只可怜甄家在隔壁，早已烧成一片瓦砾场了。只有他夫妇并几个家人的性命不曾伤了。急得士隐惟跌足长叹而已。只得与妻子商议，且到田庄上去安身。偏值近年水旱不收，鼠盗蜂起，无非抢田夺地，民不安生，因此官兵剿捕，难以安身。士隐只得将田庄都折变，携妻子与两个丫鬟投他岳丈家去。

他岳丈名封肃，本贯大如州人氏，虽是务农，家中都还殷实。今见女儿、女婿这等狼狈而来，心中便有些不乐。幸而士隐还有折变地的银子未曾用完，拿出来托他随分就价，置些须房地，为后日衣食之计。那封肃便半哄半赚，些须与他些薄田朽层。士隐乃读书之人，不惯生理稼穡等事，勉强支持了一二年，越觉穷了下去。封肃每见面时，便说些现成话，且人前人后又怨他们不善过活，一味好吃懒做等语。士



urinate. When he came back she had gone. He made a frantic search for her all night. And at dawn, not daring to face his master without her, he ran away to another district.

Shiyin and his wife were naturally alarmed when their daughter failed to come home. They sent search parties out, but all returned without any word of her. She was the middle-aged couple's only child, and her loss nearly drove them distracted. They wept day and night and were tempted to take their own lives. After a month's grief Shiyin fell ill, and then his wife. Every day they sent for doctors.

Then, on the fifteenth day of the third month, a fire broke out in Gourd Temple — the monk preparing the sacrifice carelessly let a pan of oil catch fire and soon the window paper was alight. Since most of the nearby buildings had bamboo walls and were probably doomed to destruction, the flames spread from house to house until the whole street was ablaze like a flaming mountain. Soldiers and civilians tried to put out the fire, but it was beyond control. The conflagration raged for a whole night and destroyed none knew how many houses before it burned itself out. The Zhens' home, being next to the temple, was reduced to a pile of rubble. Although they and their few servants were lucky enough to escape with their lives, poor Shiyin could do nothing but stamp his feet and sigh.

He and his wife decided then to go and live on their farm. But the last few year's harvests had been ruined by flood and drought and the countryside was overrun by bandits who seized fields and land, giving the people no peace. The punitive expeditions by government troops only made matters worse. Finding it impossible to settle there, Shiyin had to mortgage his land and take his wife and two maids to find refuge with his father-in-law Feng Su.

Now this Feng Su, a native of Daruzhou, although only a farmer was quite comfortably off. He was not pleased by the arrival of his daughter and son-in-law in this sorry state. Fortunately Shiyin had some money left from the mortgage of his land, and he asked Feng Su to invest this for him in some estate on which he could live in future. His father-in-law tricked him, however, by pocketing half the sum and buying him some poor fields and a ramshackle cottage. As a scholar, Shiyin had no knowledge of business or farming. He struggled along for a year or two, losing money

隐知投人不着，心中未免悔恨，再兼上年惊唬，急忿怨痛，已有积伤，暮年之人，贫病交攻，渐渐的露出那下世光景来。

可巧这日拄了拐，挣挫到街上散散心时，忽见那边来了一个跛足道人，疯癫落脱，麻履鹑衣，口内念着几句言词道：

世人都晓神仙好，惟有功名忘不了！
古今将相在何方？荒冢一堆草没了。
世人都晓神仙好，只有金银忘不了！
终朝只恨聚无多，及到多时眼闭了。
世人都晓神仙好，只有姣妻忘不了！
君生日日说恩情，君死又随人去了。
世人都晓神仙好，只有儿孙忘不了！
痴心父母古来多，孝顺儿孙谁见了？

士隐听了，便迎上来道：“你说些什么？只听见些‘好’、‘了’，‘好’、‘了’。”那道人道：“你若果听见‘好’、‘了’二字，还算明白。可知世人万般，好便是了，了便是好。若不了，便不好；若要好，须是了。我这歌儿，便名《好了歌》。”



all the time, while Feng Su kept admonishing him to his face and complaining to all and sundry behind his back of his incompetence, idleness and extravagance.

To the shock Shiyin had suffered the previous year and the toll taken by his subsequent misfortunes was now added the bitter realization that he had misplaced his trust. Ageing and a prey to poverty and ill health, he began to look like a man with one foot in the grave.

He made the effort one day to find some distraction by taking a walk in the street, leaning on his cane. Suddenly a Taoist limped towards him, a seeming maniac in hemp sandals and tattered clothes, who as he came chanted:

“All men long to be immortals
Yet to riches and rank each aspires;
The great ones of old, where are they now?
Their graves are a mass of briars.

All men long to be immortals,
Yet silver and gold they prize
And grub for money all their lives
Till death seals up their eyes.

All men long to be immortals
Yet dote on the wives they've wed,
Who swear to love their husband evermore
But remarry as soon as he's dead.

All men long to be immortals
Yet with getting sons won't have done.
Although fond parents are legion,
Who ever saw a really filial son?”

At the close of this song Shiyin stepped forward.

“What was that you just chanted?” he asked. “I had the impression that it was about the vanity of all things.”

“If you gathered that, you have some understanding,” the Taoist remarked. “You should know that all good things in this world must end, and to make an end is good, for there is nothing good which does not end. My song is called *All Good Things Must End*.”

Shiyin with his innate intelligence at once grasped the other's mean-



士隐本是有宿慧的，一闻此言，心中早已彻悟。因笑道：“且住！待我将你《好了歌》解注出来何如？”道人笑道：

“你解，你解。”士隐乃说道：

陋室空堂，当年笏满床。

衰草枯杨，曾为歌舞场。

蛛丝儿结满雕梁，绿纱儿今又糊在蓬窗上。

说什么脂正浓、粉正香，如何两鬓又成霜？

昨日黄土陇头送白骨，今宵红灯帐底卧鸳鸯。

金满箱，银满箱，转眼乞丐人皆谤。

正叹他人命不长，那知自己归来丧！

训有方，保不定后日作强梁。

择膏粱，谁承望流落在烟花巷！

因嫌纱帽小，致使锁枷扛。

昨怜破袄寒，今嫌紫袍长。

乱烘烘你方唱罢我登场，反认他乡是故乡。

甚荒唐，到头来都是为他人作嫁衣裳！





ing. Putting on a smile he said, "Wait a minute, will you let me expound this song of yours?"

"By all means do," said the Taoist.

Shiyin then declaimed:

"Mean huts and empty halls
Where emblems of nobility once hung;
Dead weeds and withered trees,
Where men have once danced and sung.
Carved beams are swathed in cobwebs
But briar-choked casements screened again with gauze;
While yet the rouge is fresh, the powder fragrant,
The hair at the temples turns hoary — for what cause?
Yesterday, yellow clay received white bones;
Today, red lanterns light the love-birds' nest;
While men with gold and silver by the chest
Turn beggars, scorned by all the dispossessed.
A life cut short one moment makes one sight,
Who would have known it's her turn next to die?
No matter with what pains he schools his sons.
Who knows if they will turn to brigandry?
A pampered girl brought up in luxury
May slip into a quarter of ill fame;
Resentment at a low official rank
May lead to fetters and a felon's shame.
In ragged coat one shivered yesterday,
Today a purple robe he frowns upon;
All's strife and tumult on the stage,
As one man ends his song the next comes on.
To take strange parts as home
Is folly past compare;
And all our labour in the end
Is making clothes for someone else to wear."

The lame, eccentric Taoist clapped his hands. "You have hit the nail on the head," he cried.

"Let's go," was Shiyin's brief reply.



那疯跛道人听了，拍掌笑道：“解得切，解得切！”士隐便说一声“走罢！”将道人肩上褡裢抢了过来背着，竟不知回家，同了道人飘飘而去。当下哄动街坊，众人当作一件新闻传说。封氏闻得此信，哭了死去活来，只得与父亲商议，遣人各处访寻，那知音信全无。无奈何，少不得依着他父母度日。幸而身边还有两个旧日的丫鬟伏侍，主仆三人，日夜作些针线发卖，帮着父亲过活。那封肃虽然日日抱怨，然也无可如何了。

这日，甄家大丫头在门前买线，忽听街上喝道之声，众人都说新太爷到任。丫鬟于是隐在门内看时，只见军牢快手一对一对的过去，俄而大轿内抬着一个乌纱猩袍的官府过去。丫鬟倒发了怔，自忖这官好面善，倒像在那里会过的。于是进入房中，也就丢过不在心上。至晚间，正待歇之时，忽听一片声打的门响，许多人乱嚷，说：“本府太爷的差人来，传人问话。”封肃听了，唬得目瞪口呆，不知有何祸事，且听下回分解。



He transferred the sack from the Taoist's shoulder to his own, and then, without even calling in at his home, he strode off with the priest.

This caused a sensation in the neighbourhood and words of it soon reached Shiyin's wife, who gave way to a storm of weeping. After consultation with her father she had a thorough search made, but there was no news of her husband. She had perforce to go back and live with her parents. Luckily she still had her two maids, and the three of them by sewing day and night helped to defray Feng Su's expenses. For his part, grumble as he might, he had to lump it.

One day the elder of the two maids was buying some thread at the gate when she heard men shouting to clear the street, and people said the new prefect had arrived to take up office. She hid in the doorway to watch. First soldiers and runners marched past two by two. Then came a large sedan-chair in which was seated an official in a black gauze cap and red robe. The maid stared in surprise and thought: His face looks familiar. Have I seen him somewhere before? But once back in the house she thought no more of the matter.

That evening, just as they were going to bed, there came a loud knocking on the gate and a clamour of voices. Messengers from the yamen ordered Feng Su to appear for questioning by the prefect. His jaw dropped and he gaped in consternation. Did this mean fresh calamity?

To find out, read the next chapter.



第二回

贾夫人仙逝扬州城 冷子兴演说荣国府

诗云：

一局输赢料不真，香销茶尽尚逡巡。

欲知目下兴衰兆，须问旁观冷眼人。

却说封肃，因听见公差传唤，忙出来陪笑启问。那些人只嚷：“快请出甄爷来！”封肃忙陪笑道：“小人姓封，并不姓甄。只有当日小婿姓甄，今已出家一二年了，不知可是问他？”那些公人道：“我们也不知什么‘真’‘假’，因奉太爷之命来问你。他是你女婿，便带了你去亲见太爷面禀，省得乱跑。”说着，不容封肃多言，大家推拥他去了。封肃家内人各各都惊慌，不知何兆。

那天约二更时，只见封肃方回来，欢天喜地。众人忙问端的。他乃说道：“原来本府新升的太爷姓贾名化，本胡州人，曾与女婿旧日相交。方才在门前过去，因看见娇杏那丫头买线，所以他只当女婿移住于此。我一一将原故回明，那太爷倒伤感叹息了一回；又问外孙女儿，我说看灯丢了。太爷说，‘不妨，我自使番役务必探访回来。’说了一回话，临走倒送了我二两银子。”甄家娘子听了，不免心中伤感。一宿无话。



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Chapter 2

Lady Jia Dies in the City of Yangzhou Leng Zixing Describes the Rong Mansion

A verse says:

Who can guess the outcome of a game of chess?
Incense burned out, tea drunk — it's still in doubt.
To interpret the signs of prosperity or decline
An impartial onlooker must be sought out.

Hearing the hubbub at his gate, Feng Su hurried out to see what the messengers wanted.

"Ask Mr. Zhen to come out," they bawled. "Be quick about it."

"My name is Feng, not Zhen," he answered with an ingratiating smile. "My son-in-law's name is Zhen, but he left home a year or two ago to become a priest. Is he the man you want?"

"How would we know? We're here on the prefect's orders. If you're his father-in-law, you must come and clear this up with His Honour to save us another trip."

Giving Feng Su no chance to protest they dragged him off, while his whole household trembled, not knowing what this portended.

Towards the end of the second watch he returned in the highest of spirits. Asked what had happened, he told them: "This new prefect, Jia Hua, is a native of Huzhou and an old friend of my son-in-law. When he passed our gate and saw our Jiaoxing buying thread, he supposed that Shiyin had moved his household here. He seemed very upset when I explained all that had happened. He asked after my granddaughter too and I told him she was lost on the Feast of Lanterns. 'Never mind,' said His Honour. 'I'll have a search made and I'm certain we shall find her.' At the end of our conversation, as I was leaving, he gave me two taels of silver."

Zhen's wife was very moved by this. And so the night passed.

Early the next morning a messenger arrived from Jia Yucun with two



至次日，早有雨村遣人送了两封银子、四匹锦缎，答谢甄家娘子；又寄一封密书与封肃，转托问甄家娘子要那娇杏作二房。封肃喜的屁滚尿流，巴不得去奉承，便在女儿前一力撺掇成了，乘夜只用一乘小轿，便把娇杏送进去了。雨村欢喜，自不必说，乃封百金赠封肃，外又谢甄家娘子许多物事，令其好生养赡，以待寻女儿下落。封肃回家无话。

却说娇杏这丫鬟，便是那年回顾雨村者。因偶然一顾，便弄出这段事来，亦是自己意料不到之奇缘。谁想他命运两济，不承望自到雨村身边，只一年便生了一子。又半载，雨村嫡妻忽染疾下世，雨村便将他扶侧作正室夫人了。正是：

偶因一着错，便为人上人。

却说雨村因那年士隐赠银之后，他于十六日便起身入都，至大比之期，不料他十分得意，已会了进士，选入外班，今已升了本府知府。虽才干优长，未免有贪酷之弊；且又恃才侮上，那些官员皆侧目而视。不上两年，便被上司寻了一个空隙，作成一本，参他“生性狡猾，擅纂礼仪，且沾清正之名，而暗结虎狼之属，致使地方多事，民命不堪”等语。龙颜大怒，即批革职。该部文书一到，本府官员无不喜悦。那雨村心中虽十分惭愧，却面上全无一点怨色，仍是嘻笑自若。交代过公事，将历年做官积的些资本并家小送至原籍，安插妥协，却是自己担风袖月，游览天下胜迹。



packets of silver and four lengths of brocade for Mrs. Zhen as a token of gratitude. There was also a confidential letter for Feng Su asking him to persuade Mrs. Zhen to let the prefect have Jiaoxing as his secondary wife. Feng Su could hardly contain himself for joy. Eager to please the prefect, he prevailed on his daughter to agree and that very same night put Jiaoxing in a small sedan-chair and escorted her to the yamen.

We need not dwell on Yucun's satisfaction. He gave Feng Su a hundred pieces of silver and sent Mrs. Zhen many gifts, urging her to take good care of her health while he ascertained her daughter's whereabouts. Feng Su went home, and there we can leave him.

Now Jiaoxing was the maid who had looked back at Yucun that year in Gusu, little dreaming that one casual glance could have such an extraordinary outcome. And so doubly kind was fate that within a year of marriage she bore a son; while after another half year Yucun's wife contracted a disease and died, and then he made Jiaoxing his wife, further improving her position.

A single chance hiatus
Raised her status.

Yucun, after receiving Shiyin's gift of silver that year, had left on the sixteenth for the capital. He did so well in the examinations that he became a Palace Graduate and was given a provincial appointment. He had now been promoted to this prefectship.

But although a capable administrator Yucun was grasping and ruthless, while his arrogance and insolence to his superiors made them view him with disfavour. In less than two years they found a chance to impeach him. He was accused of "ingrained duplicity, tampering with the rites and, under a show of probity, conspiring with his ferocious underlings to foment trouble in his district and make life intolerable for the local people."

The Emperor, much incensed, sanctioned his dismissal. The arrival of this edict rejoiced the hearts of all officials in the Prefecture. But Yucun, although mortified and enraged, betrayed no indignation and went about looking as cheerful as before. After handing over his affairs he gathered together the capital accumulated during his years in office and moved his household back to his native place. Having settled them there he set off, "the wind on his



那日，偶又至维扬地面，因闻得今岁鹺政点的是林如海。这林如海姓林名海，表字如海，乃是前科的探花，今已升至兰台寺大夫，本贯姑苏人氏，今钦点出为巡盐御史，到任方一月有余。原来这林如海之祖，曾袭过列侯，今到如海，已经五世。起初时，只封袭三世，因当今隆恩盛德，远迈前代，额外加恩，至如海之父，又袭了一代。至如海，便从科第出身。虽系钟鼎之家，却亦是书香之族。只可惜这林家支庶不盛，子孙有限，虽有几门，却与如海俱是堂族而已，没甚亲支嫡派的。今如海年已四十，只有一个三岁之子，偏又于去岁死了。虽有几房姬妾，奈他命中无子，亦无可如何了。今只有嫡妻贾氏，生了一女，乳名黛玉，年方五岁。夫妻无子，故爱女如珍，且又见他聪明清秀，便也欲使他读书识几个字，不过假充养子之意，聊解膝下荒凉之叹。

雨村正值偶感风寒，病在旅店，将一月光景方渐愈。一因身体劳倦，二因盘费不继，也正欲寻个作合之处，暂且歇下。幸而两个旧友，亦在此境居住，因闻得鹺政欲聘一西宾，雨村便相托友力，谋了进去，且作安身之计。妙在只一个女学生，并两个伴读丫鬟，这女学生年又小，身体又极怯弱，工课不限多寡，故十分省力。

看看又是一载的光景，谁知女学生之母贾氏夫人一疾而终。女学生侍汤奉药，守丧尽哀，遂又将要辞馆别图。林如海意欲令女守制读书，故又将他留下。近因女学生哀痛过伤，本自怯弱多病的，触犯旧症，遂连日不曾上学。雨村闲居无聊，每当风日晴和，饭后便出来闲步。

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back, moonlight in his sleeves," to see the famous sights of the empire.

One day his travels again took him to Yangzhou, where he learned that the Salt Commissioner that year was Lin Hai — his courtesy name was Lin Ruhai — who had come third in a previous Imperial examination and recently been promoted to the Censorate. A native of Gusu, he had now been selected by the Emperor as a Commissioner of the Salt Inspectorate. He had been little more than a month in this present post.

One of Lin Ruhai's ancestors five generations earlier had been ennobled as a marquis. The rank had been conferred for three generations; then, as the benevolence of the present gracious Emperor far exceeded that of his noble predecessors, he had as a special favour extended it for one more generation, so that Lin Ruhai's father had inherited the title as well. He himself, however, had made his career through the examinations, for his family was cultured as well as noble. Unfortunately it was not prolific, although several branches existed, and Lin Ruhai had cousins but no brothers or sisters. Now he was in his forties and his only son had died at the age of three the previous year. He had several concubines but fate had not granted him another son, and he could not remedy this. By his wife, née Jia, he had a daughter Daiyu just five years old. Both parents loved her dearly. And because she was as intelligent as she was pretty, they decided to give her a good education to make up for their lack of a son and help them forget their loss.

It so happened that Yucun had caught a chill which laid him up in his inn for a month and more. Exhausted by his illness, and short of funds, he was searching for somewhere to recuperate. Fortunately he had two old friends here who knew that the Salt Commissioner was looking for a tutor. Upon their recommendation Yucun was given the post, which provided the security he needed. He was lucky, too, to have as pupil only one small girl accompanied by two maids. Since the child was so delicate, her lessons were irregular and this meant that his duties were light.

In a twinkling another year went by and then his pupil's mother unexpectedly fell ill and died. The little girl attended her during her illness and then went into strict mourning. Yucun considered resigning, but Lin Ruhai kept him on so as not to interrupt his daughter's education during the period of mourning. Recently, grief had brought about a relapse in the



这日偶至郭外，意欲赏鉴那村野风光。忽信步至一山环水旋、茂林深竹之处，隐隐有座庙宇，门巷倾颓，墙垣朽败，门前有额，题着“智通寺”三字，门旁又有一副旧破对联，曰：

身后有余忘缩手，眼前无路想回头。

雨村看了，因想道：“这两句话，文虽浅近，其意则深。我也曾游过些名山大刹，倒不曾见过这话头，其中想必有个翻过筋斗来的亦未可知，何不进去试试。”想着，走入看时，只有一个龙钟老僧在那里煮粥。雨村见了，便不在意。及至问他两句话，那老僧既聋且昏，齿落舌钝，所答非所问。

雨村不耐烦，便仍出来，意欲到那村肆中沽饮三杯，以助野趣，于是款步行来。将入肆门，只见座上吃酒之客有一人起身大笑，接了出来，口内说：“奇遇，奇遇。”雨村忙看时，此人是都中在古董行中贸易的号冷子兴者，旧日在都相识。雨村最赞这冷子兴是个有作为大本领的人，这子兴又借雨村斯文之名，故二人说话投机，最相契合。雨村忙笑问：“老兄何日到此？弟竟不知。今日偶遇，真奇缘也。”子兴道：“去年岁底到家，今因还要入都，从此顺路找个敝友说一句话，承他之情，留我多住两日。我也无甚紧事，且盘桓两





delicate child's health, and for days at a time she had to abandon her studies. Then Yucun, finding time hang heavy on his hands, used to take a walk after his meals when the weather was fine.

One day he strolled to the outskirts of the city to enjoy the countryside. He came to luxuriant woods and bamboo groves set among hills and interlaced by streams, with a temple half hidden among the foliage. The entrance was in ruins, the walls were crumbling. A placard above the gate bore the inscription: Temple of Perspicacity. And flanking the gate were two mouldering boards with the couplet:

Though plenty was left after death, he forgot
to hold his hand back;
Only at the end of the road does one think of
turning on to the right track.

"Trite as the language is, this couplet has deep significance," thought Yucun. "I've never come across anything like it in all the famous temples I've visited. There may be a story behind it of someone who has tasted the bitterness of life, some repentant sinner. I'll go in and ask."

But inside he found only a doddering old monk cooking gruel. Not very impressed, Yucun casually asked him a few questions. The man proved to be deaf as well as dim-witted, for his mumbled answers were quite irrelevant.

Yucun went out again in disgust and decided to improve the occasion by drinking a few cups in a village tavern. He had scarcely set foot inside the door when one of the men who was drinking there rose to his feet and accosted him with a laugh.

"Fancy meeting you here!"

It was Leng Zixing, a curio-dealer whom he had met in the capital. As Yucun admired his enterprise and ability while Zixing was eager to cultivate one of the literati, they had hit it off well together and become good friends.

"When did you arrive, brother?" asked Yucun cheerfully. "I'd no idea you were in these parts. What a coincidence, meeting you here."

"I went home at the end of last year and stopped here on my way back to the capital to look up an old friend. He was good enough to ask me to stay, and since I've no urgent business I'm breaking my journey for a couple of days. I shall go on about the middle of the month. My



日，待月半时也就起身了。今日敝友有事，我因闲步至此，且歇歇脚，不期这样巧遇！”一面说，一面让雨村同席坐了。另整上酒肴来，二人闲谈漫饮，叙些别后之事。

雨村因问：“近日都中可有新闻没有？”子兴道：“倒没有什么新闻，倒是老先生你贵同宗家，出了一件小小异事。”雨村笑道：“弟族中无人在都，何谈及此？”子兴笑道：“你们同姓，岂非同宗一族？”雨村问是谁家。子兴道：“荣国府贾府中，可也不玷辱了先生的门楣了？”雨村笑道：“原来是他家。若论起来，寒族人丁却不少，自东汉贾复以来，支派繁盛，各省皆有，谁能逐细考查？若论荣国一支，却是同谱。但他那等荣耀，我们不便去攀扯，至今故越发生疏难认了。”子兴叹道：“老先生休如此说。如今的这宁荣两门，也都萧疏了，不比先时的光景。”雨村道：“当日宁荣两宅的人口也极多，如何就萧疏了？”冷子兴道：“正是，说来也话长。”雨村道：“去岁我到金陵地界，因欲游览六朝遗迹，那日进了石头城，从他老宅门前经过。路北，东是宁国府，西是荣国府，二宅相连，竟将大半条街占了。大门前虽冷落无人，隔着围墙一望，里面厅殿楼阁，也还都峥嵘轩峻；就是后一带花园子里树木山石，也还都有蓊蔚溇润之气，那里像个衰败之家？”子兴冷笑道：“亏你是进士出身，原何不通！古人有云：‘百足之虫，死而不僵。’如今虽说不似先年那样兴盛，较之平常仕宦之家，到底气象不同。如今生齿日繁，事

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friend's busy today, so I came out for a stroll and stopped here to rest. I'd no idea I'd run into you like this."

He made Yucun sit down at his table and ordered more food and wine. Drinking slowly, they spoke of all they had done since parting.

"Is there any news from the capital?" asked Yucun.

"Nothing much," replied Zixing. "But something rather curious has happened in the house of one of your noble kinsmen."

"I've no kinsmen in the capital. Who do you mean?"

"You have the same surname even if you don't belong to the same clan."

Yucun asked to whom he alluded.

"The Jia family of the Rong Manison. You needn't be ashamed of the connection."

"Oh, that family." Yucun laughed. "To tell the truth, our clan is a very large one. Since the time of Jia Fu of the Eastern Han Dynasty its branches have multiplied until now you find Jias in every province. Impossible to keep track of them all. The Rong branch and mine are, however, on the same clan register, but they're so grand that we've never claimed relationship and are gradually drifting further and further apart."

"Don't talk like that, friend. Both the Ning and Rong branches have declined." Zixing sighed. "They're not what they used to be."

"How is that possible? They used to be enormous households."

"I know. It's a long story."

"Last year when I was in Jinling,"¹ said Yucun, "on my way to visit the Six Dynasty ruins I went to the Stone City² and passed the gates of their old mansions. Practically the whole north side of the street is taken up by their houses, the Ning Mansion on the east and the Rong Mansion adjoining it on the west. True, there wasn't much coming and going outside their gates, but over the wall I caught glimpses of most imposing halls and pavilions, while the trees and rockeries of the gardens behind had a flourishing, opulent look. There was nothing to suggest a house in decline."

"For a Palace Graduate you're not very smart." Zixing chuckled. "A centipede dies but never falls down, as the old saying goes. Although they're not as prosperous as before, they're still a cut above ordinary

务日盛，主仆上下，安富尊荣者尽多，运筹谋画者无一；其日用排场，又不能将就省俭，如今外面的架子虽未甚倒，内囊却也尽上来了。这还是小事。更有一件大事，谁知这样钟鸣鼎食之家，翰墨诗书之族，如今的儿孙，竟一代不如一代了！”雨村听说，也纳罕道：“这样诗礼之家，岂有不善教育之理？别门不知，只说这宁、荣两宅，是最教子有方的。”

子兴叹道：“正说的是这两门呢。待我告诉你，当日宁国公与荣国公是一母同胞弟兄两个。宁公居长，生了四个儿子。宁公死后，长子贾代化袭了官，也生了两个儿子，长名贾敷，至八九岁上便死了，只剩了次子贾敬袭了官，如今一味好道，只爱烧丹炼汞，余者一概不在心上。幸而早年生下一子，名唤贾珍，因他父亲一心想作神仙，把官倒让他袭了。他父亲又不肯回原籍来，只在都中城外和道士们胡厮。这位珍爷倒生了一个儿子，今年才十六岁，名叫贾蓉。如今敬老爷一概不管。这珍爷那里肯读书，只一味高乐不了，把宁国府竟翻了过来，也没有人敢来管他。再说荣府你听，方才所说异事，就出在这里。自荣公死后，长子贾代善袭了官，娶的也是金陵世勋史侯家的小姐为妻，生了两个儿子，长名贾赦，次名贾政。如今代善早已去世，太夫人尚在，长子贾赦袭着官；次子贾政，自幼酷喜读书，祖父最疼，原欲以科甲出身的，不料代善临终时遗本一上，皇上因恤先臣，



official families. Their households are increasing and their commitments are growing all the time, while masters and servants alike are so used to lording it in luxury that not one of them thinks ahead. They squander money every day and are quite incapable of economizing. Outwardly they may look as grand as ever, but their purses are nearly empty. That's not their worst trouble, though. Who would've thought that each new generation of this noble and scholarly clan is inferior to the last."

"Surely," countered Yucun in surprise, "a family so cultured and versed in etiquette knows the importance of a good upbringing? I can't vouch for our other branches, but I've always heard that these two houses take great pains over the education of their sons."

"It's these two houses I'm talking about," rejoined Zixing regretfully. "Just hear me out. The Duke of Ningguo and the Duke of Rongguo were brothers by the same mother. The Duke of Ningguo, the elder, had four sons and after his death the oldest of these, Jia Daihua, succeeded to the title. The elder of his two sons, Jia Fu, died at the age of eight or nine leaving the younger, Jia Jing, to inherit the title. But he's so wrapped up in Taoism that he takes no interest in anything but distilling elixirs. Luckily when he was younger he had a son Jia Zhen, to whom he's relinquished the title so that he can give all his mind to becoming an immortal; and instead of going back to his native place he's hobnobbing with Taoist priests outside the city. Jia Zhen has a son called Rong just turned sixteen. Jia Jing washes his hands of all mundane matters, and Jia Zhen has never studied but lives for pleasure. He's turning the Ning Mansion upside down, yet no one dares to restrain him.

"Now for the Rong Mansion, where that curious business I just mentioned took place. After the death of the Duke of Rongguo, his elder son Jia Daishan succeeded to the title and married a daughter of Marquis Shi of Jinling, by whom he had two sons, Jia She and Jia Zheng. Jia Daishan has been dead for many years but his wife, Lady Dowager Shi, is still alive. Their elder son Jia She inherited the title. The younger, Jia Zheng, was so fond of studying as a child that he was his grandfather's favourite and he hope to make a career for himself through the examinations. When Jia Daishan died, however, he left a valedictory memorial, and the Emperor out of regard for his former minister not only conferred the title on

即时令长子袭官外，问还有儿子，立刻引见，遂额外赐了这政老爹一个主事之衔，令其入部习学，如今现已升了员外郎了。这政老爷的夫人王氏，头胎生得公子，名唤贾珠，十四岁进学，不到二十岁就娶了妻，生了一子，一病死了。第二胎生了一位小姐，生在大年初一日，就奇了；不想后来又生了一位公子，说来更奇，一落胎胞，嘴里即衔下一块五彩晶莹的玉来，上面还有许多字迹，就取名叫作宝玉。你道是奇异事不是？”

雨村笑道：“果然奇异。这人来历只怕不小。”子兴冷笑道：“万人皆如此说，因而乃祖母便先爱如珍宝。那年周岁时，政老爷便要试他将来的志向，便将那世上所有之物件摆了无数，与他抓取。谁知他一概不取，只把些脂粉钗环抓来。政老爷便大怒了，说，‘将来酒色之徒耳！’因此便不大喜悦。独那史老太君还是命根一样。说来又奇，如今长了七八岁，虽然淘气异常，但其聪明乖觉处，百个不及他。说起孩子话来也奇怪，他说，‘女儿是水作的骨肉，男人是泥作的骨肉。我见了女儿，我便清爽；见了男子，便觉浊臭逼人。’你道好笑不好笑？将来色鬼无疑了！”雨村骇然厉色，忙止道：“非也！可惜你们不知道这人来历。大约政老前辈也错以淫魔色鬼看待了。若非多读书识事，加以致知格物之功，悟道参玄之力者，不能知也。”

子兴见他说得这样重大，忙请教其端。雨村道：“天地生人，除大仁大恶两种，余者皆无大异。若大仁者，则应运而生，大恶者，则应劫而生。运生世治，劫生世危。尧、舜、



his elder son but asked what other sons there were, granted Jia Zheng an audience, and as an additional favour gave him the rank of Assistant Secretary with instructions to familiarize himself with affairs in one of the ministries. He has now risen to the rank of Under-Secretary.

“Jia Zheng’s wife, Lady Wang, bore him a son called Jia Zhu who passed the district examination at fourteen, married before he was twenty and had a son, but then fell ill and died. His second child was a daughter, born strangely enough on the first day of the year. But stranger still was the birth later of a son who came into the world with a piece of clear, brilliantly coloured jade in his mouth. There are even inscriptions on the jade, Isn’t that extraordinary?”

“It certainly is. The boy should have a remarkable future.”

“That’s what everyone says.” Zixing smiled cynically. “And for that reason his grandmother dotes on him. On his first birthday Jia Zheng tested his disposition by setting all sorts of different objects before him to see which he would select. Believe it or not, ignoring everything else he reached out for the rouge, powder-boxes, hair ornaments and bangles! His father was furious and swore he’d grow up to be a dissolute rake. Because of this he’s not too fond of the boy, but the child’s still his grandmother’s darling. He’s seven or eight now and remarkably mischievous, yet so clever you won’t find his equal in a hundred. And he says the strangest things for a child. ‘Girls are made of water, men of mud,’ he declares. ‘I feel clean and refreshed when I’m with girls but find men dirty and stinking.’ Isn’t that absurd? He’s bound later on to run after women like the very devil.”

“That doesn’t follow,” put in Yucun, grown suddenly grave. “You don’t know how he’s come into the world. I suspect his father is making a mistake as well if he thinks the boy depraved. To understand him you’d need to be widely read and experienced, able to recognize the nature of things, grasp the Way and comprehend the Mystery.”

He spoke so seriously that Zixing asked him to expand on this.

“All men, apart from the very good and the very bad, are much alike,” said Yucun. “The very good are born at a propitious time when the world is well governed, the very bad in times of calamity when danger threatens. Examples of the first are Yao, Shun, Yu and Tang, King Wen and

禹、汤、文、武、周、召、孔、孟、董、韩、周、程、张、朱，皆应运而生，大仁者，修治天下。共工、桀、纣、始皇、王莽、曹操、桓温、安禄山、秦桧等，皆应劫而生，大恶者，挠乱天下。清明灵秀，天地之正气，仁者之所秉也；残忍乖僻，天地之邪气，恶者之所秉也。今当运隆祚永之朝，太平无为之世，清明灵秀之气所秉者，上至朝廷，下至草野，比比皆是。所余之秀气，漫无所归，遂为甘露，为和风，洽然溉及四海。彼残忍乖僻之邪气，不能荡溢于光天化日之中，遂凝结充塞于深沟大壑之内，偶因风荡，或被云摧，略有摇动感发之意，一丝半缕，误而泄出者，偶值灵秀之气适过，正不容邪，邪复妒正，两不相下，亦如风水雷电，地中既遇既不能消，又不能让，必至搏击掀发后始尽。故其气亦必赋人，发泄一尽始散。使男女偶秉此气而生者，上则不能成仁人君子，下亦不能为大凶大恶。置之于万万人中，其聪俊灵秀之气，则在万万人之上；其乖僻邪谬不近人情之态，又在万万人之下。若生于公侯富贵之家，则为情痴情种；若生于诗书清贫之族，则为逸士高人；纵再偶生于薄祚寒门，断不能为走卒健仆，甘遭庸人驱制驾驭，必为奇优名倡。如前代之许由、陶潜、阮籍、嵇康、刘伶、王谢二族、顾虎头、陈后主、唐明皇、宋徽宗、温飞卿、米南宫、石曼卿、柳耆卿、秦少游，近日之倪雲林、唐伯虎、祝枝山，再如李龟年、黄幡绰、敬新磨、卓文君、红拂、薛涛、



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King Wu, Duke Zhou and Duke Shao, Confucius and Mencius, Dong Zhongshu, Han Yu, Zhou Dunyi, the Cheng brothers, Zhang Zai, and Zhu Xi.³ Examples of the second are Chi You, Gong Gong, Jie, Zhou, Qin Shi Huang, Wang Mang, Cao Cao, Huan Wen, An Lushan and Qin Hui.⁴

“The good bring order to the world, the bad plunge it into confusion. The good embody pure intelligence, the true essence of heaven and earth; the bad, cruelty and perversity, the evil essence.

“This is a prosperous, long-enduring reign when the world is at peace and there are many people in the court and in the countryside who are endowed with the good essences. The over-abundance of this good essence, having nowhere to go, is transformed into sweet dew and gentle breezes and scattered throughout the Four Seas.

“But because there is no place under the clear sky and bright sun for the essence of cruelty and perversity, it congeals in deep caverns and in the bowels of the earth. If wafted by winds or pressed upon by clouds, it is thrown into agitation and traces of it may escape. And should these meet the pure essence, good refuses to yield to evil while evil envies good — neither can prevail over the other. This is like wind, rain, lightning and thunder which cannot vanish into thin air or give way but must battle until they are spent. So in order to find some outlet these essences permeate human beings, who come into the world embodying both. Such people fall short of sages or perfect men, but neither are they out-and-out villains.

“The pure intelligence with which they are endowed sets them above their myriad fellow creatures, but their perversity and unnatural behaviour sink them lower than other men too. Born into rich and noble families, such people will become romantic eccentrics; born into poor but cultured families, they will become high-minded scholars or recluses. Even if born into luckless and humble homes, they will never grow up into yamen runners or servants at the beck and call of the vulgar — they’ll turn out celebrated actors or courtesans. People of this type in the past were Xu You, Tao Qian, Yuan Ji, Ji Kang and Liu Ling, the two families of Wang and Xie, Gu Kaizhi, Chen Shubao, the Tang emperor Minghuang, the Song emperor Huizong, Liu Tingzhi, Wen Tingyun, Mi Fu, Shi Yannian, Liu Yong and Qin Guan.⁵ More recent examples are Ni Zan, Tang Yin and Zhu Yunming.⁶ Then there are others like Li Guinian, Huang Fanchuo,

崔莺、朝云之流，此皆易地则同之人也。”

子兴道：“依你说，成则王侯，败则贼了？”雨村道：“正是这意。你不知，我自革职以来，这两年遍游各省，也曾遇见两个异样孩子。所以方才你一说这宝玉，我就猜着了八九，亦是这一派人物。不用远说，只金陵城内，钦差金陵省体仁院总裁甄家，你可知么？”子兴道：“谁人不知！这甄府和贾府就是老亲，又系世交。两家来往，极其亲热的。便在下也和他家来往非止一日了。”

雨村笑道：“去岁我在金陵，曾有人荐我到甄府处馆。我进去看其光景，谁知他家那等显贵，却是一个富而好礼之家，倒是个难得之馆。但这一个学生，虽是启蒙，却比一个举业的还劳神。说起来更可笑，他说‘必得两个女儿伴着我读书，我方能认得字，心里也明白；不然我自己心里糊涂。’又常对跟他的小厮们道：‘这女儿两个字，极尊贵、极清净的，比那阿弥陀佛、元始天尊的这个宝号还更尊荣无对的呢！你们这浊口臭舌，万不可唐突了这两个字，要紧。但凡说时，必须先用清水香茶漱了口，才可说；设若失错，便要凿牙穿腮等事。’其暴虐浮躁，顽劣憨痴，种种异常。只一放了学，进去见了那些女儿们，其温厚和平，聪敏文雅，竟又变了一个。因此，他尊人也曾下死笞楚过几次，无奈竟不能改。每打的吃疼不过时，他便‘姐姐’‘妹妹’乱叫起来。后来听得里面女儿们拿他取笑，‘因何打急了只管叫姐妹作甚？莫不是求姐妹去说情讨饶？你岂不愧羞？’他回答的最妙。他说‘急疼之时，只叫“姐姐”“妹妹”字样，或可



Jing Xinmo, Zhuo Wenjun, Hongfo, Xue Tao, Cui Yingying and Zhaoyun.⁷ All of these, in their different fields, were essentially the same.”

“You’re saying that such people may become princes or thieves, depending on whether they’re successful or not.”

“Exactly. You don’t know yet that since my dismissal I’ve spent two years travelling through different provinces and come across one or two remarkable children. Hence my guess that this Baoyu you mentioned belongs to the same category. Let me give you an example no further away than Jinling. You know Mr. Zhen, who was principal of the Jinling Provincial College?”

“Who doesn’t know him? The Zhen and Jia families are interrelated and on a very friendly footing, I’ve done business with the Zhens a number of times.”

“Last year when I was in Jinling,” said Yucun, “someone recommended me to the Zhens as a resident tutor. I was surprised to find their household so grand, yet it combined wealth with propriety. Posts like that are not easy to come by. But although my pupil was a beginner, he was harder to teach than a candidate for the Provincial Examination. Here’s an example of the absurd things he’d say: ‘I must have two girls as company while I study, or I can’t learn character — my brain gets muddled.’ He told his pages, ‘The word “girl” is so honourable and pure, not even the supreme Buddhist and Taoist titles can compare with it. You with your filthy mouths and stinking tongues must never violate it. Before you utter this word, mind you rinse your mouths with clear water or fragrant tea. If you don’t, your teeth will grow crooked and rip through your cheeks.’

“He had a fearful temper and could be incredibly stubborn and obstreperous; but as soon as classes were over and he joined the girls he became a different person — amiable, sensible and gentle. More than once, because of this, his father thrashed him within an inch of his life, but still that didn’t change him. When the pain became too much for him, he would start yelling, ‘Sister! Little Sister!’ Once the girls in the inner chambers teased him saying, ‘Why do you call us when you’re being beaten? Do you want us to beg you off? For shame!’ You should have heard his answer. He said, ‘The first time I called I didn’t know it would

解疼也未可知，因叫了一声，便果觉不疼了，遂得了秘法，每疼痛之极，便连叫姐妹起来。’你说好笑不好笑？也因祖母溺爱不明，每因孙辱师责子，因此我就辞了馆出来。这等子弟，必不能守祖父之根基，从师友之规谏的。只可惜他家几个好姊妹都是少有的。”

子兴道：“便是贾府中，现在三个也不错。政老爹之长女，名元春，现因贤孝才德，入宫作女史去了。二小姐乃赦老爹之妾所出，名迎春；三小姐乃政老爹之庶出，名探春；四小姐乃宁府珍爷之胞妹，名唤惜春。因史老夫人极爱孙女，都跟在祖母这边一处读书，听得个个不错。”雨村道：

“更妙在甄家的风俗，女儿之名，亦皆从男子之名命字，不似别家另外用那些‘春’‘红’‘香’‘玉’等艳字的。何得贾府亦落此俗套？”子兴道：“不然。只因现今大小姐是正月初一日所生，故名元春，余者方从了‘春’字。上一辈的，却也是从弟兄而来的。现有对证，目今你贵东家林公之夫人，即荣府中赦、政二公之胞妹，他在家时，名唤贾敏。不信时，你回去细访可知。”雨村拍案笑道：“怪道这女学生读至凡书中有‘敏’字，他皆念作‘密’字，每每如是；写字遇着‘敏’字，又减一二笔，我心中就有些疑惑。今听你说，是为此无疑矣。怪道我这女学生言语举止另是一样，不与近日女子相同，度其母必不凡，方得其女，今知为荣府之孙女，又不足骇矣，可伤其母上月竟亡故了。”子兴叹道：

“老姊妹四个，这一个极小的，又没了。长一辈的姊妹，一



ease the pain. But then I discovered that it worked like magic. So when the pain's worst, I keep on calling "Sister." Have you ever heard anything so ludicrous?

"His grandmother indulged him so unwisely that she was often rude to his tutor or blamed her son. That's why I resigned from that post. A boy like that is bound to lose the property he inherits and won't benefit by the advice of teachers and friends. The pity is, all the girls in his family are admirable."

"The three girls in the Jia family aren't bad either," rejoined Zixing, "Jia Zheng's elder daughter Yuanchun was chosen to be a Lady-Clerk in the palace of the heir apparent because of her goodness, filial piety and talents. The second, Yingchun, is Jia She's daughter by a concubine. The third, Tanchun, is Jia Zheng's daughter by a concubine. The fourth, Xichun, is the younger sister of Jia Zhen of the Ning Mansion. The Lady Dowager is so attached to these grand-daughters that she makes them study in the Rong Mansion near her, and I hear good reports of them all."

"I prefer the Zhen family's way of giving their daughters the same sort of names as boys instead of choosing flowery names meaning Spring, Red, Fragrant, or Jade," remarked Yucun. "How could the Jia family sink to such vulgarity?"

"You don't understand," said Zixing. "They named the eldest girl Yuanchun⁸ because she was born on New Year's Day, and so the others have *chun* in their names too. But all the girls of the last generation had names like those of boys. For proof, look at the wife of your respected employer Mr. Lin, the sister of Jia She and Jia Zheng in the Rong Mansion. Her name, before she married, was Jia Min.⁹ If you don't believe me, check up when you go back."

Yucun pounded the table with a laugh. "No wonder my pupil always pronounces *min* as *mi* and writes it with one or two strokes missing.¹⁰ That puzzled me, but now you've explained the reason. And no wonder she talks and behaves so differently from the general run of young ladies nowadays. I suspected she must have had an unusual mother. If she's a grand-daughter of the Rong family that explains it. What a pity that her mother died last month."

"She was the youngest of four sisters, but now she's gone too."

个也没有了。只看这小一辈的，将来之东床如何呢？”

雨村道：“正是。方才说这政公，已有衔玉之儿，又有长子所遗一个弱孙。这赦老竟无一个不成？”子兴道：“政公既有玉儿之后，其妾又生了一个，倒不知其好歹。只眼前现有二子一孙，却不知将来如何。若问那赦公，也有二子，长名贾琏，今已二十来往了，亲上作亲，娶的就是政老爹夫人王氏之内侄女，今已娶了二年。这位琏爷身上现捐的是个同知，也是不喜读书，于世路上好机变，言谈去的，所以如今只在乃叔政老爷家住着，帮着料理些家务。谁知自娶了他令夫人之后，倒上下无一人不称颂他夫人的，琏爷倒退了一射之地：说模样又极标致，言谈又爽利，心机又极深细，竟是个男人万不及一的。”

雨村听了，笑道：“可知我前言不谬。你我方才所说的这几个人，都只怕是那正邪两赋而来一路之人，未可知也。”子兴道：“不管正邪，只顾算别人家的帐，你也吃一杯酒才好。”雨村道：“正是，只顾说话，竟多吃了几杯。”子兴笑道：“说别人家的闲话，正好下酒，即多吃几杯何妨。”雨村向窗外看道：“天也晚了，仔细关了城门。我们慢慢进城再谈，未为不可。”于是，算还酒帐。方欲走时，听得后面有人叫道：“雨村兄，恭喜了！来这等村野地方何干？”雨村听说，忙回头看时，且听下回分解。



Zixing sighed. "Not one of those sisters is left. It will be interesting to see what husbands they find for the younger generation."

"Yes. Just now you spoke of Jia Zheng's son born with jade in his mouth, and mentioned a young grandson left by his elder son. What about the venerable Jia She? Has he no sons?"

"After the birth of this son with the jade Jia Zheng had another by his concubine, but I know nothing about him. So he has two sons and a grandson. However, there's no saying how they'll turn out. Jia She has two sons as well. Jia Lian, the elder, is over twenty now. Two years ago he married a relative, the niece of Jia Zheng's wife Lady Wang. This Jia Lian, who has bought the rank of a sub-prefect, takes no interest in books but is a smooth man of the world, so he lives with his uncle Jia Zheng and helps him to manage his domestic affairs. Since his marriage he's been thrown into the shade by his wife, who is praised by everybody high and low. I hear she's extremely good-looking and a clever talker. So resourceful and astute that not a man in ten thousand is a match for her."

"That bears out what I was saying. These people we've been discussing are probably all pervaded by mixed essences of both good and evil. They are people of similar ways."

"Never mind about good and evil," protested Zixing. "We've been doing nothing but reckoning accounts for others. You must drink another cup."

"I've been talking so hard, I'm already slightly tipsy."

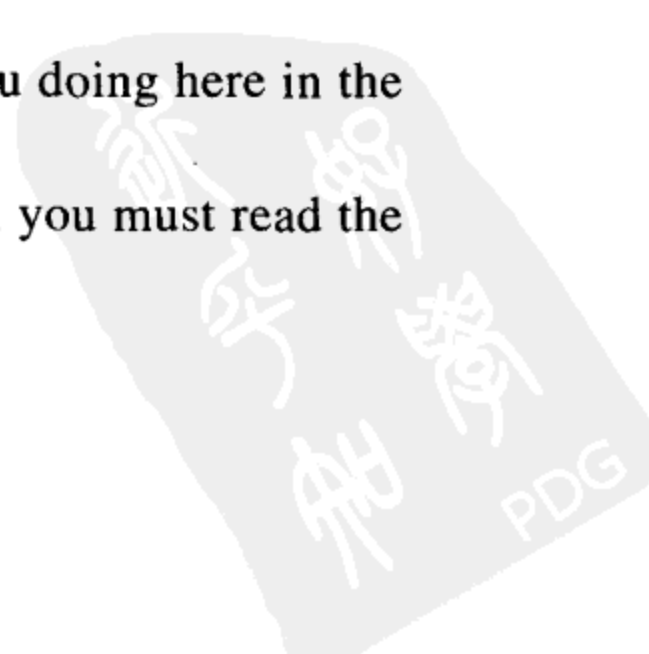
"Gossip goes well with wine. Why not drink some more?"

Yucun looked out of the window. "It's growing late. They'll soon be closing the city gates. Let's stroll back and continue our conversation in town."

With that they paid the bill. They were on the point of leaving when a voice from behind called out:

"Congratulations, Brother Yucun! What are you doing here in the wilds of the country?"

Yucun turned to look. But to know who it was, you must read the chapter which follows.





接外孫賈母惜孫女



第三回

托内兄如海荐西宾 接外孙贾母惜孤女

却说雨村忙回头看时，不是别人，乃是当日同僚一案参革的号张如圭者。他本系此地人，革后家居，今打听得都中奏准起复旧员之信，他便四下里寻找门路，忽遇见雨村，故忙道喜。二人见了礼，张如圭便将此信告诉雨村，雨村自是欢喜，忙忙的叙了两句，遂作别各自回家。冷子兴听得此言，便忙献计，令雨村央烦林如海，转向都中去，央烦贾政。雨村领其意，作别回去，至馆中，忙寻邸报看真确了。

次日，面谋之如海。如海道：“天缘凑巧，因贱荆去世，都中家岳母念及小女无人依傍教育，前已遣了男女船只来接，因小女未曾大痊，故未及行。此刻正思向蒙训教之恩，未经酬报，遇此机会，岂有不尽心图报之理？但请放心。弟已预为筹画至此，已修下荐书一封，转托内兄，务为周旋协佐，方可稍尽弟之鄙诚，即有所费用之例，弟于内兄信中，已注明白，亦不劳尊兄多虑矣。”雨村一面打恭，谢不释口，一面又问：“不知令亲大人现居何职？只怕晚生草率，不敢遽然入都干渎。”如海笑道：“若论舍亲，与尊兄系同谱，



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Chapter 3

Lin Ruhai Recommends a Tutor to His Brother-in-Law The Lady Dowager Sends for Her Motherless Grand-Daughter

To continue. Yucun turned and saw that it was Zhang Rugui, a native of this place and his former colleague who had also been dismissed from his post for the same reason as himself, and had returned home to Yangzhou. Now there was word from the capital that a request for the reinstatement of former officials had been sanctioned, and he was busily pulling strings to find some opening. He congratulated Yucun the instant he saw him and lost no time, once greetings had been exchanged, in telling him the good news. Yucun was naturally overjoyed, but after some hurried remarks each went his own way.

Leng Zixing, who had heard everything, at once proposed asking Lin Ruhai to enlist the support of Jia Zheng in the capital. Accepting his advice, Yucun went back alone to verify the report from the *Court Gazette*.

The next day he laid his case before Lin Ruhai.

“What a lucky coincidence!” exclaimed Ruhai. “Since my wife’s death my mother-in-law in the capital has been worried because my daughter has no one to bring her up. She has sent two boats with male and female attendants to fetch the child, but I delayed her departure while she was unwell. I was wondering how to repay you for your goodness in teaching her: now this gives me a chance to show my appreciation. Set your mind at rest. I foresaw this possibility and have written a letter to my brother-in-law urging him to do all he can for you as a small return for what I owe you. You mustn’t worry either about any expenses that may be incurred — I’ve made that point clear to my brother-in-law.”

Yucun bowed with profuse thanks and asked: “May I know your respected brother-in-law’s position? I fear I am too uncouth to intrude on him.”

Ruhai smiled. “My humble kinsmen belong to your honourable clan.

乃荣公之孙；大内兄现袭一等将军之职，名赦，字恩侯；二内兄名政，字存周，现任工部员外郎，其为人谦恭厚道，大有祖父遗风，非膏粱轻薄仕宦之流，故弟方致书烦托。否则不但有污尊兄之清操，即弟亦不屑为矣。”雨村听了，心下方信了昨日子兴之言，于是又谢了林如海。如海乃说：“已择了正月初六日小女人入都，尊兄即同路入都，岂不两便？”雨村唯唯听命，心中十分得意。如海遂打点礼物，并饯行之物，雨村一一领了。

那女学生黛玉，身体方愈，原不忍弃父而往；无奈他外祖母执意要他去，且兼如海说：“汝父年将半百，再无续室之意；且汝多病，年又极小，上无亲母教育，下无姊妹兄弟扶持，今依傍外祖母，及舅氏姊妹，正好减我顾盼之忧，何反云不往？”黛玉听了，方洒泪拜别，随了奶娘，及荣府中几个老妇人登舟而去。雨村另有一只船，带二个小童，依黛玉而行。

有日到了都中，进了神京，雨村先整了衣冠，带了小童，拿着“宗侄”的名帖，至荣府的门前投了。彼时贾政已看了妹丈之书，即忙请人相会。见雨村相貌魁伟，言语不俗，且这贾政最喜读书人，礼贤下士，拯弱济危，大有祖风；况又系妹丈致意，因此优待雨村，更又不同，便竭力内



They're the grandsons of the Duke of Rongguo. My elder brother-in-law Jia She, whose courtesy name is Enhou, is a hereditary general of the first rank. My second, Jia Zheng, whose courtesy name is Cunzhou, is an under-secretary in the Board of Works. He is an unassuming, generous man who takes after his grandfather. That is why I am writing to him on your behalf. If he were some purse-proud, fivulous official I'd be dishonouring your high principles, brother, and I myself would disdain to do such a thing."

This confirmed what Zixing had said the previous day, and once more Yucun expressed his thanks.

"I've chosen the second day of next month for my daughter's departure for the capital," continued Ruhai. "It would suit both parties, surely, if you were to travel together?"

Yucun promptly agreed with the greatest satisfaction, and took the gifts and travelling expenses which Ruhai had prepared.

His pupil Daiyu, who had just got over her illness, could hardly bear to leave her father, but she had to comply with the wishes of her grandmother.

"I am nearly fifty and don't intend to marry again," Ruhai told her, "You're young and delicate, with no mother to take care of you, no sister or brothers to look after you. If you go to stay with your grandmother and uncles' girls, that will take a great load off my mind. How can you refuse?"

So parting from him in a flood of tears, she embarked with her nurse and some elderly maid-servants from the Rong Mansion, followed by Yucun and two pages in another junk.

In due course they reached the capital and entered the city. Yucun spruced himself up and went with his pages to the gate of the Rong Mansion, where he handed in his visiting-card on which he had styled himself Jia Zheng's "nephew."

Jia Zheng, who had received his brother-in-law's letter, lost no time in asking him in. Yucun cut an impressive figure and was by no means vulgar in his conversation. Since Jia Zheng was well-disposed to scholars and, like his grandfather before him, delighted in honouring worthy men of letters and helping those in distress, and since moreover his brother-in-



中协力，题奏之日，轻轻谋了一个复职候缺，不上两个月，金陵应天府缺出，便谋补了此缺，拜辞了贾政，择日到任去了，不在话下。

且说黛玉自那日弃舟登岸时，便有荣国府打发了轿子并拉行李的车辆久候。这林黛玉常听见母亲说过，他外祖母家，与别家不同。他近日所见的这几个三等仆妇，吃穿用度，已是不凡了，何况今至其家。因此步步留心，时时在意，不肯轻易多说一句话，多行一步路，惟恐被人耻笑了他去。自上轿进入城中，从纱窗向外瞧了一瞧，其街市之繁华，人烟之阜盛，自与别处不同。又行了半日，忽见街北蹲着两个大石狮子，三间兽头大门，前列坐着十来个华冠丽服之人。正门却不开，只有东西两角门有人出入。正门上有匾，匾上大书“敕造宁国府”五个大字。黛玉想道，这必是外祖之长房了。想着，又往西行不多远，照样也是三间大门，方是荣国府了。却不进正门，只进了西角门。那轿夫抬进去，走了一箭之地，将转弯时，便歇下，退出去了。后面的婆子们已都下了轿，赶上前来；另换了三四个衣帽周全，十七八岁的小厮上来，复抬起轿子。众婆子步下围随，至一垂花门前落下。众小厮退出，众婆子上来打起轿帘，扶黛玉下了轿。林黛玉扶着婆子的手，进了垂花门，两边是抄手游





law had recommended Yucun, he treated him uncommonly well and did all in his power to help him. The same day that he presented a petition to the throne Yucun was rehabilitated and ordered to await an appointment. In less than two months he was sent to Jinling to fill the vacated post of prefect of Yingtian.¹ Taking leave of Jia Zheng he chose a day to proceed to his new post. But no more of this.

To return to Daiyu. When she disembarked, a sedan-chair from the Rong Mansion and carts for her luggage were waiting in readiness. She had heard a great deal from her mother about the magnificence of her grandmother's home; and during the last few days she had been impressed by the food, costumes and behaviour of the relatively low-ranking attendants escorting her. She must watch her step in her new home, she decided, be on guard every moment and weigh every word, so as not to be laughed at for any foolish blunder. As she was carried into the city she peeped out through the gauze window of the chair at the bustle in the streets and the crowds of people, the like of which she had never seen before.

After what seemed a long time they came to a street with two huge stone lions crouching on the north side, flanking a great triple gate with beast-head knockers, in front of which ten or more men in smart livery were sitting. The central gate was shut, but people were passing in and out of the smaller side gates. On a board above the main gate was written in large characters: Ningguo Mansion Built at Imperial Command.

Daiyu realized that this must be where the elder branch of her grandmother's family lived.

A little further to the west they came to another imposing triple gate. This was the Rong Mansion. Instead of going through the main gate, they entered by the smaller one on the west. The bearers carried the chair a bow-shot further, then set it down at a turning and withdrew. The maid-servants behind Daiyu had now alighted and were proceeding on foot. Three or four smartly dressed lads of seventeen or eighteen picked up the chair and, followed by the maids, carried it to a gate decorated with overhanging flowery patterns carved in wood. There the bearers withdrew, the maids raised the curtain of the chair, helped Daiyu out and supported her through the gate.

廊，当中是穿堂，当地放一个紫檀架子的大理石的大插屏。转过插屏，小小三间厅，厅后就是后面的正房大院。正面五间上房，皆是雕梁画栋，两边穿山游廊厢房，挂着各色鹦鹉、画眉等鸟雀。台阶之上，坐着几个穿红着绿的丫头，一见他们来了，便忙都笑迎上来，说：“刚才老太太还念呢，可巧就来了。”于是三四人争着打起帘子，一面听得人回话说：“林姑娘到了。”

黛玉方进入房时，只见两个人搀着一位鬓发如银的老母迎上来，黛玉便知是他外祖母。方欲拜见时，早被他外祖母一把搂入怀中，心肝儿肉叫着大哭起来。当下地下侍立之人，无不掩面涕泣，黛玉也哭个不住。一时众人慢慢解劝住了，黛玉方拜见了外祖母。此即冷子兴所云之史氏太君也，贾赦、贾政之母。当下贾母一一的指与黛玉：“这是你大舅母；这是你二舅母；这是你先珠大哥的媳妇珠大嫂。”黛玉一一拜见过。贾母又说：“请姑娘们来。今日远客才来，可以不必上学去了。”众人答应了一声，便去了两个。

不一时，只见三个奶嬷嬷并五六个丫鬟，簇拥着三个姊妹来了。第一个肌肤微丰，合中身材，腮凝新荔，鼻腻鹅脂，温柔沉默，观之可亲。第二个削肩细腰，长挑身材，鸭蛋脸面，俊眼修眉，顾盼神飞，文彩精华，见之忘俗。第三



Inside, verandahs on both sides led to a three-roomed entrance hall in the middle of which stood a screen of marble in a red sandalwood frame. The hall gave access to the large court of the main building. In front were five rooms with carved beams and painted pillars, and on either side were rooms with covered passageways. Cages of brilliantly coloured parrots, thrushes and other birds hung under the eaves of the verandahs.

Several maids dressed in red and green rose from the terrace and hurried to greet them with smiles.

“The old lady was just talking about you,” they cried. “And here you are.”

Three or four of them ran to raise the door curtain, and a voice could be heard announcing, “Miss Lin is here.”

As Daiyu entered, a silver-haired old lady supported by two maids advanced to meet her. She knew that this must be her grandmother, but before she could kowtow the old lady threw both arms around her.

“Dear heart! Flesh of my child!” she cried, and burst out sobbing.

All the attendants covered their faces and wept, and Daiyu herself could not keep back her tears. When at last the others prevailed on her to stop, Daiyu made her kowtow to her grandmother. This was the Lady Dowager from the Shi family mentioned by Leng Zixing, the mother of Jia She and Jia Zheng, who now introduced the family one by one.

“This,” she said, “is your elder uncle’s wife. This is your second uncle’s wife. This is the wife of your late Cousin Zhu.”

Daiyu greeted each in turn.

“Fetch the girls,” her grandmother said. “They can be excused their lessons today in honour of our guest from far away.”

Two maids went to carry out her orders. And presently the three young ladies appeared, escorted by three nurses and five or six maids.

The first was somewhat plump and of medium height. Her cheeks were the texture of newly ripened lichees, her nose as sleek as goose fat. Gentle and demure, she looked very approachable.

The second had sloping shoulders and a slender waist. She was tall and slim, with an oval face, well-defined eyebrows and lovely dancing eyes. She seemed elegant and quick-witted with an air of distinction. To look at her was to forget everything vulgar.



个身材未足，形容尚小。其钗环裙袄，三人皆是一样的妆饰。黛玉忙起身迎上来见礼，互相厮认过，各归座了。丫鬟们斟上茶来。不过说黛玉之母如何得病，如何请医服药，如何送死发丧。不免贾母又伤感起来，因说：“我这些儿女，所疼者独有你母，今日一旦先舍我而去，连面不能一见，今见了你，我怎不伤心！”说着，搂了黛玉在怀，又呜咽起来。众人忙都宽慰解释，方略略止住。

众人见黛玉年貌虽小，其举止言谈不俗，身体面庞虽怯弱不胜，却有一段自然风流态度，便知他有不足之症。因问：“常服何药，如何不急为疗治？”黛玉笑道：“我自来是如此，从会吃饮食时，便吃药，到今未断，请了多少名医，修方配药，皆不见效。那一年，我才三岁时，听得说来了一个癞头和尚，说要化我去出家，我父母因不从他。又说：‘既舍不得他，只怕他的病一生也不能好的了。若要好时，除非从此以后总不许见哭声；除父母之外，凡有外姓亲友之人，一概不见，方可平安了此一世。’疯疯癫癫，说了这些不经之谈，也没人理他。如今还是吃‘人参养荣丸’。”贾母道：“这正好，我这里正配丸药呢。叫他们多配一料就是了。”

一语未了，只听后院中有人笑声，说：“我来迟了，不曾迎接远客！”黛玉纳罕道：“这些人个个皆敛声屏气，恭肃严





The third was not yet fully grown and still had the face of a child.

All three were dressed in similar tunics and skirts with the same bracelets and head ornaments.

Daiyu hastily rose to greet these cousins, and after the introductions they took seats while the maids served tea. All the talk now was of Daiyu's mother. How had she fallen ill? What medicine had the doctors prescribed? How had the funeral and mourning ceremonies been conducted? Inevitably, the Lady Dowager was most painfully affected.

"Of all my children I loved your mother best," she told Daiyu. "Now she has gone before me, and I didn't even have one last glimpse of her face. The sight of you makes me feel my heart will break!" Again she took Daiyu in her arms and wept. The others were hard put to it to comfort her.

All present had been struck by Daiyu's good breeding. For in spite of her tender years and evident delicate health, she had an air of natural distinction. Observing how frail she looked they asked what medicine or treatment she had been having.

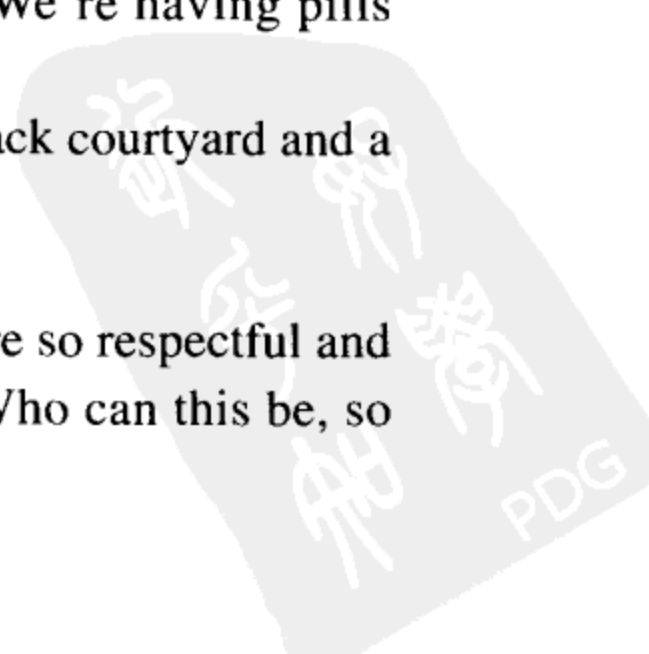
"I've always been like this," Daiyu said with a smile. "I've been taking medicine ever since I was weaned. Many well-known doctors have examined me, but none of their prescriptions was any use. The year I was three, I remember being told, a scabby monk came to our house and wanted to take me away to be a nun. My parents wouldn't hear of it. The monk said, 'If you can't bear to part with her she'll probably never get well. The only other remedy is to keep her from hearing weeping and from seeing any relatives apart from her father and mother. That's her only hope of having a quiet life.' No one paid any attention, of course, to such crazy talk. Now I'm still taking ginseng pills."

"That's good," approved the Lady Dowager. "We're having pills made, and I'll see they make some for you."

Just then they heard peals of laughter from the back courtyard and a voice cried:

"I'm late in greeting our guest from afar!"

Daiyu thought with surprise, "The people here are so respectful and solemn, they all seem to be holding their breath. Who can this be, so boisterous and pert?"





整如此，这来者系谁，这样放诞无礼？”心下想时，只见一群媳妇丫鬟围拥着一个人，从后房进来。这个人打扮与众姑娘不同，彩绣辉煌，恍若神妃仙子：头上戴着金丝八宝攒珠髻，绾着朝阳五凤挂珠钗；项上带着赤金盘螭璎珞圈；裙边系着豆绿宫绦双鱼比目玫瑰佩；身上穿着缕金百蝶穿花大红洋缎穿褙袄，外罩五彩刻丝石青银鼠褂；下罩翡翠洒花洋绉裙。一双丹凤三角眼，两弯柳叶吊梢眉，身量苗条，体格风骚，粉面含春威不露，丹唇未启笑先闻。黛玉连忙起身接见。贾母笑道：“你不认得他，是我们这里有名的一个泼皮破落户儿，南省俗谓作‘辣子’，你只叫他‘凤辣子’就是了。”黛玉正不知以何称呼，只见众姊妹都忙告诉道：“这是琏嫂子。”黛玉虽不认识，曾听见母亲说过，大舅贾赦之子贾琏，娶的就是二舅母王氏之内侄女，自幼假充男儿教养的，学名王熙凤。黛玉忙陪笑见礼，以“嫂”呼之。这熙凤携着黛玉的手，上下细细的打谅了一回，仍送至贾母的身边坐下，因笑道：“天下真有这样标致人物，我今才算见了！况且这通身的气派，竟不像老祖宗的外孙女儿，竟是个嫡亲的孙女，怨不得老祖宗天天口头心头一时不忘。只可怜我这妹





While she was still wondering, through the back door trooped some matrons and maids surrounding a young woman. Unlike the girls, she was richly dressed and resplendent as a fairy.

Her gold-filigree tiara was set with jewels and pearls. Her hair-clasps, in the form of five phoenixes facing the sun, had pendants of pearls. Her necklet, of red gold, was in the form of a coiled dragon studded with gems. She had double red jade pendants with pea-green tassels attached to her skirt.

Her close-fitting red satin jacket was embroidered with gold butterflies and flowers. Her turquoise cape, lined with white squirrel, was inset with designs in coloured silk. Her skirt of kingfisher-blue crepe was patterned with flowers.

She had the almond-shaped eyes of a phoenix, slanting eyebrows as long and drooping as willow leaves. Her figure was slender and her manner vivacious. The springtime charm of her powdered face gave no hint of her latent formidability. And before her crimson lips parted, her laughter rang out.

Daiyu rose quickly to greet her.

“You don’t know her yet.” The Lady Dowager chuckled. “She’s the terror of this house. In the south they’d call her Hot Pepper. Just call her Fiery Phoenix.”

Daiyu was at a loss how to address her when her cousins came to her rescue. “This is Cousin Lian’s wife,” they told her.

Though Daiyu had never met her, she knew from her mother that Jia Lian, the son of her first uncle Jia She, had married the niece of Lady Wang, her second uncle’s wife. She had been educated like a boy and given the school-room name Xifeng.² Daiyu lost no time in greeting her with a smile as “cousin.”

Xifeng took her hand and carefully inspected her from head to foot, then led her back to her seat by the Lady Dowager.

“Well,” she cried with a laugh, “this is the first time I’ve set eyes on such a ravishing beauty. Her whole air is so distinguished! She doesn’t take after her father, son-in-law of our Old Ancestress, but looks more like a Jia. No wonder our Old Ancestress couldn’t put you out of her mind and was for ever talking or thinking about you. But poor ill-fated



妹这样命苦，怎么姑妈偏就去世了！”说着，使用帕拭泪。贾母笑道：“我才好了，你倒来招我。你妹妹远客才来，身子又弱，也才劝住了，快再休提前言。”这熙凤听了，忙转悲为喜道：“正是呢！我一见妹妹，一心都在他身上了，又是喜欢，又是伤心，竟忘记了老祖宗。该打，该打！”又忙携黛玉之手，问：“妹妹几岁了？可也上过学？现吃什么药？在这里，不要想家，想要什么吃的、什么玩的，只管告诉我；丫头老婆们不好了，也只管告诉我。”一面又问婆子们：“林姑娘的行李东西可搬进来了？带了几个人来？你们赶早打扫两间下房，让他们去歇歇。”

说话时，已摆了茶果上来。熙凤亲为捧茶捧果。又见二舅母问他：“月钱放完了不曾？”熙凤道：“月钱已放完。才刚带着人到后楼上找缎子，找了这半日，也并没有见昨日太太说的那样，想是太太记错了。”王夫人道：“有没有，什么要紧。”因又说道：“该随手拿出两个来，给你这妹妹去裁衣裳的，等晚上想着，叫人再去拿罢，可别忘了。”熙凤道：“这倒是我先料着了，知道妹妹不过这两日到的，我已预备下了，等太太回去，过了目，再送来。”王夫人一笑，点头不语。

当下茶果已撤，贾母命两个老嬷嬷带了黛玉去见两个舅舅。时贾赦之妻邢氏忙亦起身，笑回道：“我带了外甥女过





little cousin, losing your mother so young!" With that she dabbed her eyes with a handkerchief.

"I've only just dried my tears. Do you want to start me off again?" said the old lady playfully. "Your young cousin's had a long journey and she's delicate. We've just got her to stop crying. So don't reopen that subject."

Xifeng switched at once from grief to merriment. "Of course," she cried. "I was so carried away by joy and sorrow at sight of my little cousin, I forgot our Old Ancestress. I deserve to be caned." Taking Daiyu's hand again, she asked, "How old are you, cousin? Have you started your schooling yet? What medicine are you taking? You mustn't be home sick here. If you fancy anything special to eat or play with, don't hesitate to tell me. If the maids or old nurses aren't good to you, just let me know."

She turned then to the servants. "Have Miss Lin's luggage and things been brought in? How many attendants did she bring? Hurry up and clear out a couple of rooms where they can rest."

Meanwhile refreshments had been served. And as Xifeng handed round the tea and sweetmeats, Lady Wang asked whether she had distributed the monthly allowance.

"It's finished," was Xifeng's answer. "Just now I took some people to the upstairs storeroom at the back to look for some brocade. But though we searched for a long time we couldn't find any of the sort you described to us yesterday, madam. Could your memory have played you a trick?"

"It doesn't matter if there's none of that sort," said Lady Wang. "Just choose two lengths to make your little cousin some clothes. This evening don't forget to send for them."

"I've already done that," replied Xifeng. "Knowing my cousin would be here any day, I got everything ready. The material's waiting in your place for your inspection. If you pass it, madam, it can be sent over."

Lady Wang smiled and nodded her approval.

Now the refreshments were cleared away and the Lady Dowager ordered two nurses to take Daiyu to see her two uncles.

At once Jia She's wife, Lady Xing, rose to her feet and suggested, "Won't

去，倒也便宜。”贾母笑道：“正是呢，你也去罢，不必过来了。”邢夫人答应了一声“是”字，遂带了黛玉与王夫人作辞，大家送至穿堂前。出了垂花门，早有众小厮们拉过一辆翠幄青油车，邢夫人携了黛玉坐上，众婆子们放下车帘，方命小厮们抬起，拉至宽处，方驾上驯骡，亦出了西角门，往东过荣府正门，便入一黑油大门中，至仪门前方下来。众小厮退出，方打起车帘，邢夫人搀着黛玉手，进入院中。黛玉度其房屋院宇，必是荣府中花园隔断过来的。进入三层仪门，果见正房厢庑游廊，悉皆小巧别致，不似方才那边轩峻壮丽；且院中随处之树木山石皆有。一时进入正室，早有许多盛妆丽服之姬妾丫鬟迎着，邢夫人让黛玉坐了，一面命人到外面书房请贾赦。一时人来回说：“老爷说了：‘连日身子不好，见了姑娘彼此倒伤心，暂且不忍相见。劝姑娘不要伤心想家，跟着老太太和舅母，是同家里一样。姊妹们虽拙，大家一处伴着，亦可以解些烦闷。或有委屈之处，只管说得，不要外道才是。’”黛玉忙站起来，一一听了。再坐一刻，便告辞。邢夫人苦留吃过晚饭去，黛玉笑回道：“舅母爱恤赐饭，原不应辞，只是还要过去拜见二舅舅，恐领了赐去不



it be simpler if I take my niece?"

"Very well," agreed the Lady Dowager, "And there's no need for you to come back afterwards."

Lady Xing assented and then told Daiyu to take her leave of Lady Wang, after which the rest saw them to the entrance hall. Outside the ornamental gate pages were waiting beside a blue lacquered carriage with kingfisher-blue curtains, into which Lady Xing and her niece entered. Maids let down the curtains and told the bearers to start. They bore the carriage to an open space and harnessed a docile mule to it. They left by the west side gate, proceeded east past the main entrance of the Rong Mansion, entered a large black-lacquered gate and drew up in front of a ceremonial gate.

When the pages had withdrawn, the curtains were raised, and Lady Xing led Daiyu into the courtyard. It seemed to her that these buildings and grounds must be part of the Rong Mansion garden; for when they had passed three ceremonial gates she saw that the halls, side chambers and covered corridors although on a smaller scale were finely constructed. They had not the stately splendour of the other mansion, yet nothing was lacking in the way of trees, plants or artificial rockeries.

As they entered the central hall they were greeted by a crowd of heavily made-up and richly dressed concubines and maids. Lady Xing invited Daiyu to be seated while she sent a servant to the library to ask her husband to join them.

After a while the servant came back to report, "The master says he hasn't been feeling too well the last few days, and meeting the young lady would only upset them both. He isn't up to it for the time being. Miss Lin mustn't mope or be homesick here but feel at home with the old lady and her aunts. Her cousins may be silly creatures, but they'll be company for her and help to amuse her. If anyone is unkind to her, she must say so and not treat us as strangers."

Daiyu had risen to her feet to listen to this message. Shortly after this she rose again to take her leave. Lady Xing insisted that she stay for the evening meal.

"Thank you very much, aunt, you're too kind," said Daiyu. "Really I shouldn't decline. But it might look rude if I delayed in calling on my

恭，异日再领，未为不可。望舅母容谅。”邢夫人听说，笑道：“这倒是了。”遂令两三个嬷嬷，用方才的车，好好送了过去。于是黛玉告辞。邢夫人送至仪门前，又嘱咐了几句，眼看着车去了，方回来。

一时黛玉进入荣府，下了车。众嬷嬷引着，便往东转弯，穿过一个东西的穿堂，向南大厅之后，仪门内大院落，上房五间大正房，两边厢房鹿顶耳房钻山四通八达，轩昂壮丽，比贾母处不同。黛玉方知这便是正经正内室，一条大甬路，直接出大门的。进入堂屋中，抬头迎面，先看见一个赤金九龙青地大匾，匾上写着斗大三个大字，是“荣禧堂”，后有一行小字，是“某年月日，书赐荣国公贾源”，又有“万几宸翰之宝”。大紫檀雕螭案上，设着三尺来高青绿古铜鼎，悬着待漏随朝墨龙大画，一边是金螭彝，一边是玻璃盒。地下两溜十六张楠木交椅，又有一副对联，乃乌木联牌，镶着鍍银字迹，道是：

座上珠玑昭日月，堂前黼黻焕烟霞。

下面一行小字，道是：“同乡世教弟勋袭东安郡王穆莳拜手书。”

原来王夫人时常居坐宴息，亦不在正室，在东边的三间耳房内。于是老嬷嬷引黛玉进东房门来。临窗大炕上铺着猩红洋褥，正面设着大红金钱蟒靠背，石青金钱蟒引枕，秋香色金钱蟒大条褥。两边设一对梅花式洋漆小几。左边几上文



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second uncle. Please excuse me and let me stay another time.”

“You’re quite right,” said Lady Xing. She told a few elderly maids to escort her niece back in the same carriage, whereupon Daiyu took her leave. Her aunt saw her to the ceremonial gate and after giving the maids some further instructions waited to see them off.

Back in the Rong Mansion, Daiyu alighted again. The nurses led her eastwards, round a corner, through an entrance hall into a hall facing south, then passed through a ceremonial gate into a large courtyard. The northern building had five large apartments and wings on either side. This was the hub of the whole estate, more imposing by far than the Lady Dowager’s quarters.

Daiyu realized that this was the main inner suite, for a broad raised avenue led straight to its gate. Once inside the hall she looked up and her eye was caught by a great blue tablet with nine gold dragons on it, on which was written in characters large as peck measures:

Hall of Glorious Felicity.

Smaller characters at the end recorded the date on which the Emperor had conferred this tablet upon Jia Yuan, the Duke of Rongguo, and it bore the Imperial seal.

On the large red sandalwood table carved with dragons an old bronze tripod, green with patina, stood about three feet high. On the wall hung a large scroll-picture of black dragons riding the waves. This was flanked by a bronze wine vessel inlaid with gold and a crystal bowl. By the walls were a row of sixteen cedar-wood armchairs; and above these hung two panels of ebony with the following couplet inset in silver:

Pearls on the dais outshine the sun and moon;

Insignia of honour in the hall blaze like iridescent clouds.

Small characters below recorded that this had been written by the Prince of Dungan, who signed his name Mu Shi and styled himself a fellow provincial and old family friend.

Since Lady Wang seldom sat in this main hall but used three rooms on the east side for relaxation, the nurses led Daiyu there.

The large *kang* by the window was covered with a scarlet foreign rug. In the middle were red back-rests and turquoise bolsters, both with dragon-design medallions, and a long greenish yellow mattress also with



王鼎匙箸香盒；右边几上汝窑美人觚，内插着时鲜花卉，并茗唾壶等物。地下面西一溜四张椅上，都搭着银红撒花椅披，底下四副脚踏。椅之两边，也有一对高几，几上茗碗瓶花俱备。其余陈设，自不必细说。老嬷嬷们让黛玉炕上坐，炕沿上却有两个锦褥对设，黛玉度其位次，便不上炕，只向东边椅子上坐了。本房内丫鬟忙捧上茶来。黛玉一面吃茶，一面打量这些丫鬟们，妆饰衣裙，举止行动，果亦与别家不同。

茶未吃了，只见一个穿红绫袄、青缎掐牙背心一个丫鬟走来笑说道：“太太说，请林姑娘到那边坐罢。”老嬷嬷听了，于是又引黛玉出来，到了东廊三间小正房内。正房炕上横着一张炕桌，桌上堆着书籍茶具，靠东壁面西，设着青缎靠背引枕。王夫人却坐在西边下首，亦是青缎靠背坐褥。见黛玉来了，便往东让。黛玉心中料定是贾政之位。因见挨炕一溜三张椅子上，也搭着半旧弹墨椅袱，黛玉便向椅上坐了。王夫人再四携他上炕，他方挨王夫人坐了。王夫人因说：“你舅舅今日斋戒去了，再见罢。只是有一句话嘱咐你，你三个姊妹，倒都极好，以后一处念书、认字、学针线，或是偶一玩笑，都有尽让的。但我不放心的，最是一件：我有一个孽根祸胎，是这家里的‘混世魔王’，今日因庙里还愿





dragon medallions. At each side stood a low table of foreign lacquer in the shape of plum-blossom. On the left-hand table were a tripod, spoons, chopsticks and an incense container; on the right one, a slender-waisted porcelain vase from the Ruzhou Kiln containing flowers then in season, as well as tea-bowls and a spittoon. Below the *kang* facing the west wall were four armchairs, their covers of bright red dotted with pink flowers, and with four footstools beneath them. On either side were two tables set out with teacups and vases of flowers. The rest of the room need not be described in detail.

The nurses urged Daiyu to sit on the *kang*, on the edge of which were two brocade cushions. But feeling that this would be presumptuous, she sat instead on one of the chairs on the east side. The maids in attendance served tea, and as she sipped it she studied them, observing that their make-up, clothes and deportment were quite different from those in other families. Before she had finished her tea in came a maid wearing a red silk coat and a blue satin sleeveless jacket with silk borders. With a smile this girl announced:

“Her Ladyship asks Miss Lin to go in and take a seat over there.”

At once the nurses conducted Daiyu along the eastern corridor to a small three-roomed suite facing south. On the *kang* under the window was a low table laden with books and a tea-service. Against the east wall were a none too new blue satin back-rest and a bolster.

Lady Wang was sitting in the lower place by the west wall on a none too new blue satin cover with a back-rest and a bolster. She invited her niece to take the seat on the east. But guessing that this was Jia Zheng’s place, Daiyu chose one of the three chairs next to the *kang*, which had black-dotted antimacassars, looking none too new. Not until she had been pressed several times did she take a seat by her aunt.

“Your uncle’s observing a fast today,” said Lady Wang. “You’ll see him some other time. But there’s one thing I want to tell you. Your three cousins are excellent girls, and I’m sure you’ll find them easy to get on with during lessons, or when you’re learning embroidery or playing together. Just one thing worries me: that’s my dreadful son, the bane of my life, who torments us all in this house like a real devil. He’s gone to a temple today in fulfilment of a vow, but you’ll see what he’s like when

去了，尚未回来，晚间你看见便知了。你只以后不要睬他，你这些姊妹都不敢沾惹他的。”

黛玉亦常听得母亲说过，二舅母生的有个表兄，乃衔玉而诞，顽劣异常，极恶读书，最喜在内帏厮混；外祖母又极溺爱，无人敢管。今见王夫人如此说，便知说的是这表兄了。因陪笑道：“舅母说的，可是衔玉所生的这位哥哥？在家时亦曾听见母亲常说，这位哥哥比我大一岁，小名就唤宝玉，虽极憨顽，在姊妹情中极好的。况我来了，自然只和姊妹一处，兄弟们自是别院另室的，岂有去沾惹之理？”王夫人笑道：“你不知道原故。他与别人不同，自幼因老太太疼爱，原系同姊妹们一处娇养惯了的。若姊妹们不理他，他倒还安静些，纵然他没趣，不过出了二门，背地里拿着他两个小幺儿出气，咕唧一会子就完了。若这一日姊妹们和他多说一句话，他心里一乐，便生出多少事来。所以嘱咐你别睬他。他嘴里一时甜言蜜语，一时有天无日，一时又疯疯傻傻，只休信他。”

黛玉一一都答应着。只见一个丫鬟来回：“老太太那里传晚饭了。”王夫人忙携黛玉，从后房门。由后廊往西，出了角门，是一条南北宽过道。南边是倒座三间抱厦厅，北边立着一个粉油大影壁，后有一半大门，小小一所房室。王夫人笑指向黛玉道：“这是你凤姐姐的屋子，回来你好往这里找他来，少什么东西，你只管和他说就是了。”这院门上也有四五个才总角的小厮，垂手侍立。王夫人遂携黛玉，穿过一个





he comes back this evening. Just pay no attention to him. None of your cousins dare to provoke him.”

Daiyu’s mother had often spoken of this nephew born with a piece of jade in his mouth, his wild ways, aversion to study and delight in playing about in the women’s apartments. Apparently he was so spoiled by his grandmother that no one could control him. She knew Lady Wang must be referring to him.

“Does aunt mean my elder cousin with the jade in his mouth?” she asked with a smile. “Mother often spoke of him. I know he’s a year older than me, his name is Baoyu, and for all his pranks he’s very good to his girl cousins. But how can I provoke him? I’ll be spending all my time with the other girls in a different part of the house while our boy cousins are in the outer courtyards.”

“You don’t understand,” replied Lady Wang with a laugh. “He’s not like other boys. Because the old lady’s always doted on him, he’s used to being spoilt with the girls. If they ignore him he keeps fairly quiet though he feels bored. He can always work off his temper by scolding some of his pages. But if the girls give him the least encouragement, he’s so elated he gets up to all kinds of mischief. That’s why you mustn’t pay any attention to him. One moment he’s all honey-sweet; the next, he’s rude and recalcitrant; and in another minute he’s raving like a lunatic. You can’t take him seriously.”

As Daiyu promised to remember this, a maid announced that dinner was to be served in the Lady Dowager’s apartments. Lady Wang at once led her niece out of the back door, going west along a corridor and through a side gate to a broad road running from north to south. On the south side was a dainty three-roomed annex facing north; on the north a big screen wall painted white, behind which was a small door leading to an apartment.

“That’s where your cousin Xifeng lives.” Lady Wang pointed out the place. “So next time you know where to find her. If you want anything just let her know.”

By the gate several young pages, their hair in tufts, stood at attention. Lady Wang led Daiyu through an entrance hall running from east to west into the Lady Dowager’s back courtyard. Stepping through the back



东西穿堂，便是贾母的后院了。于是，进入后房门，已有多人在此伺候，见王夫人来了，方安桌椅。贾珠之妻李氏捧饭，熙凤安箸，王夫人进羹。贾母正面榻上独坐，两边四张空椅，熙凤忙拉了黛玉在左边第一张椅上坐了，黛玉十分推让。贾母笑道：“你舅母和嫂子们不在这里吃饭。你是客，原应如此坐的。”黛玉方告了座，坐了。贾母命王夫人坐了。迎春姊妹三个告了座方上来。迎春便坐右手第一，探春左第二，惜春右第二。旁边丫鬟执着拂尘、漱盂、巾帕。李、凤二人立于案旁布让。外间伺候之媳妇丫鬟虽多，却连一声咳嗽不闻。寂然饭毕，各有丫鬟用小茶盘捧上茶来。当日林如海教女以惜福养身，云饭后务待饭粒咽完，过一时再吃茶，方不伤脾胃。今黛玉见了这里许多事情不合家中之式，不得不随的，少不得一一改过来，因而接了茶。早见人又捧过漱盂来，黛玉也照样漱了口。然后盥手毕，又捧上茶来，这方是吃的茶。贾母便说：“你们去罢，让我们自在说话儿。”王夫人听了，忙起身，又说了两句闲话，方引李、凤二人去了。贾母因问黛玉念何书，黛玉道：“只刚念了《四书》。”黛玉又问姊妹们读何书，贾母道：“读的是什么书，不过是认得两个字，不是睁眼瞎子罢了！”





door, they found quite a crowd assembled who, as soon as they saw Lady Wang, set tables and chairs ready. Jia Zhu's widow, Li Wan, served the rice while Xifeng put out the chopsticks and Lady Wang served the soup.

The Lady Dowager was seated alone on a couch at the head of the table with two empty chairs on each side. Xifeng took Daiyu by the hand to make her sit in the first place on the left, but she persistently declined the honour.

"Your aunt and sisters-in-law don't dine here," said her grandmother with a smile. "Besides, you're a guest today. So do take that seat."

With a murmured apology, Daiyu obeyed. The Lady Dowager told Lady Wang to sit down; then Yingchun and the two other girls asked leave to be seated, Yingchun first on the right, Tanchun second on the left, and Xichun second on the right. Maids held ready dusters, bowls for rinsing the mouth and napkins, while Li Wan and Xifeng standing behind the diners plied them with food.

Although the outer room swarmed with nurses and maids, not so much as a cough was heard. The meal was eaten in silence. And immediately after, tea was brought in on small trays. Now Lin Ruhai had taught his daughter the virtue of moderation and the harm caused to the digestive system by drinking tea directly after a meal. But many customs here were different from those in her home. She would have to adapt herself to these new ways. As she took the tea, however, the rinse-bowls were proffered again, and seeing the others rinse their mouths she followed suit. After they had washed their hands tea was served once more, this time for drinking.

"You others may go," said the Lady Dowager now. "I want to have a chat with my grand-daughter."

Lady Wang promptly rose and after a few remarks led the way out, followed by Li Wan and Xifeng. Then her grandmother asked Daiyu what books she had studied.

"I've just finished the *Four Books*,"³ said Daiyu. "But I'm very ignorant." Then she inquired what the other girls were reading.

"They only know a very few characters, not enough to read any books."

The words were hardly out of her mouth when they heard footsteps in



一语未了，只听院外一阵脚步响，丫鬟进来笑道：“宝玉来了！”黛玉心中正疑惑着：“这个宝玉，不知是怎生个惫懒人物，懵懂顽童？倒不见那蠢物也罢了”，心中正想着，忽见丫鬟话未报完，已进来了一位年轻的公子：头上戴着束发紫金冠，齐眉勒着二龙抢珠金抹额；穿一件二色金百蝶穿花大红箭袖，束着五彩丝攒花结长穗宫绦，外罩石青起花八团倭缎排穗褂；登着青缎粉底小朝靴。面若中秋之月，色如春晓之花，鬓若刀裁，眉如墨画，脸如桃瓣，睛若秋波。虽怒时而若笑，即瞋视而有情。项上金螭璎珞，又有一根五色丝绦，系着一块美玉。黛玉一见，便吃一大惊，心下想着：

“好生奇怪，倒象在那里见过一般，何等眼熟到如此！”只见这宝玉向贾母请了安，贾母命：“去见你娘来。”宝玉即转身去了。一时回来，再看，已换了冠带：头上周围一转的短发，都结成了小辫，红丝结束，共攒至顶中胎发，总编一根大辫，黑亮如漆，从顶至梢，一串四颗大珠，用金八宝坠角；身上穿着银红撒花半旧大袄，仍旧带着项圈、宝玉、寄名锁、护身符等物；下面半露松花色洒花绫裤腿，锦边弹墨袜，厚底大红鞋。越显得面如敷粉，唇若施脂；转盼多情，语言常笑。天然一段风骚，全在眉梢；平生万种情思，悉堆





the courtyard and a maid came in to announce, "Baoyu is here."

Daiyu was wondering what sort of graceless scamp or little dunce Baoyu was and feeling reluctant to meet such a stupid creature when, even as the maid announced him, in he walked.

He had on a golden coronet studded with jewels and a golden chaplet in the form of two dragons fighting for a pearl. His red archer's jacket, embroidered with golden butterflies and flowers, was tied with a coloured tasselled palace sash. Over this he wore a turquoise fringed coat of Japanese satin with a raised pattern of flowers in eight bunches. His court boots were of black satin with white soles.

His face was as radiant as the mid-autumn moon, his complexion fresh as spring flowers at dawn. The hair above his temples was as sharply outlined as if cut with a knife. His eyebrows were as black as if painted with ink, his cheeks as red as peach-blossom, his eyes bright as autumn ripples. Even when angry he seemed to smile, and there was warmth in his glance even when he frowned.

Round his neck he had a golden torque in the likeness of a dragon, and a silk cord of five colours, on which hung a beautiful piece of jade.

His appearance took Daiyu by surprise. "How very strange!" she thought. "It's as if I'd seen him somewhere before. He looks so familiar."

Baoyu paid his respects to the Lady Dowager and upon her instructions went to see his mother.

He returned before long, having changed his clothes. His short hair in small plaits tied with red silk was drawn up on the crown of his head and braided into one thick queue as black and glossy as lacquer, sporting four large pearls attached to golden pendants in the form of the eight precious things. His coat of a flower pattern on a bright red ground was not new, and he still wore the torque, the precious jade, a lock-shaped amulet containing his Buddhistic name, and a lucky charm. Below could be glimpsed light green flowered satin trousers, black-dotted stockings with brocade borders, and thick-soled scarlet shoes.

His face looked as fair as if powdered, his lips red as rouge. His glance was full of affection, his speech interspersed with smiles. But his natural charm appeared most in his brows, for his eyes sparkled with a



眼角。看其外貌，最是极好，却难知其底细。后人有《西江月》二词，批宝玉极合，其词曰：

无故寻愁觅恨，有时似傻如狂。纵然生得好皮囊，腹内原来草莽。潦倒不通世务，愚顽怕读文章。行为偏僻性乖张，那管世人诽谤！

富贵不知乐业，贫穷难耐凄凉。可怜辜负好时光，于国于家无望。天下无能第一，古今不肖无双。寄言纨绔与膏粱，莫效此儿形状！

贾母因笑道：“外客未见，就脱了衣裳，还不去见你妹妹！”宝玉早已看见多了一个姊妹，便料定是林姑妈之女，忙来作揖。厮见毕，归坐，细看形容，与众各别：两弯似蹙非蹙罥烟眉，一双似喜非喜含情目。态生两靥之愁，娇袭一身之病。泪光点点，娇喘微微。闲静时如姣花照水，行动处似弱柳扶风。心较比干多一窍，病如西子胜三分。宝玉看罢，因笑道：“这个妹妹我曾见过的。”贾母笑道：“可又是胡





world of feeling. However, winning as his appearance was, it was difficult to tell what lay beneath.

Someone subsequently gave an admirable picture of Baoyu in these two verses written to the melody of *The Moon over the West River*:

Absurdly he courts care and melancholy
And raves like any madman in his folly;
For though endowed with handsome looks is he,
His heart is lawless and refractory.

Too dense by far to understand his duty,
Too stubborn to apply himself to study,
Foolhardy in his eccentricity,
He's deaf to all reproach and obloquy.

Left cold by riches and nobility,
Unfit to bear the stings of poverty,
He wastes his time and his ability,
Failing his country and his family.

First in this world for uselessness is he,
Second to none in his deficiency.
Young fops and lordlings all, be warned by me:
Don't imitate this youth's perversity!

With a smile at Baoyu, the Lady Dowager scolded, "Fancy changing your clothes before greeting our visitor. Hurry up now and pay your respects to your cousin."

Of course, Baoyu had seen this new cousin earlier on and guessed that she was the daughter of his Aunt Lin. He made haste to bow and, having greeted her, took a seat. Looking at Daiyu closely, he found her different from other girls.

Her dusky arched eyebrows were knitted and yet not frowning, her speaking eyes held both merriment and sorrow; her very frailty had charm. Her eyes sparkled with tears, her breath was soft and faint. In repose she was like a lovely flower mirrored in the water; in motion, a pliant willow swaying in the wind. She looked more sensitive than Bi Gan⁴, more delicate than Xi Shi.⁵

"I've met this cousin before," he declared at the end of his scrutiny.

"You're talking nonsense again," said his grandmother, laughing.

说，你又何曾见过他？”宝玉笑道：“虽然未曾见过他，然我看着面善，心里就算是旧相识，今日只作远别重逢，亦未为不可。”贾母笑道：“更好，更好，若如此，更相和睦了。”宝玉便走近黛玉身边坐下，又细细打量一番，因问：“妹妹可曾读书？”黛玉道：“不曾读，只上了二年学，些须认得几个字。”宝玉又道：“妹妹尊名是那两字？”黛玉便说了名。宝玉又问表字。黛玉道：“无字。”宝玉笑道：“我送妹妹一个妙字，莫若‘颦颦’二字极妙。”探春便问何出？宝玉道：“《古今人物通考》上说：‘西方有石名黛，可代画眉之墨。’况这林妹妹眉尖若蹙，用取这两个字，岂不两妙！”探春笑道：“只恐又是你的杜撰。”宝玉笑道：“除《四书》外，杜撰的太多，偏只我是杜撰不成？”又问黛玉：“可也有玉无有？”众人不解其语，黛玉便忖度着因他有玉，故问我有也无，因答道：“我没有那个。想来那玉，亦是件罕物，岂能人人有的。”宝玉听了，登时发作起痴狂病来，摘下那玉，就狠摔去，骂道：“什么罕物，连人之高低不择，还说‘通灵’不‘通灵’呢！我也不要这劳什古子了！”吓的众人一拥争去拾玉。贾母急的搂了宝玉道：“孽障！你生气，要打骂人容易，



“How could you possibly have met her?”

“Well, even if I haven’t, her face looks familiar. I feel we’re old friends meeting again after a long separation.”

“So much the better.” The Lady Dowager laughed. “That means you’re bound to be good friends.”

Baoyu went over to sit beside Daiyu and once more gazed fixedly at her.

“Have you done much reading, cousin?” he asked.

“No,” said Daiyu. “I’ve only studied for a couple of years and learned a few characters.”

“What’s your name?”

She told him.

“And your courtesy name?”

“I have none.”

“I’ll give you one then,” he proposed with a chuckle. “What could be better than Pinpin?”⁶

“Where’s that from?” put in Tanchun.

“*The Compendium of Men and Objects Old and New* says that in the west is a stone called *dai* which can be used instead of graphite for painting eyebrows. As Cousin Lin’s eyebrows look half knit, what could be more apt than these two characters?”

“You’re making that up, I’m afraid,” teased Tanchun.

“Most works, apart from the *Four Books*, are made up; am I the only one who makes things up?” he retorted with a grin. Then, to the mystification of them all, he asked Daiyu if she had any jade.

Imagining that he had his own jade in mind, she answered, “No, I haven’t. I suppose it’s too rare for everybody to have.”

This instantly threw Baoyu into one of his frenzies. Tearing off the jade he flung it on the ground.

“What’s rare about it?” he stormed. “It can’t even tell good people from bad. What spiritual understanding has it got? I don’t want this nuisance either.”

In consternation all the maids rushed forward to pick up the jade while the Lady Dowager in desperation took Baoyu in her arms.

“You wicked monster!” she scolded. “Storm at people if you’re in a

何苦摔那命根子！”宝玉满面泪痕哭道：“家里姐姐妹妹都无有，单我有，我说无趣；如今来了一个神仙似的妹妹，也无有，可知这不是个好东西。”贾母忙哄他道：“你这妹妹，原有这个来的，因你姑妈去世时，舍不得你妹妹，无法可处，遂将他的玉带了去：一则权当殉葬之礼，尽你妹妹的孝心；二则你姑妈之灵，亦可权作常得见女之意。因此他只说无有，不便自己夸张之意。你如今怎比得他？还不好生慎重带上，仔细你娘知道了。”说着，便向丫鬟手中接来，亲与他带上。宝玉听如此说，想一想，竟大有情理，也就不生别论了。

当下，奶娘来问黛玉之房舍。贾母说：“今将宝玉挪出来，同我在套间暖阁里，把你林姑娘暂安碧纱橱里。等过了春天，再与他们收拾房屋，另作一番安置罢。”宝玉道：

“好祖宗，我就在碧纱橱外的床上很妥当，何必又出来，闹的老祖宗不得安静。”贾母想了一想说：“也罢了。”每人一个奶娘，并一个丫头照管，余者在外间上夜听唤。一面早有熙凤命人送了一顶藕色花帐，并几件锦被缎褥之类。

黛玉只带了两个人来，一个是自己奶娘王嬷嬷，一个是十岁的小丫头，亦是自幼随身的，名唤雪雁。贾母见雪雁甚小，一团孩气，王嬷嬷又极老，料黛玉皆不遂心省力的，便将自己身边一个二等丫头，名唤鹦哥者，与了黛玉。外亦如迎春等例，每人除自幼乳母外，另有四个教引嬷嬷，除贴身掌管钗钏盥沐两个丫鬟外，另有五六个洒扫房屋来往使唤的



passion. But why should you throw away that precious thing your life depends on?"

His face stained with tears, Baoyu sobbed, "None of the girls here has one, only me. What's the fun of that? Even this newly arrived cousin who's lovely as a fairy hasn't got one either. That shows it's no good."

"She did have one once," said the old lady to soothe him. "But when your aunt was dying and was unwilling to leave her, the best she could do was to take the jade with her instead. That was like burying the living with the dead and showed your cousin's filial piety. It meant, too, that now your aunt's spirit can still see your cousin. That's why she said she had none, not wanting to boast about it. How can you compare with her? Now put it carefully on again lest your mother hears about this."

She took the jade from one of the maids and put it on him herself. And Baoyu, convinced by her tale, let the matter drop.

Just then a nurse came in to ask about Daiyu's quarters.

"Move Baoyu into the inner apartment of my suite," said his grandmother. "Miss Lin can stay for the time being in his Green Gauze Lodge. Once spring comes, we'll make different arrangements."

"Dear Ancestress!" coaxed Baoyu. "Let me stay outside Green Gauze Lodge. I'll do very well on that bed in the outer room. Why should I move over and disturb you?"

After a moment's reflection the Lady Dowager agreed to this. Each would be attended by a nurse and a maid, while other attendants were on night duty outside. Xifeng had already sent round a flowered lavender curtain, satin quilts and embroidered mattresses.

Daiyu had brought with her only Nanny Wang, her old wet-nurse, and ten-year-old Xueyan, who had also attended her since she was a child. Since the Lady Dowager considered Xueyan too young and childish and Nanny Wang too old to be of much service, she gave Daiyu one of her own personal attendants, a maid of the second grade called Yingge. Like Yingchun and the other young ladies, in addition to her own wet-nurse Daiyu was given four other nurses as chaperones, two personal maids to attend to her toilet and five or six girls to sweep the rooms and run errands.

Nanny Wang and Yingge accompanied Daiyu now to Green Gauze



小丫鬟。当下，王嬷嬷与鹦哥陪侍黛玉在碧纱橱内。宝玉之乳母李嬷嬷，并大丫鬟名唤袭人者，陪侍在外大床上。

原来这袭人亦是贾母之婢，本名珍珠。贾母因溺爱宝玉，生恐宝玉之婢无竭力尽忠之心，素喜袭人心地纯良，肯尽职任，遂与了宝玉。宝玉因知他本姓花，又曾见旧人诗句上有“花气袭人”之句，遂回明贾母，即更名袭人。这袭人亦有些痴处：伏侍贾母时，心中眼中只有一个贾母；今与了宝玉，心中眼中又只有一个宝玉。只因宝玉性情乖僻，每每规谏宝玉，宝玉不听，心中着实忧郁。

是晚，宝玉、李嬷嬷已睡了，他见里面黛玉和鹦哥犹未安歇，他自卸了妆，悄悄地进来，笑问：“姑娘怎么还不安歇？”黛玉忙笑让道：“姐姐请坐。”袭人在床沿上坐了。鹦哥笑道：“林姑娘正在伤心，自己淌眼抹泪的，说：‘今儿才来，就惹出你家哥儿的狂病来，倘或摔坏了那玉，岂不是因我之过！’因此便伤心，我好容易劝好了。”袭人道：“快休如此，将来只怕比这个更奇怪的笑话儿还有呢！若为他这种行止，你多心伤感，只怕伤感不了呢。快别多心！”黛玉道：“姐姐们说的，我记着就是了。究竟不知那玉是怎么个来历？上面还有字迹？”袭人道：“连一家子也不知来历，听得说，落草时从他口里掏出。上面有现成字眼，让我拿来你看便知。”黛玉忙止道：“罢了，此刻夜深了，明日再看不迟。”



Lodge, while Baoyu's wet-nurse, Nanny Li, and his chief maid Xiren made ready the big bed for him in its outer room.

Xiren, whose original name was Zhenzhu, had been one of the Lady Dowager's maids. The old lady so doted on her grandson that she wanted to make sure he was well looked after and for this reason she gave him her favourite, Xiren, a good, conscientious girl. Baoyu knew that her surname was Hua⁷ and remembered a line of poetry which ran, "the fragrance of flowers assails men." So he asked his grandmother's permission to change her name to Xiren.⁸

Xiren's strong point was devotion. Looking after the Lady Dowager she thought of no one but the Lady Dowager, and after being assigned to Baoyu she thought only of Baoyu. What worried her, though, was that he was too headstrong to listen to her advice.

That night after Baoyu and Nanny Li were asleep, Xiren noticed that Daiyu and Yingge were still up in the inner room. She tiptoed in there in her night clothes and asked:

"Why aren't you sleeping yet, miss?"

"Please sit down, sister," invited Daiyu with a smile.

Xiren sat on the edge of the bed.

"Miss Lin has been in tears all this time, she's so upset," said Yingge. "The very day of her arrival, she says, she's made our young master fly into a tantrum. If he'd smashed his jade she would have felt to blame. I've been trying to comfort her."

"Don't take it to heart," said Xiren. "I'm afraid you'll see him carrying on even more absurdly later. If you let yourself be upset by his behaviour you'll never have a moment's peace. Don't be so sensitive."

"I'll remember what you've said," promised Daiyu. "But can you tell me where that jade of his came from, and what the inscription on it is?"

Xiren told her, "Not a soul in the whole family knows where it comes from. It was found in his mouth, so we hear, when he was born, with a hole for a cord already made in it. Let me fetch it here to show you."

But Daiyu would not hear of this as it was now late. "I can look at it tomorrow," she said.

大家又叙了一回，方才安歇。

次日起来，省过贾母，因往王夫人处来，正值王夫人与熙凤在一处拆金陵来的书信看，又王夫人之兄嫂处遣了两个媳妇来说话的。黛玉虽不知原委，探春等却都晓得，是议论金陵城中所居的薛家姨母之子，姨表兄薛蟠，倚仗势力，打死人命，现在应天府案下审理。如今母舅王子腾得了信息，故遣人来告诉这边，意欲唤取进京之意。且听下回分解。





After a little more chat they went to bed.

The next morning, after paying her respects to the Lady Dowager, Daiyu went to Lady Wang's apartments. She found her and Xifeng discussing a letter from Jinling. With them were two maid-servants who had brought a message from the house of Lady Wang's brother.

Daiyu did not understand what was going on, but Tanchun and the others knew that they were discussing Xue Pan, the son of Aunt Xue in Jinling. Presuming on his powerful connections, he had had a man beaten to death and was now to be tried in the Yingtian prefectural court. Lady Wang's brother Wang Ziteng, having been informed of this, had sent these messengers to the Rong Mansion to urge them to invite the Xue family to the capital. But more of this in the next chapter.



第四回

薄命女偏逢薄命郎 葫芦僧乱判葫芦案

却说黛玉同姊妹们至王夫人处，见王夫人与兄嫂处的来使计议家务，又说姨母家遭了人命官司等语。因见王夫人事情冗杂，姊妹们遂出来，至寡嫂李氏房中来了。

原来这李氏即贾珠之妻。珠虽夭亡，幸存一子，取名贾兰，今方五岁，已入学攻书。这李氏亦系金陵名宦之女，父名李守中，曾为国子监祭酒，族中男女无有不诵诗读书。至李守中承继以来，便说“女子无才便有德”，故生了李氏，便不十分令其读书，只不过将些《女四书》、《列女传》、《贤媛集》等三四种书，使他认得几个字，记得前朝这几个贤女事迹便罢了，却只以纺绩井臼为要，因取名为李纨，字宫裁。因此这李纨虽青春丧偶，且居处于膏粱锦绣之中，竟如槁木死灰一般，一概无闻无见，惟知侍亲养子，外则陪侍小姑等针黹诵读而已。今黛玉虽客寄于此，终日有这般姑嫂相伴，除老父外，余者也就无庸虑及了。

如今且说贾雨村，因补授了应天府，一下马就有一件人命官司，详至案下，乃是两家争买一婢，各不相让，以至殴伤人命。彼时雨村即传原告之人来审。那原告道：“被殴死者乃小人之主人。因那日买了一个丫头，不想是拐子拐来卖





Chapter 4

An Ill-Fated Girl Meets an Ill-Fated Man A Confounded Monk Ends a Confounded Case

To resume. Daiyu and the other girls found Lady Wang discussing family affairs with messengers sent by her brother, and heard that her sister's son was involved in a murder case. Since she was so occupied, the girls called on Li Wan.

Li Wan was the widow of Jia Zhu who had died young, but luckily she had a son, Jia Lan, just five and already in school. Her father, Li Shouzhong, a notable of Jinling, had served as a Libationer in the Imperial College. All the sons and daughters of his clan had been devoted to the study of the classics. When he became head of the family, however, in the belief that "an unaccomplished woman is a virtuous woman," instead of making his daughter study hard he simply had her taught enough to read a few books such as the *Four Books for Girls*, *Biographies of Martyred Women*, and *Lives of Exemplary Ladies* so that she might remember the deeds of worthy women of earlier dynasties while devoting her main attention to weaving and household tasks. That was why he gave her the name Li Wan¹ and the courtesy name Gongcai.²

So this young widow living in the lap of luxury was no better off than withered wood or cold ashes, taking no interest in the outside world. Apart from waiting on her elders and looking after her son, all she did was to accompany the girls at their embroidery or reading.

Though Daiyu was only a guest here, with cousins like these to keep her company she felt completely at home, except for worrying sometimes about her father.

But to return to Jia Yucun. No sooner had he taken up his post as prefect of Yingtian than a charge of murder was brought to his court. It was a case of two parties claiming to have purchased the same slave girl,

的。这拐子先已得了我家的银子，我家小爷原说，第三日方是好日子，再接入门。这拐子便又悄悄卖与薛家，被我们知道了，去找拿卖主，夺取这丫头。无奈薛家原系金陵一霸，倚财仗势，众豪奴将小人的主人竟打死了。凶身主仆已皆逃走，无影无踪，只剩得几个局外之人。小人告了一年的状，竟无人作主。望大老爷拘拿凶犯，剪恶除凶，以救孤寡，死者感戴天地之恩不尽！”

雨村听了大怒道：“岂有此放屁的事！打死人命竟白白走了，再拿不来的！”因发签差公人立刻将凶犯族人拿来拷问，令他们实供藏在何处；一面再动海捕文书。正要发签时，只见案边立的一个门子使眼色儿：不令他发签之意。雨村心下甚为疑怪，只得停了手，即时退堂，至密室，使从人皆退去，只留门子一个服侍。这门子忙上来请安，笑问：“老爷一向加官进禄，八九年来便忘了我了？”雨村道：“却十分面善，只是一时想不起来。”那门子笑道：“老爷真是贵人多忘事，把出身之地竟忘了，不记当年葫芦庙里之事了？”雨村听罢，如雷震一惊，方想起往事。原来这门子本是葫芦庙内一个小沙弥，因被火之后，无处安身，欲投别庙去修行，又耐不了清凉景况，因想这件生意倒还轻省热闹，遂趁年纪蓄了发，充了门子。雨村那里辨得是他，便忙携手笑道：“原来是故人。”又让坐了好谈。这门子不敢坐，雨村笑



neither willing to give way, and in consequence one of them had been beaten to death. Yucun summoned the plaintiff for questioning.

“The murdered man was my master,” the plaintiff testified. “He bought a slave girl not knowing that she’d been kidnapped and paid for her in silver. Our master said he’d take her home three days later because that would be a lucky day. Then the kidnapper sold her on the sly to the Xue family. When we found this out, we went to him to demand the girl. But the Xues lord it in Jinling with their money and powerful backing. A pack of their thugs beat my master to death, after which the murderers, master and men, disappeared without a trace, leaving here only a few people who weren’t involved. I lodged a charge a year ago, but nothing came of it. I beg Your Honour to arrest the criminals, punish the evil-doers and help the widow and orphan. Then both the living and the dead will be everlastingly grateful!”

“This is a scandal!” fumed Yucun. “How can men commit a murder and go scot-free?”

He was about to order his runners to arrest the criminals’ relatives for interrogation, in order to find out the murderers’ whereabouts and issue warrants for their arrest, when an attendant standing by his table shot him a warning glance. Then Yucun refrained and left the court in some bewilderment.

Back in his private office he dismissed everyone but the attendant, who went down on one knee in salute, then said with a smile:

“Your Honour has risen steadily in the official world. After eight or nine years, do you still remember me?”

“Your face looks very familiar, but I can’t place you.”

The attendant smiled. “High officials have short memories,” he said. “So you’ve forgotten the spot you started from, Your Honour, and what happened in Gourd Temple?”

At this disconcerting remark, the past came back to Yucun like the crash of a thunder-bolt. Now this attendant had been a novice in Gourd Temple. When the fire left him stranded he decided that work in a yamen would be easier and, having had enough of monastic austerity, instead of going to another temple he had taken advantage of his youth to grow his hair again and get this post. No wonder Yucun had failed to recognize him.

道：“贫贱之交不可忘。你我故人也；二则此系私室，既欲长谈，岂有不坐之理？”这门子听说，方告了座，斜签着坐了。

雨村便问方才何故不令发签，这门子道：“老爷既荣任这一省，难道没抄一张本省的‘护官符’来不成？”雨村忙问：“何为‘护官符’？我竟不知。”门子道：“这还了得！连这个不知，怎能作得长远！如今凡作地方官者，皆有一个私单，上面写的是本省最有权有势、极富极贵大乡绅名姓，各省皆然；倘若不知，一时触犯了这样人家，不但官爵，连性命还保不成呢！所以绰号叫作‘护官符’。方才所说的这薛家，老爷如何惹得他！这件官司并无难断之处，皆因都碍着情分脸面，所以如此。”一面说，一面从顺袋中取出一张抄写的“护官符”来，递与雨村，看时，上面皆是本地大族名臣之家的谚俗口碑。其口碑排写明白，下面皆注着始祖官爵并房次云：

贾不假，白玉为堂金作马。

宁国荣国二公之后，共二十房分，除宁荣亲派八房在都外，现原籍住者十二房。





Now, taking his hand, the prefect observed with a smile: "So we are old acquaintances."

He invited him to take a seat, but the attendant declined the honour.

"We were friends in the days when I was hard up," said Yucun. "Besides, this is my private office. As we are going to have a good talk, how can you remain standing all the time?"

Then, deferentially, the attendant perched sideways on the edge of a chair. And Yucun asked why he had stopped him from issuing the warrants.

"Now that Your Honour's come to this post," said the attendant, "surely you've copied out the Officials' Protective Charm for this province?"

"Officials' Protective Charm? What do you mean?"

"Don't tell me you've never heard of it? In that case you won't keep your job long. All local officials nowadays keep a secret list of the most powerful, wealthy and high-ranking families in their province. Each province has such a list. Because if unknowingly you offend one of these families, you may lose not only your post but your life as well. That's why it's called a Protective Charm. This Xue family mentioned just now is one Your Honour can't afford to offend. There's nothing difficult about this case, but out of deference to them it was never settled by your predecessor."

With that he took a hand-written copy of the Officials' Protective Charm from his pocket and handed it to Yucun. It was a doggerel catalogue of the most notable families in that district with notes on their ancestry, ranks and family branches. It started off:

The Jinling Jias,
If truth be told,
Have halls of jade,
Stables of gold.

*Twenty branches descended
from the Duke of Ningguo and
the Duke of Rongguo. Apart
from eight branches in the capi-
tal, there are twelve branches in
their ancestral district.*

Vast O Pang Palace,
Fit for a king,



阿房宫，三百里，住不下金陵一个史。

保龄侯尚书令史公之后，房分共二十，都中现住者十房，原籍现居十房。

东海缺少白玉床，龙王来请金陵王。

都太尉统制县伯王公之后，共十二房，都中二房，余在籍。

丰年好大雪，珍珠如土金如铁。

紫薇舍人薛公之后，现领内府帑银行商，共八房。

雨村犹未看完，忽闻传点，人报：“王老爷来拜。”雨村听说，忙具衣冠出去迎接。有顿饭工夫，方回来细问。这门子道：“这四家皆连络有亲，一损皆损，一荣俱荣，扶持遮饰，皆有照应的。才告打死人之薛，就系丰年大雪之薛也。不单靠这三家，他的世交亲友在都在外者，本自不少。老爷如今拿谁去？”雨村听如此说，便笑问道：“如你这样说来，却怎么了结此案？你大约也深知这凶犯躲的方向了？”

门子笑道：“不瞒老爷说，不但这凶犯逃躲的方向，我已知道，一并这拐卖之人我也知道，死鬼买主也深知道。待我





Isn't fine enough
For the Shis of Jinling.

*Twenty branches descended from
Marquis Shi of Baoling, Prime Min-
ister. Ten in the capital, ten in the
ancestral district.*

If the Dragon King wants
A white jade bed,
He applies to the Wangs
Of Jinling, it's said.

*Twelve branches descended from
Earl Wang the High Marshal. Two in
the capital, the rest in the ancestral
district.*

The Xues in their affluence
Are so rich and grand,
Gold is like iron to them
And pearls like sand.

*Eight branches descended from Lord
Xue, Imperial Secretary, Now in
charge of the Treasury.*

Before Yucun could finish reading the list, a chime sounded at the gate and a certain Mr. Wang was announced. Putting on his official robes and cap again, he went to receive the caller, coming back in the time it takes for a meal to ask for more information.

"These four families are all closely connected," said the attendant, "Injure one and you injure them all, honour one and you honour them all. They help each other and cover up for each other. This Xue charged with murder is one of the Xues on that list. Not only can he count on the support of those three other families, he has plenty of influential friends and relatives both in the capital and in the provinces. So whom is Your Honour going to arrest?"

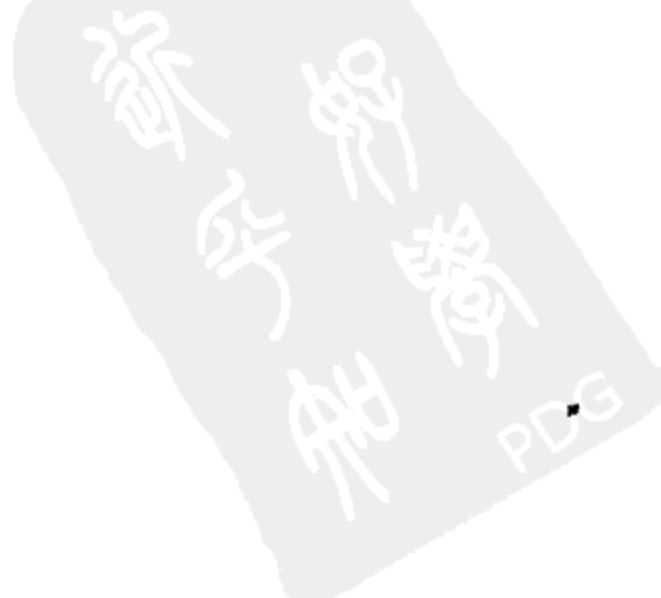
"If that's so, how are we to settle the case?" asked Yucun. "I take it you know the murderer's hiding-place?"

"I won't keep it from Your Honour." The attendant grinned. "I know not only where the murderer has gone. I know the kidnapper who sold the girl, and I knew the poor devil who bought her. Let me put all the facts



细说与老爷听：这个被打之人，乃是本地一个小乡宦之子，名唤冯渊，自幼父母早亡，又无兄弟，只他一个守着些薄产过日。长到十八九岁上，酷爱男风，不喜女色。这也是前生冤孽，可巧遇见这拐子卖丫头，他便一眼看上了这丫头，定要买来作妾，立誓再不交结男子，也再不娶第二个了，所以三日后方过门。谁知道这拐子又偷卖与了薛家，他意欲卷了两家的银子，再逃往他乡去。谁知又不曾走脱，两家拿住，打了个臭死，都不肯收银，只要领人。那薛家公子岂肯让人的，便喝着手下人一打，把个冯公子打了个稀烂，抬回家去三日死了。这薛公子原是早已择定日子上京去的，头起身两日前，就偶然遇见这丫头，欲买了就进京的，谁知闹出事来。既打了冯公子，夺了丫头，他便没事人一般，只管带了家眷走他的路。他这里自有兄弟奴仆在此料理，并不为此些微小事，值得他一逃。这且别说，老爷你道这被卖之丫头是谁？”雨村笑道：“我如何得知？”门子冷笑道：“这人算来还是老爷大恩人呢！他就是葫芦庙旁住的甄老爷的女儿，小名英莲的。”雨村骇然道：“原来就是他！闻得养至五岁被人拐去，却如今才来卖呢？”

门子道：“这种拐子单管偷拐五六岁的儿女，养在一个僻静之处，到十一二岁时，度其容貌，带至他乡转卖。当日他这英莲，我们天天哄他玩耍；虽隔了七八年，如今十二三岁





before you.

“The man who was killed, Feng Yuan, was the son of one of the minor local gentry. Both his parents died when he was young and he had no brothers; he lived as best he could on his small property. Up to the age of eighteen or nineteen he was a confirmed queer and took no interest in women. But then, no doubt as retribution for entanglements in a former life, he ran into this kidnapper and no sooner set eyes on this girl than he fell for her and made up his mind to buy her for his concubine. He swore to have no more to do with men and to take no other wife. That was why he insisted on her coming to him three days later. Who was to know that the kidnapper would sell her on the sly to the Xues, meaning to abscond with the payment from both parties? Before he could get away with this, they nabbed him and beat him within an inch of his life. Both refused to take back their money — both wanted the girl. Then young Xue, who will never give an inch to anyone, ordered his men to beat Feng Yuan into a pulp. Three days after being carried home he died.

“Young Xue had already fixed on a day to set off for the capital. But happening to see this girl two days before leaving he decided to buy her and take her along, not knowing the trouble that would come of it. Then, having killed a man and carried off a girl, he set off with his household as if nothing had happened, leaving his clansmen and servants here to settle the business. A trifling matter like taking a man’s life wouldn’t frighten him away. So much for him. But do you know who the girl is?”

“How could I know?”

“She’s by way of being Your Honour’s benefactress.” The attendant sniggered. “She’s Yinglian, the daughter of Mr. Zhen who lived next to Gourd Temple.”

“Well!” exclaimed Yucun in astonishment. “So that’s who she is! I heard that she was kidnapped when she was five. Why didn’t they sell her before?”

“Kidnappers of this type make a point of stealing small girls. They bring them up somewhere out of the way until they’re eleven or twelve, then take them elsewhere to sell according to their looks. We used to play with Yinglian every day. Although seven or eight years have passed and she’s now a good-looking girl of twelve or thirteen, her features haven’t



的光景，其模样虽然出脱得齐整，然大概自是不改，熟人易认。况他眉心中原有米粒大的一点胭脂痣，从胎里带来的，所以我却认得。偏生这拐子又租了我的房舍居住，那日拐子不在家，我也曾问他。他是被拐子打怕了的，万不敢说，只说拐子是他亲爹，因无钱偿债，故卖他。我又哄之再四，他又哭了，只说‘我原不记得小时之事！’这可无疑了。那日冯公子相看了，兑了银子，拐子醉了，他自己叹道：‘我今日罪孽可满了！’后听得冯公子三日才令过门，他反转有忧愁之态。我又不忍其形景，等拐子出去，命内人解释他：‘这冯公子必待好日期来接，可知必不以丫鬟相看。况他是绝风流人品，家里又过得，素习最又厌恶堂客，今竟破价买你，后事不言可知。只耐得两三日，何必忧闷！’他听如此说，方才略解些，自以为从此得所。谁料天下竟有这等不如意事，第二日，他偏又卖与薛家。若卖与第二个人还好，这薛公子混名人称‘呆霸王’，最是天下头一个爱弄性的，且使钱如土，打了个落花流水，生拖死拽，把个英莲拖去，如今也不知死活。这冯公子空喜一场，一念未遂，反花了钱，送了命，岂不可叹！”

雨村听了，叹道：“这也是他们孽障遭遇，亦非偶然。不然这冯渊如何偏只看准了这英莲？这英莲受了拐子数年折磨，才得个头路，且又是多情的，若能聚合了，倒是一件美





changed and anyone who knew her can easily recognize her. Besides, she had a red birthmark the size of a grain of rice between her eyebrows, which makes me quite sure it's her.

"As the kidnapper happened to rent rooms from me, one day when he was away I asked her outright. She'd been beaten so much she was afraid to talk; she just insisted that he was her father, selling her to clear his debts. When I tried repeatedly to wheedle it out of her, she burst into tears and said she didn't remember a thing about her childhood. So there's no doubt. It's her, all right.

"The day that young Feng met her and paid down his silver, the kidnapper got drunk. Then Yinglian sighed, 'At last my trials are over!' She started worrying again, though, when she heard Feng wouldn't be fetching her for three days. I was so sorry for her that as soon as the kidnapper went out I sent my wife to cheer her up.

"My wife told her: 'Mr. Feng's insistence on waiting for a lucky days is proof that he won't be treating you like a servant. Besides, he's a very fine gentleman, quite well-to-do, who never could abide women in the past, yet now he's paid a fancy price for you. That all goes to show you're quite safe. Just be patient for two or three days. You've no reason to worry.'

"She perked up a bit then, believing that she'd soon have a place where she belonged. But this world is full of disappointments: the very next day she was sold to the Xues. Any other family wouldn't have been so bad; but this young Xue, otherwise known as the Stupid Tyrant, is the most vicious ruffian alive, who throws money about like dirt. He started a big fight and then dragged her off by force more dead than alive. What's become of her since, I don't know.

"Feng Yuan dreamed of happiness, but instead of finding it he lost his life. Wretched luck, wasn't it?"

"This was retribution, no accident," replied Yucun with a sigh. "Otherwise, why should Feng Yuan have taken a fancy to Yinglian and no one else? As for her, after being knocked about all those years by the kidnapper she at last saw a way out with a man who loved her, and if she'd married him all would have been well; but then this had to happen! Of course, Xue's family is richer than Feng's, but a profligate like Xue Pan



事，偏又生出这段事来。薛家纵比冯家有钱，想其为人，自然姬妾众多，未必及冯渊之定情于一人。这正是梦幻情缘，恰遇一对薄命儿女。且不要议论他，只目今这官司，如何剖断才好？”门子笑道：“老爷当年何其明，今日何翻成了个没主意的人了！小的闻到老爷补升此任，亦系贾府、王府之力；此薛蟠即贾府之亲，老爷何不顺水行舟，作个整人情，将此案了结，日后也好见贾、王二公的面。”雨村道：“你说的何尝不是。但事关人命，蒙皇上隆恩，起复委用，实是重生再造，正当殚心竭力图报之时，岂可因私而废法？是我实不能忍为者。”门子听了，冷笑道：“老爷说的何尝不是，但只如今世上是行不去的。岂不闻古人有云：‘大丈夫相时而动’，又曰：‘趋吉避凶者为君子’。依老爷这一说，不但不能报效朝廷，亦且自身不保，还要三思为妥。”

雨村低了半日头，方说道：“依你怎么样？”门子道：“小人已想了一个极好的主意在此：老爷明日坐堂，只管虚张声势，动文书发签拿人。原凶自然是拿不来的，原告固是定要将薛家族中及家人拿几个来拷问。小的在暗中调停，令他们报个暴病身亡，合族及地方上共递一张保呈，老爷只说善能扶鸾请仙，堂上设了乩坛，令军民人等只管来看。老爷





is sure to have troops of maids and concubines and to be thoroughly debauched — he could never be as true to one girl as Feng Yuan. So this romance was an empty dream, a chance encounter between an ill-fated young couple. Well, enough of that. What's the best way to settle this case?"

"Your Honour used to be shrewd enough in the past," said the attendant with a smile. "What's made you so short of ideas today? I heard that your appointment was due to the good offices of the Jias and Wangs, and this Xue is related to the Jias by marriage. So why not sail with the stream and do them a good turn, settling this case in such a way that you can face them in future?"

"There's much in what you say. But a man's life is involved. Moreover, I've been re-instated by the Emperor's favour and am in fact beginning a new life. I should be doing my utmost to show my gratitude. How can I flout the law for private considerations? I really can't bring myself to do such a thing."

The attendant sneered: "Your Honour is right, of course. But that won't get you anywhere in the world today. Remember the old sayings: 'A gentleman adapts himself to circumstances' and 'The superior man is one who pursues good fortune and avoids disaster.' If you do as you just said, not only will you be unable to repay the Emperor's trust, you may endanger your own life into the bargain. Better think it over carefully."

Yucun lowered his head. After a long silence he asked: "What do *you* suggest?"

"I've thought of a very good plan," said the attendant. "It's this. When Your Honour tries the case tomorrow, make a great show of sending out writs and issuing warrants. Of course the murderer won't be forthcoming and the plaintiff will press his case; then you can arrest some of Xue's clansmen and servants for interrogation. Behind the scenes I'll fix things so that they report Xue Pan's 'death by sudden illness,' and we'll get his clan and the local authorities to testify to this.

"Then Your Honour can claim to be able to consult spirits through the planchette. Have one set up in the court and invite both military and civilians to come and watch. You can say: The spirit declares that Xue



就说：‘乩仙批了，死者冯渊与薛蟠原因夙孽相逢，今狭路既遇，原应了结。薛蟠今已得了无名之病，被冯渊魂已追索去了。其祸皆由拐子某人而起，拐之人系某乡某姓氏，按例处治，余不累及’等语。小人暗中嘱托拐子，令其实招。众人见乩仙批语与拐子相符，余者自然也不虚了。薛家有的是钱，老爷断一千也得，五百也得，与冯渊作烧埋之费。那冯家也无甚紧要的人，不过为的是钱，见有了这银子，想也就无话说了。老爷想想此计如何？”雨村笑道：“不妥，不妥。等我再斟酌，或可压服口声。”二人计议，天色已晚，别无甚话。

至次日坐堂，勾取一应有名姓人犯，雨村详加审问，果见冯家人口稀疏，不过赖此欲多得些烧埋之费；薛家仗势倚情，偏不相让，故致颠倒未决。雨村便徇情枉法，胡乱判断了此案，冯家得了许多烧埋银子，也就无甚话说了。雨村既判了此案，疾忙作书二封，与贾政并王子腾，不过说“令甥之事已完，不必过虑”等语。此事皆由葫芦庙内之沙弥新门子所出，雨村又恐他对人说出当日贫贱的事来，因此心中大不乐，后来到底寻了个不是，远远充发了他才罢。

当下且不说雨村。且说那买了英莲、打死冯渊的薛公





Pan and Feng Yuan were enemies in a former existence who were fated to clash in order to settle scores; that, hounded by Feng Yuan's ghost, Xue Pan has perished of some mysterious disease; that since this trouble was caused by the man who kidnapped the girl with such-and-such a name, he must be dealt with according to the law, but no one else is involved... and so on and so forth.

"I'll see to it that the kidnapper makes a full confession, and when the spirit's message confirms this, people will be convinced.

"The Xues are rolling in money. You can make them pay a thousand or five hundred taels for Feng Yuan's funeral expenses. His relatives are insignificant people, and all they're out for is money. So the silver will shut their mouths.

"What does Your Honour think of this scheme of mine?"

"Impossible," Yucun laughed. "I shall have to think this over carefully in order to suppress idle talk."

Their consultation lasted late into the afternoon.

The next day a number of suspects were summoned to court and Yucun cross-examined them carefully. He found that the Feng family was indeed a small one and just out for more money for the funeral, but the case had been confused and left unsettled because of the stubborn Xues' powerful connections.

So Yucun twisted the law to suit his own purpose and passed arbitrary judgement. The Fengs received a large sum for funeral expenses and made no further objections.

Once the case was settled Yucun lost no time in writing to Jia Zheng and Wang Ziteng, Commander-in-Chief of the Metropolitan Garrison, to inform them that the charge against their worthy nephew was dropped and they need not worry about it any longer. All this was due to the attendant who had been a novice in Gourd Temple, but Yucun, dismayed by the thought that this man might disclose certain facts about the days when he was poor and humble, later found some fault with him and had him exiled to a distant region.

Let us return now to young Xue, who had bought Yinglian and had Feng Yuan beaten to death. He came of a scholarly Jinling family, but having lost his father while still a child he was thoroughly spoiled by his



子，亦系金陵人氏，本是书香继世之家。只是如今这薛公子幼年丧父，寡母又怜他是个独根孤种，未免溺爱纵容，遂至老大无成；且家中有百万之富，现领着内帑钱粮，采办杂料。这薛公子学名薛蟠，表字文起，从五六岁就性情奢侈，言语傲慢。虽也上过学，不过略识几个字，终日惟有斗鸡走狗，游山玩水而已。虽是皇商，一应经济世事，全然不知，尽赖祖父旧日情分，户部挂了虚名，支领钱粮，其余事体，自有旧伙计、老家人等措办。寡母王氏乃现任京营节度使王子腾之妹，与荣国府贾政的夫人王氏，是一母所生的姊妹，今年方四十上下年纪，只有薛蟠一子。还有一女，比薛蟠小两岁，乳名宝钗，生得肌骨莹润，举止娴雅。当日有他父亲在日，酷爱此女，令其读书识字，较之乃兄，竟高超十倍。自父死后，见哥哥不能依贴母怀，他便不以书字为事，只留心针黹。家计等事，好为母亲分忧解劳。近因今上崇诗尚礼，征采才能，降不世出之隆恩，除聘选妃嫔外，凡仕宦名家之女，皆亲名达部，以备挑选择为公主郡主人学陪侍，充为才人、赞善之职。二则自薛翁死后，各省中所有买卖承局、总管、伙计人等，见薛蟠年轻不谙世事，便趁时拐骗起来，京都中几处生意，渐亦消耗。薛蟠素闻得都中乃第一繁华之地，正思一游，便趁此机会，一为送妹妹待选，二为望





mother as the only son and heir, with the result that he grew up good for nothing. For they were millionaires, in receipt of an income from the State Treasury as Purveyors for the Imperial Household.

Young Xue's name was Pan, his courtesy name Wenqi, and since the age of five or six he had shown himself extravagant in his habits and insolent in his speech. At school he merely learned a few characters, spending all his time on cockfights, riding or pleasure trips. Although a Court Purveyor, he knew nothing of business or worldly affairs but prevailed on his grandfather's old connections to find him a well-paid sinecure in the Board of Revenue and left all business to his agents and old family servants.

His widowed mother, née Wang, was the younger sister of Wang Ziteng, Commander-in-Chief of the Metropolitan Garrison, and the sister of Lady Wang, wife of Jia Zheng of the Rong Mansion. She was about forty years of age and Xue Pan was her only son. But she also had a daughter two years younger whose infant name was Baochai, a beautiful, dainty girl of great natural refinement. While her father was still alive he made her study, and she turned out ten times better than her brother. However, after her father's death it was so clear that Xue Pan would prove no comfort to their mother that Baochai gave up her studies and devoted herself to needlework and the household management, so as to share her mother's burden and cares.

Recently, to honour culture, encourage propriety and search out talent, in addition to selecting consorts and ladies-in-waiting the Emperor in his infinite goodness had made the Board compile a list of the daughters of ministers and noted families from whom to choose virtuous and gifted companions for the princesses in their studies.

Moreover, since the death of Xue Pan's father, all the managers and assistants in the Purveyor's offices of different provinces had taken advantage of his youth and inexperience to start swindling, and even the business in the various family shops in the capital was gradually falling off.

Thus Xue Pan, who had long heard of the splendours of the capital, now had three pretexts for a visit to it: First, to escort his sister there for the selection; secondly, to see his relatives; and thirdly, to clear his ac-

亲，三因亲自入都销算旧帐，再计新支。其实，则为游览上国风光之意。因此早已打点下行装细软，以及馈送亲友各色土物人情等类，择日一定起身，不想偏遇见那拐子重卖英莲。见他生得不俗，立意买了，又遇冯家来夺人，因恃强喝令手下豪奴将冯渊打死。他便将家中事务嘱托族人并几个老家人，他便带了母亲、妹子竟自起身长行去了。人命官司，他竟视为儿戏，以为花上几个臭钱，无有不了的。

在路不记其日。那日已将入都时，忽闻得母舅王子腾升了九省统制，奉旨出都查边。薛蟠心中暗喜道：“我正想进京去有个嫡亲母舅管辖，不能任意挥霍；如今却好升出去了，可知天从人愿。”因和母亲商议道：“咱们京中虽有几处房舍，只是这十来年无人进京居住，那看守的人，也难定他们不租赁与人，须得先着人去打扫收拾才好。”他母亲道：

“何必如此招摇！咱们这一进京，原该先拜亲友，或是在你舅舅家，或在你姨娘家。他两家的房舍极是便宜，咱们先去寄住，再慢慢的着人去收拾，岂不消停？”薛蟠道：“如今舅舅正升了外省去了，家里自然忙乱起身，咱们这工夫反一窝一拖的奔了去，岂不没眼色些。”他母亲道：“你舅舅家虽升了去，还有你姨爹家。况这几年来，他们常常捎书来，接咱们进京。如今既来了，你舅舅虽忙着起身，你贾家姨娘家自必苦留我们。咱们且忙忙收拾房屋，岂不使人见怪？你的意



counts and decide on further outlay. His real reason, of course, was to see the sights of the great metropolis.

He had long since packed his luggage and valuables and prepared local specialities of every kind as gifts for relatives and friends. An auspicious day for departure had just been chosen when he met the kidnapper who was selling Yinglian and, struck by her good looks, promptly purchased her. When Feng Yuan demanded her back. Xue Pan relying on his powerful position ordered his bullies to beat the young man to death. Then entrusting the family affairs to some clansmen and old servants, he left with his mother and sister. To him a murder charge was just a trifle which could easily be settled with some filthy lucre.

After some days on the road they were approaching the capital when word came of the promotion of his uncle Wang Ziteng to the post of Commander-in-Chief of Nine Provinces with orders to inspect the borders.

Xue Pan told himself gleefully, "I was just thinking what a bore it would be to have an uncle cramping my style in the capital. Now he's been upgraded and is leaving. It shows Heaven is kind."

He suggested to his mother, "Although we have some houses in the capital, none of us has lived there for ten years or more and the caretakers may have rented them out. Let's send someone on ahead to have one cleaned up."

"Why go to such trouble?" she asked. "When we arrive, we should first call on relatives and friends. We can stay with your uncle or aunt. Both of them have plenty of space. Wouldn't it be simpler to put up there first and take our time over opening up other houses?"

"But uncle's just been promoted and is going to the provinces, so his place is bound to be upside down. If we descend on him like a swarm of bees, it will look most inconsiderate."

"Your uncle may be leaving for his new post, but there's still your aunt's house. They've written year after year inviting us to visit the capital. Now that we're here and your uncle's getting ready to leave, your Aunt Jia is sure to press us to stay there. It will appear very strange to them if we're in such a rush to open up one of our own houses.

"I know what you're after. You're afraid of being under restraint if

思我也知道，守着舅舅、姨爹住着，未免拘束，不如你各自住着，任意施为。既然如此，你自去挑所房子去住，我和你姨娘、姊妹们别了这几年，却要厮守几日，我带了你妹子投你姨娘家去，你道好不好？”薛蟠见母亲如此说，情知扭不过，只得吩咐人夫，一路奔荣国府来。

那时王夫人已知薛蟠官司一事，亏贾雨村就中维持了结，才放了心。又见哥哥升了边缺，正愁又少了娘家亲戚来往，略加寂寞。过了几日，忽家人传报：“姨太太带了哥儿姐儿，合家进京，在外下车。”喜的王夫人忙带了女媳人等，接出大厅，将薛姨妈等接了进来。姊妹们暮年相见，自不必说悲喜交集，泣笑叙阔一番。忙又引见贾母，将人情土物各种酬献了。合家俱厮见过，忙又治席接风。

薛蟠已见过贾政，贾琏又引着拜见了贾赦、贾珍等。贾政便使人上来说：“姨太太有了春秋，外甥年轻，不知世路，在外住着，恐有人引诱生事。咱们东北角上，梨香院一所十来间房，白空着，打扫了，请姨太太和哥姐儿住了甚好。”王夫人未及留，贾母也遣人来说“请姨太太就在这里住下，大家亲密些”等语。薛姨妈正欲同居一处，方可拘紧些儿



you stay with your uncle or aunt. You'd prefer to be on your own, free to do as you please. In that case, go and find yourself some lodgings. I've been parted all these years from your aunt and we old sisters want to spend a little time together. I shall take your sister there with me. Have you any objection to that?"

Realizing that he could not talk his mother round, Xue Pan had perforce to order his servants to make straight for the Rong Mansion.

Meanwhile Lady Wang, who had learned with relief of the dismissal, thanks to Yucun, of the charge against Xue Pan, had been dismayed again by her brother's promotion to a frontier post, for this confronted her with the lonely prospect of having none of her own family to visit. But a few days later a servant suddenly announced that her sister had brought her son and daughter and whole household to the capital, and they were just alighting outside the gate.

In her joy, Lady Wang hurried out to the reception hall with her daughter and daughter-in-law to greet the whole party and conduct them inside. We need not dwell on the mingled delight and sorrow of these two sisters meeting again in the evening of life or all their tears, laughter and reminiscences.

Lady Wang took them in to pay their respects to the Lady Dowager, and they distributed the gifts they had brought. When the entire family had been introduced, a feast of welcome was spread for the travellers. And after Xue Pan had paid his respects to Jia Zheng, Jia Lian took him over to call on Jia She and Jia Zhen.

Then Jia Zheng sent a message to his wife saying. "My sister-in-law has seen many springs and autumns, and my nephew is young and inexperienced. He may get into some scrapes if they live outside. The ten rooms and more in Pear Fragrance Court in the northeast corner of our grounds are empty. Let us have them swept clean and ask your sister and her children to stay there."

Before Lady Wang could extend this invitation, the Lady Dowager also sent to urge, "Do invite your sister to stay here, so that we can all be close together."

Aunt Xue was only too glad to comply so as to have some check on her son, who was likely to get up to fresh mischief if they lived outside.



子；若另住在外，恐他纵性惹祸，遂连忙道谢应允。又私与王夫人说：“一应日费供给，一概免却，方是处常之法。”王夫人知他家不难于此，遂亦从其愿。从此后，薛家母子就在梨香院中住了。

原来这梨香院，乃当日荣公暮年养静之所，小小巧巧，约有十余间房舍，前厅后舍俱全。另有一门通街，薛蟠家人就走此门出入。西南又有一角门，通一夹道，出夹道便是王夫人正房的东院了。每日或饭后，或晚间，薛姨妈便过来，或与贾母闲谈，或和王夫人相叙。宝钗日与黛玉迎春姊妹等一处，或看书下棋，或作针黹，倒也十分乐业。只是薛蟠起初之心，原不欲在贾宅居住，深恐姨父管约拘禁，料必不自在的；无奈母亲执意在此，且贾宅中又十分殷勤苦留，只得暂且住下，一面使人打扫出自己的房屋，再作移居之计。谁知自来此间，住了不上半个月的光景，贾宅族中凡有的子侄，俱已认熟一半，凡是那些纨绔气习者，莫不喜与他来往，今日会酒，明日观花，甚至聚赌嫖娼，渐渐无所不至，引诱的薛蟠比当日更坏了十倍。虽说贾政训子有方，治家有法，一则族大人多，照管不到这些；二则现任族长乃是贾珍，彼系宁府长孙，又现袭职，凡族中大小事体，自有他掌管；三则公私冗杂，且素性潇洒，不以俗务为要，每公暇之余，不过看书下棋而已，余事多不介意。况梨香院相隔两层



She promptly accepted with thanks and in private intimated to Lady Wang that, if she was to make a long stay, she must be allowed to defray all her household's daily expenses. Lady Wang knew that this presented no difficulty for the Xue family, and therefore agreed. So Aunt Xue and her children moved into Pear Fragrance Court.

This court where the Duke of Rongguo had spent his declining years was small but charming, its dozen or so rooms including a reception hall in front and the usual sleeping quarters and offices behind. It had its own entrance to the street which the Xue household used, while a passage from a southwest gate led to the east courtyard of Lady Wang's main apartment. Every day after lunch or in the evening, Aunt Xue would walk over to chat with the Lady Dowager or to talk over the old days with her sister.

Baochai spent her time with Daiyu, Yingchun and the other girls, very happy to read, play chess or sew with them.

Only Xue Pan at first disliked this arrangement, for fear that his uncle would control him so strictly that he would not be his own master. He had to comply for the time being, however, because his mother had made up her mind to it and the Jia family pressed them so hard to stay. None the less, he sent servants to make ready one of his own houses for when he decided to move.

To his relief, after less than a month he found himself on familiar terms with half the Jia sons and nephews, and all the rich young men of fashion among them enjoyed his company. One day they would meet to drink, the next to look at flowers, and soon they included him in gambling parties or visits to the courtesans' quarters, with the result that Xue Pan rapidly became even ten times worse than before.

Although Jia Zheng was known for his fine method of schooling his sons and disciplining his household, the family was too large for him to see to everything. Moreover the head of the clan was Jia Zhen, who as the eldest grandson of the Duke of Ningguo had inherited the title and was responsible for all clan affairs.

Besides, Jia Zheng, occupied as he was by public and private business, was too easy-going to take mundane matters seriously, preferring to give all his leisure to reading and chess.

房舍，又另有街门别开，可以出入，所以这些子弟们竟可以放意畅怀行事，因此把薛蟠移居之念，渐渐消灭了。要知端的，且听下回分解。





Since Pear Fragrance Court was two courtyards away from his quarters and had its own entrance to the street through which people could pass as they pleased, the young men caroused and enjoyed themselves just as they chose. For these reasons, before very long Xue Pan gave up all thought of moving.

To know what followed, turn to the next chapter.





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第五回

灵石迷性难解仙机 警幻多情秘垂淫训

题曰：

春困葳蕤拥绣衾，恍随仙子别红尘。

问谁幻入华胥境，千古风流造孽人。

第四回中已将薛家母子在荣国府中寄居等事已表明，此回则暂不能写矣。

如今且说林黛玉自在荣府以来，贾母万般怜爱，寝食起居，一如宝玉，迎春、探春、惜春三个亲孙女倒且靠后；便是宝玉和黛玉二人之亲密友爱处，亦自较别个不同，日则同行同坐，夜则同息同止，真是言和意顺，略无参商。不想如今忽来了一个薛宝钗，年纪虽大不多，然品格端方，容貌丰美，人多谓黛玉所不及。而且宝钗行为豁达，随分从时，不比黛玉孤高自许，目无下尘，故比黛玉大得下人之心。便是那些小丫头们，亦多喜与宝钗去玩笑。因此黛玉心中便有些悒郁不忿之意，宝钗却浑然不觉。那宝玉亦在孩提之间，况自天性所禀来的一片愚拙偏僻，视姊妹弟兄皆出一意，并无亲疏远近之别。其中因与黛玉同贾母一处坐卧，故略比别个



红楼梦
第五回
PDG



Chapter 5

The Spiritual Stone Is Too Bemused to Grasp the Fairy's Riddles The Goddess of Disenchantment in Her Kindness Secretly Expounds on Love

Drowsy in spring beneath embroidered quilts,
In a trance with a goddess he leaves the world of men.
Who is this now entering the Land of Dreams?
The most unregenerate lover since time began.

The fourth chapter told briefly how the Xues came to stay in the Rong Mansion, but now let us return to Daiyu.

Since her coming to the Rong Mansion, the Lady Dowager had been lavishing affection on her, treating her in every respect just like Baoyu so that Yingchun, Tanchun and Xichun, the Jia girls, all had to take a back seat. And Baoyu and Daiyu had drawn closer to each other than all the others. By day they strolled or sat together; at night they went to bed in the same apartment. On all matters, indeed, they were in complete accord.

But now Baochai had suddenly appeared on the scene. Although only slightly older, she was such a proper young lady and so charming that most people considered Daiyu inferior to her. In the eyes of the world, of course, everyone has some merits. In the case of Daiyu and Baochai, one was lovely as a flower, the other graceful as a willow, but each charming in her own way, according to her distinctive temperament.

Besides, Baochai's generous, tactful, and accommodating ways contrasted strongly with Daiyu's stand-offish reserve and won the hearts of her subordinates, so that nearly all the maids like to chat with her. Because of this, Daiyu began to feel some twinges of jealousy. But of this Baochai was completely unaware.

Baoyu was still only a boy and a very absurd and wilful one at that, who treated his brothers, sisters and cousins alike, making no difference between close and distant kinsmen. Because he and Daiyu both lived in

姊妹熟惯些。既熟惯，则更觉亲密；既亲密，则不免一时有求全之毁，不虞之隙。这一日不知为何，他二人言语有些不合起来，黛玉又气的独在房中垂泪，宝玉又自悔语言冒撞，前去俯就，那黛玉方渐渐的回转来。

因东边宁府中花园内梅花盛开，贾珍之妻尤氏乃治酒，请贾母、邢夫人、王夫人等赏花。是日先携了贾蓉之妻二人来面请。贾母等于早饭后过来，就在会芳园游玩，先茶后酒，不过皆是宁、荣二府女眷家宴小集，并无别样新文趣事可记。

一时宝玉倦怠，欲睡中觉，贾母命人好生哄着，歇息一回再来。贾蓉之妻秦氏，便忙笑回道：“我们这里有给宝叔收拾下的屋子，老祖宗放心，只管交与我就是了。”又向宝玉的奶娘丫鬟等道：“嬷嬷、姐姐们，请宝叔随我这里来。”贾母素知秦氏是个极妥当的人，生得袅娜纤巧，行事又温柔和平，乃重孙媳中第一个得意之人，见他去安置宝玉，自是安稳的。

当下秦氏引了一簇人，来至上房内间。宝玉抬头先看见一幅画贴在上面，画的人物甚好，其故事乃是《燃藜图》，也不看系何人所画，心中便有些不快。又有一副对联，写的是：

世事洞明皆学问，人情练达即文章。
及看了这两句，纵然室宇精美，铺陈华丽，亦断断不肯在这里，忙说道：“出去！出去！”秦氏听了笑道：“这里还不好，要



the Lady Dowager's quarters he was closer to her than to the other girls, and being closer had grown more intimate; but precisely because of this he sometimes offended her by being too demanding and thoughtless.

Today the two of them had fallen out for some reason and Daiyu, alone in her room, was again shedding tears. Sorry for his tactlessness, Baoyu went in to make it up and little by little contrived to comfort her.

As the plum blossom was now in full bloom in the Ning Mansion's garden, Jia Zhen's wife Madam You invited the Lady Dowager, Lady Xing, Lady Wang and the others to a party to enjoy the flowers. She brought Jia Rong and his wife with her to deliver the invitations in person, and so the Lady Dowager and the rest went over after breakfast. They strolled round the Garden of Concentrated Fragrance and were served first with tea then wine; but it was simply an informal gathering of the womenfolk of both houses for a family feast, with nothing of special interest to record.

Soon Baoyu was tired and wanted to have a nap. The Lady Dowager ordered his attendants to take good care of him and bring him back after a rest.

At once Jia Rong's wife Qin Keqing said with a smile: "We have a room ready here for Uncle Baoyu. The Old Ancestress can set her mind at rest and leave him safely to me." She told his nurses and maids to follow her with their young master.

The Lady Dowager had every confidence in this lovely slender young woman who with her gentle, amiable behaviour was her favourite of all the great-grandsons' wives of the Rong and Ning branches. She was therefore sure Baoyu would be in good hands.

Keqing led the party to an inner room. where Baoyu noticed a fine painting of "The Scholar Working by Torchlight."¹ Without even seeing who the artist was, he took a dislike to the picture. Then he read the couplet flanking it:

A grasp of mundane affairs is genuine knowledge,
Understanding of worldly wisdom is true learning.

These two lines disgusted him with the place for all its refinement and luxury, and he begged to go somewhere else.



往那里去呢?不然往我屋里去吧。”宝玉点头微笑。一嬷嬷说道:“那里有叔叔往侄儿房里睡觉的道理?”秦氏笑道:

“暖哟哟,不怕他恼。他能多大了,就忌讳这些个!上月你没看见我那兄弟来了,虽然和宝叔同年,两个人若站在一处,只怕那一个还高些呢。”宝玉道:“我怎么没见过?你带他来我瞧瞧。”众人笑道:“隔着二三十里,往那里带去,见的日子有哩。”说着大家来至秦氏房中。刚至房门,便有一股细细的甜香袭人。宝玉便觉眼饧骨软,连说“好香!”入房向壁上看时,有唐伯虎画的《海棠春睡图》,两边有宋学士秦太虚写的对联,其联云:

嫩寒锁梦因春冷,芳气袭人是酒香。

案上设着武则天当日镜室中设的宝镜,一边摆着飞燕立着舞过的金盘,盘内盛着安禄山掷过伤了太真乳的木瓜。上面设着寿昌公主于含章殿下卧的榻,悬的是同昌公主制的联珠帐。宝玉含笑连说:“这里好!”秦氏笑道:“我这屋子大约连神仙也住得了。”说着亲自展开了西子浣过的纱衾,移了红娘抱过的鸳枕。于是众奶母伏侍宝玉卧好,款款散去,只留下袭人、媚人、晴雯、麝月四个丫鬟为伴。秦氏便吩咐小丫鬟们,好生在廊檐下看着猫儿狗儿打架。





“If this isn’t good enough, where can we take you?” asked his hostess with a laugh. “Well, come along to my room.”

Baoyu nodded and smiled but one of his nurses protested:

“It’s not proper for an uncle to sleep in his nephew’s room.”

“Good gracious!” Keqing smiled. “I won’t mind his being offended if I say he’s still a baby. At his age such taboos don’t apply. Didn’t you see my brother who came last month? He’s the same age as Uncle Baoyu, but if they stood side by side I’m sure he’d be the taller.”

“Why haven’t I met him?” asked Baoyu. “Do bring him in and let me have a look at him.”

The women burst out laughing. “He’s miles away, how can we bring him? You’ll meet him some other time.”

Now, having reached the young matron’s room, they were met at the threshold by a subtle perfume which misted over Baoyu’s eyes and melted his bones.

“How good it smells here!” he cried.

Entering, he saw on the wall a picture by Tang Yin² of a lady sleeping under the blossom of a crab-apple tree in spring. On the two scrolls flanking it, Qin Guan³ the Song scholar had written:

Coolness wraps her dream, for spring is chill;
A fragrance assails men, the aroma of wine.

On the dressing-table was a rare mirror from Wu Zetian’s⁴ Hall of Mirrors. In the gold tray by it, on which Zhao Feiyan⁵ once danced, was the quince thrown in fun by An Lushan⁶ at Lady Yang,⁷ which had wounded her breast. At one end of the room stood the couch on which Princess Shouyang⁸ had slept in the Hanzhang Palace, and over it hung the curtains strung from pearls by Princess Tongchang⁹.

“It’s nice in here,” exclaimed Baoyu repeatedly in his delight.

“This room of mine is probably fit for a god,” rejoined Keqing with a smile.

With her own hands she spread a gauze coverlet washed by Xi Shi¹⁰ and arranged the bridal pillow carried by Hongniang¹¹. Then the nurses and attendants made Baoyu lie down and slipped out leaving only four maids Xiren, Meiren, Qingwen and Sheyue to keep him company. Keqing

那宝玉刚合上眼，便惚惚的睡去，犹似秦氏在前，遂悠悠荡荡，随了秦氏，至一所在。但见朱栏白石，绿树清溪，真是人迹罕逢，飞尘不到。宝玉在梦中欢喜，想道：“这个去处有趣，我就在此处过一生，纵然失了家我也愿意，强如天天被父母师傅打去。”正胡思之间，忽听山后有人作歌曰：

春梦随云散，飞花逐水流。

寄言众儿女，何必觅闲愁。

宝玉听了是女子的声音。歌音未息，早见那边走出一个人来，蹁跹袅娜，端的与人不同。有赋为证：

方离柳坞，乍出花房。但行处，鸟惊庭树；将到时，影度回廊。仙袂乍飘兮，闻麝兰之馥郁；荷衣欲动兮，听环佩之铿锵。靥笑春桃兮，云堆翠髻；唇绽缨颗兮，榴齿含香。纤腰之楚楚兮，回风舞雪；珠翠之辉辉兮，满额鹅黄。出没花间兮，宜嗔宜喜；徘徊池上兮，若飞若扬。蛾眉颦笑兮，将言而未语；莲步乍移兮，待



told them to wait on the verandah and watch the kittens and puppies playing there.

Baoyu fell asleep as soon as he closed his eyes and dreamed that Keqing was before him. Absent-mindedly he followed her a long way to some crimson balustrades and white marble steps among green trees and clear streams, in a place seldom trodden by the foot of man, unreached by swirling dust.

In his dream he thought happily, "This is a pleasant spot. If only I could spend my whole life here! For that I'd gladly give up my home where my parents and teachers keep caning me every day."

His fancy was running away with him when he heard someone singing a song on the other side of a hill:

Gone with the clouds spring's dream.
Flowers drift away on the stream.
Young lovers all, be warned by me,
Cease courting needless misery.

Baoyu realized that the voice was a girl's and before the song had ended he saw the singer come round the hill and approach him. With her graceful gait and air she was truly no mortal being. Here is as proof her description:

Leaving the willow bank, she comes just now through the flowers. Her approach startles birds in the trees in the court, and soon her shadow falls across the verandah. Her fairy sleeves, fluttering, give off a heady fragrance of musk and orchid. With each rustle of her lotus garments, her jade pendants tinkle.

Her dimpled smile is peach-blossom in spring, her blue-black hair a cluster of clouds. Her lips are cherries and sweet the breath from her pomegranate teeth.

The curve of her slender waist is snow whirled by the wind. Dazzling her pearls and emeralds and gosling-gold the painted design on her forehead.

She slips in and out of the flowers, now vexed, now radiant, and floats over the lake as if on wings.

Her mothlike eyebrows are knit yet there lurks a smile, and no sound issues from her lips parted as if to speak as she glides swiftly on lotus feet and, pausing, seems poised for flight.



止而欲行。羨彼之良质兮，冰清玉润；慕彼之华服兮，闪烁文章。爱彼之貌容兮，香培玉琢；美彼之态度兮，凤翥龙翔。其素若何，春梅绽雪。其洁若何，秋兰被霜。其静若何，松生空谷。其艳若何，霞映澄塘。其文若何，龙游曲沼。其神若何，月射寒江。应渐西子，实愧王嫱。奇矣哉，生于孰地，来自何方；信矣乎，瑶池不二，紫府无双。果何人哉？如斯之美也！

宝玉见是一个仙姑，喜的忙来作揖，笑问道：“神仙姐姐不知从那里来，如今要往那里去？我也不知这是何处，望乞携带携带。”那仙姑笑道：“吾居离恨天之上，灌愁海之中，乃放春山遣香洞太虚幻境警幻仙姑是也：司人间之风情月债，掌尘世之女怨男痴。因近来风流冤孽，缠绵于此处，是以前来访察机会，布散相思。今忽与尔相逢，亦非偶然。此离吾境不远，别无他物，仅有自采仙茗一盞，亲酿美酒一瓮，素练魔舞歌姬数人，新填《红楼梦》仙曲十二支，试随吾一游否？”宝玉听说，喜跃非常，便忘了秦氏在何处，竟随了仙姑，至一所在，有石牌坊横建，上书“太虚幻境”四个大字，两边一副对联，乃是：

假作真时真亦假，无为有处有还无。





Her flawless complexion is pure as ice, smooth as jade. Magnificent her costume with splendid designs. Sweet her face, compact of fragrance, carved in jade; and she bears herself like a phoenix or dragon in flight.

Her whiteness? Spring plum-blossom glimpsed through snow. Her purity? Autumn orchids coated with frost. Her tranquility? A pine in a lonely valley. Her beauty? Sunset mirrored in a limpid pool. Her grace? A dragon breasting a winding stream. Her spirit? Moonlight on a frosty river.

She would put Xi Shi to shame and make Wang Qiang¹² blush. Where was this wonder born, whence does she come?

Verily she has no peer in fairyland, no equal in the purple courts of heaven.

Who can she be, this beauty?

Overjoyed by the apparition of this fairy, Baoyu made haste to greet her with a bow.

“Sister Fairy,” he begged with a smile, “do tell me where you are from and whither you are going. I have lost my way. May I beg you to be my guide?”

“My home is above the Sphere of Parting Sorrow in the Sea of Brimming Grief,” she answered with a smile. “I am the Goddess of Disenchantment from the Grotto of Emanating Fragrance on the Mountain of Expanding Spring in the Illusory Land of Great Void. I preside over romances and unrequited love on earth, the grief of women and the passion of men in the mundane world. The reincarnations of some former lovers have recently gathered here, and so I have come to look for a chance to mete out love and longing. It is no accident that we have met.

“My realm is not far from here. All I can offer you is a cup of fairy tea plucked by my own hands, a pitcher of fine wine of my own brewing, some accomplished singers and dancers, and twelve new fairy songs called ‘A Dream of Red Mansions.’ But won’t you come with me?” Forgetting Keqing in his delight, Baoyu followed the goddess to a stone archway inscribed: Illusory Land of Great Void. On either pillar was this couplet:

When false is taken for true, true becomes false;
If non-being turns into being, being becomes non-being.

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转过牌坊，便是一座宫门，上面横书四个大字，乃是：“孽海情天”。又有一副对联，大书云：

厚地高天，堪叹古今情不尽；
痴男怨女，可怜风月债难偿。

宝玉看了，心下自思道：“原来如此。但不知何为‘古今之情’，何为‘风月之债’？从今倒要领略领略。”宝玉只顾如此一想，不料早把些邪魔招入膏肓了。当下随了仙姑进入二层门内，只见两边配殿，皆有匾额对联，一时看不尽许多，惟见几处写着：“痴情司”、“结怨司”、“朝啼司”、“夜怨司”、“春感司”、“秋悲司”。看了，因向仙姑道：“敢烦仙姑引我到各司中游玩游玩，不知可使得？”仙姑道：“此各司中，皆贮的是普天之下所有的女子过去未来的簿册，尔凡眼尘躯，未便先知的。”宝玉听了，那里肯依，复央之再四。仙姑无奈说：“也罢，就在此司内，略随喜随喜罢了。”宝玉喜不自胜，抬头看这司的匾上，乃是“薄命司”三字，两边对联写着：

春怨秋悲皆自惹，花容月貌为谁妍。

宝玉看了，便知感叹。进了门来，见有十数个大厨，皆用封条封着。见那封条上，皆是各省地名。宝玉一心只拣自己的家乡封条看，遂无心看别省的了。只见那边厨上封条，



Beyond this archway was a palace gateway with the inscription in large characters: Sea of Grief and Heaven of Love. The bold couplet flanking this read:

Firm as earth and lofty as heaven, passion from
time immemorial knows no end;
Pity silly lads and plaintive maids hard put to
it to requite debts of breeze and moonlight.

“Well, well,” thought Baoyu, “I wonder what’s meant by ‘passion from time immemorial’ and ‘debts of breeze and moonlight.’ From now on I’d like to have a taste of these things.”

Little did he know that by thinking in this way he had summoned an evil spirit into his inmost heart.

He followed the goddess through the second gate past two matching halls on both sides, each with its tablet and couplet. He had no time to read them all but noticed the names: Board of Infatuation, Board of Jealousy, Board of Morning Tears, Board of Night Sighs, Board of Spring Longing and Board of Autumn Sorrows.

“May I trouble you, goddess, to show me over these different boards?” he asked.

“They contain the records of the past and future of girls from all over the world,” she told him. “These may not be divulged in advance to you with your human eyes and mortal frame.”

But Baoyu would not take no for an answer and at last she yielded to his importunity.

“Very well then,” she conceded. “You may go in here and have a look round.”

Baoyu was overjoyed. He looked up and saw on the tablet the name Board of the Ill-Fated. This was flanked by the couplet:

They brought on themselves spring grief and
autumn anguish;
Wasted, their beauty fair as flowers and moon.

Grasping the meaning of this and strangely stirred, Baoyu entered and saw more than ten large cabinets, sealed and labelled with the names of different localities. Having no interest in other provinces, he was eager to

大书七字云：“金陵十二钗正册”。宝玉因问：“何为‘金陵十二钗正册’？”警幻道：“即贵省中十二冠首女子之册，故为‘正册’。”宝玉道：“常听人说，金陵极大，怎么只有十二个女子？如今单我们家里，上上下下，就有几百女孩儿呢。”警幻道：“贵省女子固多，不过择其善者录之。下边二厨则又次之。余者庸愚之辈，则无册可录矣。”宝玉听说，再看下首二厨上，果然写着“金陵十二钗副册”，又一个写着“金陵十二钗又副册。”宝上便伸手将“又副册”厨门开了，拿出一本册来，揭开一看，只见上首页上画着一幅画，又非人物，亦无山水，不过是水墨滃染的满纸乌云浊雾而已。后有几行字，写着：

霁月难逢，彩云易散。心比天高，身为下贱。风流灵巧招人怨。寿夭多因诽谤生，多情公子空牵念。

宝玉看了，又见后面画着一簇鲜花，一床破席，也有几句言词，写着：

枉自温柔和顺，空云似桂如兰。

堪羨优伶有福，谁知公子无缘。

宝玉看了不解。遂掷下这个，又去开了一副册厨门，拿起一本册来，揭开看时，只见画着一株桂花，下面有一池沼，其中水涸泥干，莲枯藕败，后面书云：





find his native place and soon discovered one cabinet labelled *First Register of Twelve Beauties of Jinling*. When he asked what this meant, Disenchantment told him:

“That is a record of the twelve foremost beauties in your honourable province. That’s why it’s called the First Register.”

“I’ve always heard that Jinling’s a very large place,” replied Baoyu. “Why are there only twelve girls? In our family alone just now, if you count the servants, we must have several hundreds.”

“True, there are many girls in your honourable province. Only those of the first grade are registered here. The next two cabinets contain records of those in the second and third grade. As for the rest, they are too mediocre for their lives to be worth recording.”

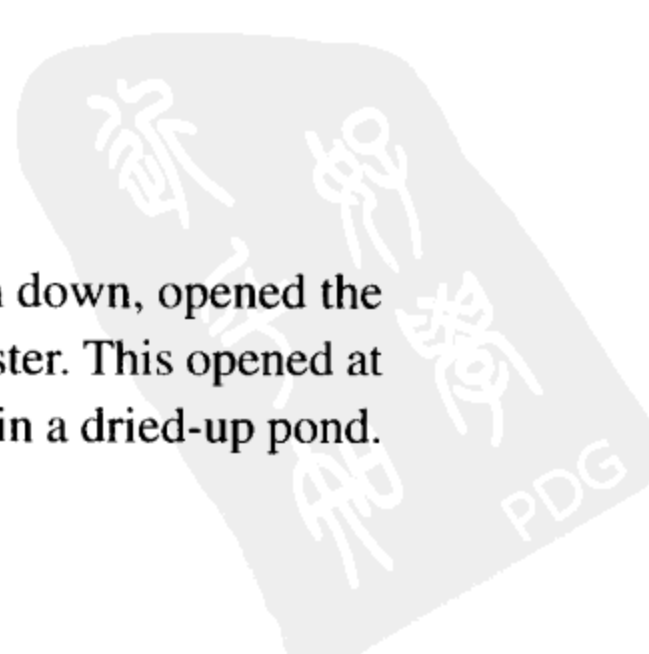
Baoyu looked at the next two cabinets and saw written on them: *Second Register of Twelve Beauties of Jinling* and *Third Register of Twelve Beauties of Jinling*. He opened the door of this last, took out the register and turned to the first page. This was covered by a painting in ink, not of any figures of landscape but of black clouds and heavy mist. Beside this were the lines:

A clear moon is rarely met with,
Bright clouds are easily scattered;
Her heart is loftier than the sky,
But her person is of low degree.
Her charm and wit give rise to jealousy,
Her early death is caused by calumny,
In vain her loving master’s grief must be.

On the next page Baoyu saw painted a bunch of flowers and a tattered mat, with the legend:

Nothing avail her gentleness and compliance,
Osmanthus and orchid with her fragrance vie;
But this prize is borne off by an actor,
And luck passes the young master by.

Unable to make anything of this, he put the album down, opened the door of another cabinet and took out the Second Register. This opened at a picture of fragrant osmanthus above withered lotus in a dried-up pond. By this was written:





根并荷花一茎香，平生遭际实堪伤。

自从两地生孤木，致使香魂返故乡。

宝玉看了仍不解。他又掷下，再取“正册”看，只见头一页上便画着两株枯木，木上悬着一围玉带；又有一堆雪，雪下一股金簪。也有四句言词道：

可叹停机德，堪怜咏絮才。

玉带林中挂，金簪雪里埋。

宝玉看了仍不解。待要问时，情知他必不肯泄漏；待要丢下，又不舍。遂又往后看，只见画着一张弓，弓上挂着香橼。也有一词：

二十年来辨是非，榴花开处照宫闱。

三春争及初春景，虎兕相逢大梦归。

后面又画着两人放风筝，一片大海，一只大船，船中有一女子掩面泣涕。也有四句云：

才自精明志自高，生于末世运偏消。

清明涕送江边望，千里东风一梦遥。

后面又画几缕飞云，一湾逝水。其词曰：

富贵又何为，襁褓之间父母违。

转眼吊斜晖，湘江水逝楚云飞。





Sweet is she as the lotus in flower,
Yet none so sorely oppressed;
After the growth of a lonely tree in two soils
Her sweet soul will be dispatched to its final rest.

Still baffled, Baoyu put this volume aside and took out the First Register. The first page had a painting of two withered trees on which hung a jade belt, while at the foot of a snowdrift lay a broken golden hairpin. Four lines of verse read:

Alas for her wifely virtue,
Her wit to sing of willow-down, poor maid!
Buried in snow the broken golden hairpin
And hanging in the wood the belt of jade.

Baoyu could make nothing of this either. He knew the goddess would not enlighten him, yet he could not bring himself to put the book down. So he turned to a painting of a bow from which was suspended a citron. This bore the legend:

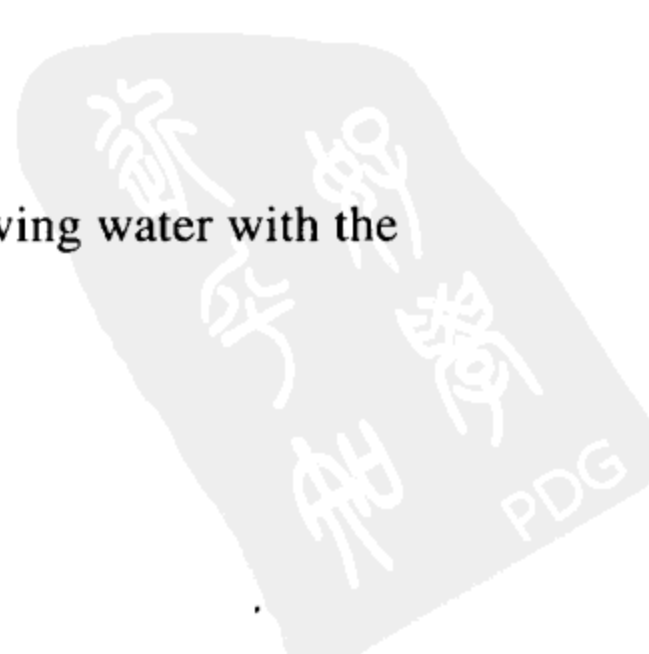
For twenty years she arbitrates
Where pomegranates blaze by palace gates.
How can the late spring equal the spring's start?
When Hare and Tiger meet,¹³
From this Great Dream of life she must depart.

On the next page was a picture of two people flying a kite, while in a large boat out at sea sat a girl, weeping, covering her face with her hands. With this were the lines:

So talented and high-minded,
She is born too late for luck to come her way.
Through tears she watches the stream
On the Clear and Bright Day;¹⁴
A thousand *li* the east wind blows,
But her home in her dreams is far away.

Next came a painting of drifting clouds and flowing water with the legend:

Nought avail her rank and riches,
While yet in swaddling clothes an orphan lone;
In a flash she mourns the setting sun,





后面又画着一块美玉，落在泥垢之中。其断语云：

欲洁何曾洁，云空未必空。

可怜金玉质，终陷淖泥中。

后面忽画一恶狼，追扑一美女，欲啖之意。其书云：

子系中山狼，得志便猖狂。

金闺花柳质，一载赴黄粱。

后面便是一座古庙，里面有一美人在内独坐看经。其判云：

勘破三春景不长，缁衣顿改昔年妆。

可怜绣户侯门女，独卧青灯古佛旁。

后面便是一片冰山，上面有一只雌凤。其判曰：

凡鸟偏从末世来，都知爱慕此生才。

一从二令三人木，哭向金陵事更哀。

后面又是一座荒村野店，有一美人在那里纺绩。其判云：

势败休云贵，家亡莫论亲。

偶因济刘氏，巧得遇恩人。

后面又画一盆茂兰，旁有一位凤冠霞帔的美人。其判云：





The river Xiang runs dry, the clouds over Chu
have flown.

Next was depicted a fine piece of jade dropped in the mud, with the
verse:

Chastity is her wish,
Seclusion her desire;
Alas, though fine as gold or jade
She sinks at last in the mire.

There followed a sketch of a savage wolf pursuing a lovely girl to
devour her. The verdict read:

For husband she will have a mountain wolf,
His object gained he ruthlessly berates her;
Fair bloom, sweet willow in a golden bower,
Too soon a rude awakening awaits her.

Next was depicted a seated girl reading a sutra alone in an old temple.
This had the legend:

She sees through the transience of spring,
Dark Buddhist robes replace her garments fine;
Pity this child of a wealthy noble house
Who now sleeps alone by the dimly lit old shrine.

Next came a female phoenix perched on an iceberg, with the verdict:

This bird appears when the world falls on evil times;
None but admires her talents and her skill;
First she complies, then commands, then is dismissed,
Departing in tears to Jinling more wretched still.

After this was a lonely village with a pretty girl spinning in a humble
cottage. The inscription read:

When fortune frowns, nobility means nothing;
When a house is ruined, kinsmen turn unkind.
Because of help given by chance to Granny Liu,
In time of need she is lucky a friend to find.

After this was painted a pot of orchids in bloom beside a beauty in
ceremonial dress. The legend ran:





桃李春风结子完，到头谁似一盆兰。

如冰水好空相妒，枉与他人作笑谈。

后面又画着高楼大厦，有一美人悬梁自缢。其判云：

情天情海幻情身，情既相逢必主淫。

漫言不肖皆荣出，造衅开端实在宁。

宝玉还欲看时，那仙姑知道他天分高明，性情颖慧，恐把仙机泄漏，遂掩了卷册，笑向宝玉道：“且随我去游玩奇景，何必在此打这闷葫芦！”

宝光恍恍惚惚，不觉弃了卷册，又随了警幻来至后面。但见珠帘绣幕，画栋雕檐，说不尽那光摇朱户金铺地，雪照琼窗玉作宫。更见仙花馥郁，异草芬芳，真好一个所在。又听警幻笑道：“你们快出来迎接贵客！”一语未了，只见房中又走出几个仙子来，皆是荷袂蹁跹，羽衣飘舞，姣若春花，媚如秋月。一见了宝玉，都怨谤警幻道：“我们不知系何‘贵客’，忙的接了出来！姐姐曾说今日今时必有绛珠妹子的生魂前来游玩，故我等久待。何故反引这浊物来，污染这清净女儿之境？”

宝玉听如此说，吓得欲退不能退，果觉自形污秽不堪。警幻忙携住宝玉的手，向众姊妹笑道：“你等不知原委；今日原欲往荣府去接绛珠，适从宁府所过，偶遇宁、荣二公之





Peach and plum in spring winds finish seeding,
Who can bloom like the orchid at last?
Pure as ice and water she arouses envy,
Vain the groundless taunts that are cast.

Next came a picture on a beautiful woman hanging herself of a tower,
with the verdict:

Love boundless as sea and sky is but illusion;
When lovers meet, lust must be king.
Say not all evil comes from the Rong Mansion,
Truly, disaster originates from the Ning.

Baoyu would have read on, but the goddess knowing his high natural endowments and quick intelligence feared the secrets of Heaven might be divulged. She closed the book therefore and said to him with a smile:

“Why not come with me to enjoy the strange sights here instead of puzzling your head over these silly riddles?”

As if in a daze he left the registers and followed her past pearl portières and embroidered curtains, painted pillars and carved beams. Words fail to describe those brilliant vermilion rooms, floors paved with gold, windows bright as snow and palaces of jade, to say nothing of the delectable fairy flowers, rare plants and fragrant herbs.

As Baoyu was feasting his eyes on these marvellous sights Disenchantment called with a laugh: “Come out quickly and welcome our honoured guest.”

At once out came several fairies, lotus sleeves swaying, feathery garments fluttering, lovely as spring blossom, entrancing as the autumn moon. At sight of Baoyu they reproached the goddess:

“So this is your guest! Why should we hurry out to meet him? You told us that today, at this hour, the spirit of Sister Vermilion Pearl would be coming to revisit her old haunts. That’s why we’ve been waiting all this time. Why bring this filthy creature here instead to pollute this domain of immaculate maidens?”

Baoyu started at that and wished he could slip away, feeling intolerably gross and filthy, but Disenchantment took him by the hand.

“You don’t understand,” she explained to the fairies. “I did set off to the Rong Mansion today to fetch Vermilion Pearl, but as I was passing

灵，嘱吾云：‘吾家自国朝定鼎以来，功名奕世，富贵传流，虽历百年，奈运终数尽，不可挽回。子孙虽多，竟无一个可以继业者。惟嫡孙宝玉一人，禀性乖张，性情怪谲，虽聪明灵慧，略可望成，无奈吾家运数合终，恐无人引入正路。幸仙姑偶来，万望先以情欲声色等事警其痴顽，或能使彼跳出迷人圈子，然后入于正路，亦吾兄弟之幸矣。’如此嘱吾，故发慈心，引彼至此。先以彼家上中下三等女子之终身册籍，令彼熟玩，尚未觉悟；故引彼再至此处，令其再历饮馔声色之幻，或可将来一悟，亦未可知也。”

说毕，携宝玉入室。但闻一缕幽香，竟不知所焚何物。宝玉遂不禁相问。警幻笑道：“此香尘世中既无，尔何能知！此香乃系诸名山胜境内，初生异卉之精，合各种宝林珠树之油所制，名‘群芳髓’。”宝玉听了，自是羡慕。已而大家入座，小丫鬟捧上茶来。宝玉自觉香清味异，纯美非常，因又问何名。警幻道：“此茶出在放春山遣香洞，又以仙花灵叶上所带宿露而烹，此茶名曰‘千红一窟’。”宝玉听了，点头称赏。因看房内，瑶琴、宝鼎、古画、新诗，无所不有；更喜窗下亦有唾绒，奁间时渍粉污。壁上也有一副对联，书着：



the Ning Mansion I met the spirits of the Duke of Ningguo and the Duke of Rongguo who told me, 'Since the start of this dynasty, for some generations, our family has enjoyed a fine reputation as well as riches and rank. But after a hundred years our good fortune is at an end, gone beyond recall. Although we have many descendants, the only one fit to continue our work is our great-grandson Baoyu. Even though his is headstrong and eccentric, lacking in intelligence, we nonetheless had certain hopes of him. However, our family's luck has run out and there seemed to be no one to show him the right way. How fortunate we are to have met you, goddess. We beg you to warn him of the dangers of lusting after women, so that he may escape from their snares and set his feet on the right path. Then we two brothers will be happy.'

"Sympathizing with their request, I fetched him here. To begin with I made him look at the three registers of the girls in his own household. When he failed to understand, I brought him here to taste the illusion of carnal delight so that later he may perchance awaken to the truth."

With that she led Baoyu inside. A subtle perfume hung in the air and he could not help asking what incense was being burned.

"You don't have this scent in the dusty world so you wouldn't know it," Disenchantment told him, smiling. "This is made from the essences of the different exotic young plants which grow in all famous mountain resorts. Distilled with the resin of every precious tree, its name is Marrow of Manifold Fragrance."

As Baoyu marvelled at this they took seats and young maids served tea with such a pure scent, exquisite flavour and refreshing quality that again he asked its name.

"This tea grows in the Grotto of Emanating Fragrance on the Mountain of Expanding Spring," Disenchantment told him. "Infused with the night dew from fairy flowers and spiritual leaves, its name is Thousand Red Flowers in One Cavern."

Nodding in appreciation Baoyu looked round him. He saw jasper lutes, rare bronze tripods, ancient paintings, new volumes of verse — nothing was lacking. But what delighted him most was the rouge by the window and the spilt powder left from a lady's toilet. On the wall hung this couplet:



幽微灵秀地，无可奈何天。

宝玉看毕，无不羡慕。因又请问众仙姑姓名：一名痴梦仙姑，一名钟情大士，一名引愁金女，一名度恨菩提，各各道号不一。少刻，有小丫鬟来调桌安椅，摆设酒馔。真是：琼浆满泛玻璃盏，玉液浓斟琥珀杯。更不用再说那肴馔之盛。宝玉因闻得此酒清香甘冽，异乎寻常，又不禁相问。警幻道：“此酒乃以百花之蕊，万木之汁，加以麟髓之醅、凤乳之曲酿成，因名为‘万艳同杯’。”

饮酒间，又有十二个舞女上来，请问演何词曲。警幻道：“就将新制《红楼梦》十二支演上来。”舞女们答应了，便轻敲檀板，款按银箏，听他唱道：

开辟鸿蒙……

方歌了一句，警幻便说道：“此曲不比尘世中所填传奇之曲，必有生旦净末丑之则，又有南北九宫之限。此或咏叹一人，或感怀一事，偶成一曲，即可谱入管弦。若非个中人，不知其中之妙。料尔亦未必深明此调。若不先阅其稿，后听其歌，翻成嚼蜡矣。”说毕，回头命小丫鬟取了《红楼梦》原稿来，递过，宝玉接起，一面看，一面听其歌曰：





Spiritual, secluded retreat,
Celestial world of sweet longing.

Lost in admiration of everything about him, he asked the fairies' names. They were introduced by their different appellations as Fairy of Amorous Dreams, Great Mistress of Passion, Golden Maid Bringing Grief, and Saint of Transmitted Sorrow.

Presently little maids brought in tables and chairs and set out wine and refreshments. Verily, glass vessels overflowed with nectar and amber cups brimmed with ambrosia. No need to dwell on the sumptuousness of that feast. He could not resist inquiring, though, what gave the wine its remarkably pure bouquet.

"This wine is made from the stamens of a hundred flowers and the sap of ten thousand trees mixed with the marrow of unicorns and fermented with phoenix milk," the goddess told him. "We call it Ten Thousand Beauties in One Cup."

As Baoyu sipped it, twelve dancing girls stepped forward to ask what they should perform.

"The twelve new songs called 'A Dream of Red Mansions'," ordered Disenchantment.

The dancers assented. Lightly striking their sandalwood castanets and softly plucking their silver lyres, they began:

At the dawn of creation....

But the goddess interrupted them to tell Baoyu, "This is not like your romantic dramas in the dusty world in which there are always the fixed parts of scholars, girls, warriors, old men and clowns, and the set nine tunes of the south or north. These songs of ours lament one person or event in an impromptu fashion and are easily set to wind or stringed accompaniments. But no outsider can appreciate their subtle qualities, and I doubt whether you will really understand their meaning. Unless you first read the text, they will seem to you as tasteless as chewed wax."

With that she turned and ordered a maid to bring the words of the "Dream of Red Mansions" songs. She handed the manuscript to Baoyu, who followed the text as he listened.



第一支

〔红楼梦引〕开辟鸿蒙，谁为情种？都只为风月情浓。趁着这奈何天，伤怀日，寂寥时，试遣愚衷。因此上，演出这怀金悼玉的《红楼梦》。

第二支

〔终身误〕都道是金玉良姻，俺只念木石前盟。空对着，山中高士晶莹雪；终不忘，世外仙姝寂寞林。叹人间，美中不足今方信。纵然是齐眉举案，到底意难平。

第三支

〔枉凝眉〕一个是阆苑仙葩，一个是美玉无瑕。若说没奇缘，今生偏又遇着他；若说有奇缘，如何心事终虚化？一个枉自嗟呀，一个空劳牵挂。一个是水中月，一个是镜中花。想眼中能有多少泪珠儿，怎经得秋流到冬尽，春流到夏！





FIRST SONG:

PROLOGUE TO THE DREAM OF RED MANSIONS

At the dawn of creation
Who sowed the seeds of love?
From the strong passion of breeze and moonlight they came.
So in this world of sweet longing
On a day of distress, in an hour of loneliness,
Fain would I impart my senseless grief
By singing this *Dream of Red Mansions*
To mourn the Gold and the Jade.

SECOND SONG:

A LIFE MISSPENT

Well-matched, all say, the gold and the jade;
I alone recall the pledge between plant and stone.
Vainly facing the hermit in sparkling snow-clad hills
I forget not the fairy in lone woods beyond the world.
I sigh, learning that no man's happiness is complete:
Even a pair thought well-matched
May find disappointment.

THIRD SONG:

VAIN LONGING

One is an immortal flower of fairyland,
The other fair flawless jade,
And were it not predestined
Why should they meet again in this existence?
Yet, if predestined,
Why does their love come to nothing?
One sighs to no purpose,
The other yearns in vain;
One is the moon reflected in the water,
The other but a flower in the mirror.
How many tears can well from her eyes?
Can they flow on from autumn till winter,
From spring till summer?



宝玉听了此曲，散漫无稽，不见得好处；但其声韵凄婉，竟能销魂醉魄。因此也不察其原委，问其来历，就暂以此释闷而已。

第四支

〔恨无常〕喜荣华正好，恨无常又到。眼睁睁，把万事全抛；荡悠悠，把芳魂消耗。望家乡，路远山高。故向爹娘梦里相寻告：儿今命已入黄泉，天伦呵，须要退步抽身早！

第五支

〔分骨肉〕一帆风雨路三千，把骨肉家园齐来抛闪。恐哭损残年，告爹娘，休把儿悬念。自古穷通皆有定，离合岂无缘？从今分两地，各自保平安。奴去也，莫牵连。

第六支

〔乐中悲〕襁褓中，父母叹双亡。纵居那绮罗丛，谁知娇养？幸生来，英豪阔大宽宏量，从未将儿女私情略萦心上。好一似，霁月光风耀玉堂。厮配得才貌仙郎，博得个地久天长，准折得幼年时坎坷形状。终久是云散高唐，水涸湘江。这是尘寰中消长数应当，何必枉悲伤！





Baoyu could see no merit in these disjointed and cryptic songs, but the plaintive music intoxicated his senses. So without probing into the meaning or asking where the songs came from, he listened for a while to pass the time. The singers went on:

FOURTH SONG:

THE TRANSIENCE OF LIFE

At the height of honour and splendour
Death comes for her;
Open-eyed, she has to leave everything behind
As her gentle soul passes away.
So far her home beyond the distant mountains
That in a dream she finds and tells her parents:
“Your child has gone now to the Yellow Spring;
You must find a retreat before it is too late.”

FIFTH SONG:

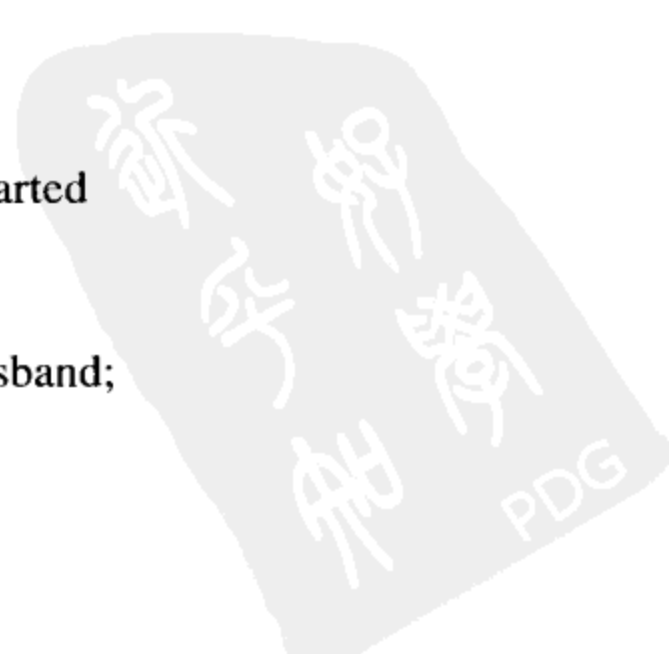
SEPARATION FROM DEAR ONES

Three thousand *li* she must sail through wind and rain,
Giving up her home and her own flesh and blood;
But afraid to distress their declining years with tears
She tells her parents: “Don’t grieve for your child.
From of old good luck and bad have been predestined,
Partings and reunions are decreed by fate;
Although from now on we shall dwell far apart,
Let us still live at peace;
Don’t worry over your unworthy daughter.”

SIXTH SONG:

SORROW AMIDST JOY

She is still in her cradle when her parents die,
Although living in luxury who will dote on her?
Happily she is born too courageous and open-hearted
Ever to take a love affair to heart.
Like bright moon and fresh breeze in a hall of jade
She is matched with a talented and handsome husband;
May she live with him for long years
To make up for her wretched childhood!





第七支

〔世难容〕气质美如兰，才华复比仙。天生成孤癖人皆罕。你道是啖肉食腥膻，视绮罗俗厌；却不知太高人愈妒，过洁世同嫌。可叹这，青灯古殿人将老；辜负了，红粉朱楼春色闹。到头来，依旧是风尘肮脏违心愿。好一似，无瑕白玉遭泥陷；又何须，王孙公子叹无缘。

第八支

〔喜冤家〕中山狼，无情兽，全不念当日根由。一味的骄奢淫荡贪还构。觑着那，侯门艳质同蒲柳；作践的，公府千金似下流。叹芳魂艳魄，一载荡悠悠。

第九支

〔虚花悟〕将那三春看破，桃红柳绿待如何？把这





But over the Gaotang Tower the clouds disperse,
The river Xiang runs dry.
This is the common fate of mortal men,
Useless it is to repine.

SEVENTH SONG:

SPURNED BY THE WORLD

By nature fair as an orchid,
With talents to match an immortal,
Yet so eccentric that all marvel at her.
To her, rich food stinks,
Silken raiment is vulgar and loathsome;
She knows not that superiority fosters hatred,
For the world despises too much purity.
By the dim light of an old shrine she will fade away,
Her powder and red chamber, her youth and
 beauty wasted,
To end, despite herself, defiled on the dusty road—
Even as flawless white jade dropped in the mud.
In vain young scions of noble houses will sigh for her.

EIGHTH SONG:

UNION OF ENEMIES

A mountain wolf, a savage ruthless beast,
Mindless of past obligations
Gives himself up to pride, luxury and license,
Holding cheap the charms of a noble family's
 daughter,
Trampling on the precious child of a ducal mansion.
Alas, in less than a year her sweet soul fades away.

NINTH SONG:

PERCEPTION OF THE TRANSIENCE OF FLOWERS

She will see through the three Springs¹⁵
And set no store
By the red of peach-blossom, the green of willows,
Stamping out the fire of youthful splendour
To savour the limpid peace of a clear sky.





韶华打灭，觅那清淡天和。说什么，天上夭桃盛，云中杏蕊多。到头来，谁把秋捱过？则看那，白杨村里人呜咽，青枫林下鬼吟哦。更兼着，连天衰草遮坟墓。这的是，昨贫今富人劳碌，春荣秋谢花折磨。似这般，生关死劫谁能躲？闻说道，西方宝树唤婆娑，上结着长生果。

第十支

〔聪明累〕机关算尽太聪明，反算了卿卿性命。生前心已碎，死后性空灵。家富人宁，终有个家亡人散各奔腾。枉费了，意悬悬半世心；好一似，荡悠悠三更梦。忽喇喇如大厦倾，昏惨惨似灯将尽。呀！一场欢喜忽悲辛。叹人世，终难定！

第十一支

〔留余庆〕留余庆，留余庆，忽遇恩人；幸娘亲，幸娘亲，积得阴功。劝人生，济困扶穷，休似俺那爱银钱、忘骨肉的狠舅奸兄！正是乘除加减，上有苍穹。





Though the peach runs riot against the sky,
Though the clouds teem with apricot blossom,
Who has seen any flower that can win safely
 through autumn?
Even now mourners are lamenting by groves of
 poplars,
Ghosts are wailing below green maples,
And the weeds above their graves stretch to the
 skyline.
Truly, changes in fortune are the cause of men's toil,
Spring blooming and autumn withering the fate
 of flowers.
Who can escape the gate of birth, the fate of death?
Yet in the west, they say, grows the *sal* tree ¹⁶
Which bears the fruit of immortality.

TENTH SONG:

RUINED BY CUNNING

Too much cunning in plotting and scheming
Is the cause of her own undoing;
While yet living her heart is broken
And after death all her subtlety comes to nothing.
A rich house, all its members at peace,
Is ruined at last and scattered;
In vain her anxious thought for half a lifetime,
For like a disturbing dream at dead of night,
Like the thunderous collapse of a great mansion,
Or the flickering of a lamp that gutters out,
Mirth is suddenly changed to sorrow.
Ah, nothing is certain in the world of men.

ELEVENTH SONG:

A LITTLE ACT OF KINDNESS

Thanks to one small act of kindness
She meets by chance a grateful friend;
Fortunate that her mother
Has done some unnoticed good.
Men should rescue the distressed and aid the poor,





第十二支

〔晚韶华〕镜里恩情，更那堪梦里功名！那美韶华去之何迅！再休提绣帐鸳衾。只这戴珠冠，披凤袄，也抵不了无常性命。虽说是，人生莫受老来贫，也须要阴骘积儿孙。气昂昂头戴簪缨，光闪闪胸悬金印；威赫赫爵禄高登，昏惨惨黄泉路近。问古来将相可还存？也只是虚名儿，与后人钦敬。

第十三支

〔好事终〕画梁春尽落香尘。擅风情，秉月貌，便是败家的根本。箕裘颓堕皆从敬，家事消亡首罪宁。宿孽总因情。

第十四支

〔飞鸟各投林〕为官的，家业凋零；富贵的，金银





Be not like her heartless uncle or treacherous cousin
Who for love of money forget their own flesh and blood.
Truly, rewards and punishments
Are meted out by Heaven.

TWELFTH SONG:

SPLENDOUR COMES TOO LATE

Love is only a reflection in a mirror,
Worse still, rank and fame are nothing but
a dream,

So quickly youth and beauty fade away.

Say no more of embroidered curtains and love-bird
quilts,

Nor can a pearl tiara and phoenix jacket
Stave off for long Death's summons.

Though it is said that old age should be free from
want,

This depends on the unknown merits laid by for one's
children.

Jubilant in official headdress

And glittering with a gold seal of high office,

A man may be awe-inspiring and exalted,

But the gloomy way to the Yellow Spring is near.

What remains of the generals and statesmen of old?

Nothing but an empty name admired by posterity.

THIRTEENTH SONG:

GOOD THINGS COME TO AN END

Fragrant dust falls from painted beams at the close of spring;

By nature passionate and fair as the moon,

The true root is she of the family's destruction.

The decline of the old tradition starts with Jing,

The chief blame for the House's ruin rests with Ning.

All their sins come about through Love.

EPILOGUE:

THE BIRDS SCATTER TO THE WOOD

An official household declines,





散尽。有恩的，死里逃生；无情的，分明报应。欠命的，命已还；欠泪的，泪已尽。冤冤相报实非轻，分离聚合皆前定。欲知命短问前生，老来富贵也真侥幸。看破的，遁入空门；痴迷的，枉送了性命。好一似食尽鸟投林，落了片白茫茫大地真干净！

歌毕，还要歌副曲。警幻见宝玉甚无趣味，痴儿竟尚未悟。那宝玉忙止歌姬不必再唱，自觉朦胧恍惚，告醉求卧。警幻便命撤去残席，送宝玉至一香闺绣阁之中，其间铺陈之盛，乃素所未见之物。更可骇者，早有一女子在内，其鲜妍妩媚有似宝钗，其袅娜风流则又如黛玉。正不知何意，忽警幻道：“尘世中多少富贵之家，那些绿窗风月，绣阁烟霞，皆被淫污纨绔与那些流荡女子悉皆玷辱。更可恨者，自古来多少轻薄浪子，皆以‘好色不淫’为饰，又以‘情而不淫’作案，此皆饰非掩丑之语也。好色即淫，知情更淫。是以巫山之会，云雨之欢，皆由既悦其色、复恋其情之所致也。吾所爱汝者，乃天下古今第一淫人也。”

宝玉听了，唬的忙答道：“仙姑差矣。我因懒于读书，家父母尚每垂训饬，岂敢再冒‘淫’字？况且年纪尚小，不知‘淫’字为何物。”警幻道：“非也。淫虽一理，意则有别。





Rich nobles' wealth is spent.
She who did god escapes the jaws of death,
The heartless meet with certain retribution.
Those who took a life have paid with their own lives,
The tears one owed have all been requited in kind.
Not light the retribution for sins against others;
All are predestined, partings and reunions.
Seek the cause of untimely death in a part existence,
Lucky she who enjoys rank and riches in old age;
Those who see through the world escape from the world,
While foolish lovers forfeit their lives for nothing.
When the food is gone the birds return to the wood;
All that's left is emptiness and a great void.

After this they would have gone on to sing the second series, but the Goddess of Disenchantment saw that Baoyu was utterly bored.

"Silly boy!" she sighed. "You still don't understand."

Baoyu asked the faires then not to sing any more, explaining that he was drunk and would like to sleep off the effects of the wine.

Disenchantment ordered the feast to be cleared away and escorted him into a scented chamber hung with silk, more luxuriously furnished than any he had seen in his life. More amazing still, he saw there a girl whose charm reminded him of Baochai, her grace of Daiyu. He was puzzling over this when Disenchantment said:

"In your dusty world, countless green-windowed chambers and embroidered boudoirs of rich and noble families are desecrated by amorous men and loose women. Worse still, all dissolute wretches since ancient times have drawn a distinction between love of beauty and carnal desire, between love and lust, so as to gloss over their immorality. Love of beauty leads to lust, and desire even more so. Thus every sexual transport of cloud and rain is the inevitable climax of love of beauty and desire.

"And what I like about you is that you are the most lustful man ever to have lived in this world since time immemorial."

"You must be mistaken, goddess," protested the frightened Baoyu. "My parents are always scolding me because I'm too lazy to study. How dare I risk being called 'lustful' as well? Besides, I'm still young and hardly know what that word means."

如世之好淫者，不过悦容貌，喜歌舞，调笑无厌，云雨无时，恨不能尽天下之美女供我片时之趣兴，此皆皮肤滥淫之蠢物耳。如尔则天分中生成一段痴情，吾辈推之为‘意淫’。‘意淫’二字，惟心会而不可言传，可神通而不可语达。汝今独得此二字，在闺阁中，固可为良友，然于世道中未免迂阔怪诡，百口嘲谤，万目睚眦。今既遇令祖宁荣二公剖腹深嘱，吾不忍君独为我闺阁增光，见弃于世道，是以特引前来，醉以灵酒，沁以仙茗，警以妙曲，再将吾妹一人，乳名兼美，字可卿者，许配于汝。今夕良辰，即可成姻。不过令汝领略此仙闺幻境风光尚然如此，何况尘世之情景哉？而今以后万万解释，改悟前情，留意于孔孟之间，委身于经济之道。”说毕，便秘授以云雨之事，于是推宝玉入旁，将门掩上自去。

那宝玉恍恍惚惚，依警幻所嘱之言，未免有儿女之事，难以尽述。至次日，便柔情缱绻，软语温存，与可卿难解难分。二人因携手出去游玩，忽至一个所在，但见荆榛满地，狼虎成群，迎面一道黑溪阻路，并无桥梁可通。正在犹豫之





“Don’t worry,” said Disenchantment. “In principle all lust is the same, but it has different connotations. For instance, there are profligates in the world who delight only in physical beauty, singing, dancing, endless merriment and constant rain-and-cloud games. They would like to possess all the beauties in the world to gratify their momentary desires. These are coarse creatures steeped in fleshly lust.

“In your case, you were born with a passionate nature which we call ‘lust of the mind.’ This can be grasped by the mind but not expressed, apprehended intuitively but not described in words. Whereas this makes you a welcome companion to women, in the eyes of the world it is bound to make you appear strange and unnatural, an object of mockery and scorn.

“After meeting your worthy ancestors the Duke of Ningguo and the Duke of Rongguo today and hearing their heartfelt request, I could not bear to let you be condemned by the world for the greater glory of women. So I brought you here to entertain you with divine wine and fairy tea, then tried to awaken you with subtle songs. And now I am going to match you with my younger sister Jianmei,¹⁷ whose childhood name is Keqing, and this very night at the auspicious hour you must consummate your union. This is simply to let you know that after you have proved for yourself the illusory nature of pleasures in fairyland you should realize the vanity of love in your dusty world. From this day on you must understand this and mend your ways, giving your minds to the teachings of Confucius and Mencius and devoting yourself to the betterment of society.”

With that she initiated him into the secrets of sex. Then, pushing him forward, she closed the door and left.

Baoyu in a daze did all the goddess had told him. We can draw a veil over his first act of love.

The next day, he and Keqing had become so attached and exchanged so many endearments that they could not bear to part. Hand in hand they walked out for a stroll.

Suddenly they found themselves in a thorny thicket infested with wolves and tigers. In front a black torrent barred their way and there was no bridge across. They were in a quandary when Disenchantment overtook them.



间，忽见警幻从后追来，告道：“快休前进，作速回头要紧！”宝玉忙止步问道：“此系何处？”警幻道：“此即迷津也。深有万丈，遥亘千里，中无舟楫可通，只有一个木筏，乃木居士掌舵，灰侍者撑篙，不受金银之谢，但遇有缘者渡之。尔今偶游至此，设如堕落其中，则深负我从前谆谆警戒之语矣。”话犹未了，只听迷津内水响如雷，竟有许多夜叉海鬼将宝玉拖下去。吓得宝玉汗下如雨，一面失声喊叫：“可卿救我！”吓得袭人辈众丫鬟们忙上来搂住，叫：“宝玉别怕，我们在这里！”

却说秦氏正在房外，嘱咐小丫头们好生看着猫儿狗儿打架，忽听宝玉在梦中唤他的小名，因纳闷道：“我的小名，这里从无人知道，他如何知道得，在梦里叫将出来？”

正是：

一场幽梦同谁诉，千古情人独我痴。





“Stop!Stop!” she cried. “Turn back before it’s too late.”

Standing petrified Baoyu asked, “What is this place?”

“The Ford of Infatuation,” Disenchantment told him. “It’s a hundred thousand feet deep and a thousand *li* wide, and there is no boat to ferry you across. Nothing but a wooden raft steered by Master Wood and punted by Acolyte Ashes, who accept no payment in silver or gold but ferry over those who are fated to cross. You strolled here by accident. If you had fallen in, then all my well-meant advice to you would have been wasted.”

Even as she spoke there came a crash like thunder from the Ford of Infatuation as hordes of monsters and river devils rushed towards Baoyu to drag him in. Cold sweat poured off him like rain. And in his terror he shouted:

“Keqing! Save me!”

Xichun hurried in with the other maids in dismay to take him in her arms.

“Don’t be afraid, Baoyu,” cried the girls. “We’re here.”

Qin Keqing was on the verandah telling the maids to watch the kittens and puppies at their play, when she heard Baoyu call her childhood name in his dream.

“No one here knows my childhood name,” she thought in surprise. “How is it that he called it out in his dream?”

Truly:

Strange encounters take place in a secret dream,
For he is the most passionate lover of all time.





第六回

贾宝玉初试云雨情 刘姥姥一进荣国府

题曰：

朝叩富儿门，富儿犹未足。

虽无千金酬，嗟彼胜骨肉。

却说秦氏因听见宝玉从梦中唤他的乳名，心中自是纳闷，又不好细问。彼时宝玉迷迷糊糊，若有所失。众人忙端上桂圆汤来，呷了两口，遂起身整衣。袭人伸手与他系裤带时，不觉伸手至大腿处，只觉冰凉一片沾湿，唬的忙退出手来，问道是怎么了。宝玉红涨了脸，把他的手一捻。袭人本是个聪明女子，年纪本又比宝玉大两岁，近来也渐通人事，今见宝玉如此光景，心中便觉察了一半，不觉也羞的红涨了脸面，遂不敢问。仍旧理好衣裳，随至贾母处来，胡乱吃毕晚饭，过这边。

袭人忙趁众奶娘丫鬟不在旁时，另取出一件中衣来，与宝玉换上。宝玉含羞央告道：“好姐姐，千万别告诉人。”袭人亦含羞笑问道：“你梦见什么故事了？是那里流出来的那些脏东西？”宝玉道：“一言难尽。”说着便把梦中之事细说与袭人听了。然后说至警幻所授云雨之情，羞的袭人掩面伏身而笑。宝玉亦素喜袭人柔媚娇俏，遂强袭人同领警幻所训云





Chapter 6

Baoyu Has His First Taste of Love Granny Liu Pays Her First Visit to the Rong Mansion

The theme:

She knocks one day at the gate of the rich,
And the rich themselves talk of want;
Their gift is not a thousand pieces of gold
But more than her own flesh and blood could give.

Qin Keqing was amazed to hear Baoyu call her childhood name in his dream, but she could hardly question him. As for Baoyu, he felt as bemused as if he had lost his wits. Attendants promptly brought him a longan decoction and after sipping a couple of mouthfuls he got up to adjust his clothes.

As Xiren reached out to fasten his trousers for him, she touched his thigh and found it cold and sticky. She drew back in alarm and asked what was the matter. Flushing crimson, Baoyu simply squeezed her hand.

Now Xiren was an intelligent girl, and being a couple of years older than Baoyu she already knew the facts of life. She guessed from the state he was in what must have happened and blushing herself helped him to tidy his clothes without any further questions.

They went then to where the Lady Dowager was and after a hasty meal returned to his room, where in the absence of the other maids and nurses Xiren fetched him a change of clothes.

“Don’t tell anyone, please, dear sister,” begged Baoyu sheepishly.

With an embarrassed smile she asked, “What did you dream about to dirty yourself like that?”

“It’s a long story,” answered Baoyu, then told her his dream in full, concluding with his initiation by Disenchantment into the “sport of cloud and rain.” Xiren, hearing this, covered her face and doubled up in a fit of giggles.

Since Baoyu had long been attracted by Xiren’s gentle, coquettish ways, he urged her to carry out the instructions with him; and as she



雨之事。袭人素知贾母已将自己与了宝玉的，今便如此，亦不为越礼，遂和宝玉偷试一番，幸无人撞见。自此宝玉视袭人更与别人不同，袭人待宝玉更为尽职。暂且别无话说。

按荣府中一宅中合算起来，人口虽不多，从上至下，也有三四百丁；事虽不多，一天也有一二十件，竟如乱麻一般，并没有个头绪可作纲领。正寻思从那一件事，自那一个人写起方妙，恰好忽从千里之外，芥豆之微，小小一个人家，向与荣府略有些瓜葛，这日正往荣府中来，因此便就此一家说来，倒还是头绪。你道这一家姓甚名谁，又与荣府有甚瓜葛？诸公若嫌琐碎粗鄙呢，则快掷下此书，另觅好书去醒目；若谓聊可破愁时，待蠢物细细讲来。

方才所说这小小之家，姓王，乃本地人氏，祖上曾作过小小的一个京官，昔年曾与凤姐之祖、王夫人之父认识。因贪王家的势利，便连了宗认作侄儿。那时只有王夫人之大兄凤姐之父与王夫人随在京中的，知有此一门连宗之族，余者皆不认识。目今其祖已故，只有一个儿子，名唤王成，因家业萧条，仍搬出城外原乡中住去了。王成新近亦因病故，只有其子，小名狗儿。狗儿亦生一子，小名板儿，嫡妻刘氏，又生一女，名唤青儿。一家四口，仍以务农为业。因狗儿白日间又作些生计，刘氏又操井臼等事，青、板姊弟两个无人看管，狗儿遂将岳母刘姥姥接来一处过活。这刘姥姥乃是个久经世代的老寡妇，膝下又无儿女，只靠两亩薄田度日。今



knew that the Lady Dowager had given her to Baoyu she felt this would not be an undue liberty. So they tried it out secretly together, and luckily they were not discovered. From that hour Baoyu treated Xiren with special consideration and she served him even more faithfully than before.

Now although the Rong Mansion was not unduly large, masters and servants together numbered three or four hundred. And although it had not too much business, a score of things had to be seen to every day — easier to unravel a skein of tangled hemp than to recount them! Just as I was wondering with which event or person to begin, suddenly from a thousand *li* away came a humble individual as insignificant as a mustard-seed, who being remotely connected with the Rong House was that day paying them a visit. Let me take her family, then, as a starting point.

Do you know the name of this family and its remote connection with the Rong Mansion? If you think this too trivial or vulgar, Gentle Readers, you had better put this book down and choose one more to your liking. If you fancy this senseless story will serve to while away the time, then let me, the stupid Stone, tell you it in detail.

The surname of these humble folk I have just mentioned was Wang. They were local people whose grandfather while a petty official in the capital had come to know Xifeng's grandfather, Lady Wang's father. Eager to attach himself to the powerful Wangs, he "joined family" with them, calling himself Wang's nephew. At that time only Lady Wang and her elder brother, Xifeng's father, both of whom had accompanied their father to the capital, were aware of this remote "clansman." The rest of the Wangs knew nothing about these connections.

The grandfather had died leaving a son Wang Cheng who, since the family was then in a poor way, moved back to their native village outside the capital. Recently Wang Cheng too had fallen ill and died, leaving a son Gouer, who had married a girl from a family called Lin by whom he had a son called Baner and a daughter called Qinger. Their family of four lived on the land.

As Gouer was busy during the day and his wife had the housework to see to, there was nobody to mind the children until he fetched his mother-in-law Granny Liu to live with them. An old widow who had been through



者女婿接来养活，岂不愿意，遂一心一计，帮趁着女儿女婿过活起来。

因这年秋尽冬初，天气冷将下来，家中冬事未办，狗儿心中未免烦虑，吃了几杯闷酒，在家闲寻气恼，刘氏也不敢顶撞。因此刘姥姥看不过，乃劝道：“姑爷，你别嗔着我多嘴。咱们村庄人，那一个不是老老诚诚的，守多大碗儿吃多大碗的饭。你皆因年小时节，托着你那老的福，吃喝惯了，如今所以把持不住。有了钱就顾头不顾尾，没了钱就瞎生气，成个什么男子汉大丈夫了！如今咱虽离城住着，终是天子脚下。这长安城中，遍地都是钱，只可惜没人会拿去罢了。在家跳蹋也不中用的。”狗儿听说，便急道：“你老只会炕头儿上混说，难道叫我打劫偷去不成？”刘姥姥道：“谁叫你偷去呢。也到底大家想法儿裁度，不然那银子钱自己跑到咱家来不成？”狗儿冷笑道：“有法儿还等到这会子呢。我又没有收税的亲戚，作官的朋友，有什么法子可想的？便有，也只怕他们未必来理我们呢！”

刘姥姥道：“这倒不然。谋事在人，成事在天。咱们谋到了，靠菩萨的保佑，有些机会，也未可知。我倒替他们想出一个机会来。当日你们原是和金陵王家连过宗的，二十年前，他们看承你们还好；如今自然是你们拉硬屎，不肯去俯就他，故疏远起来。想当初我和女儿还去过一遭。他们家的二小姐着实爽快，会待人的，倒不拿大。如今现是荣国府贾二老爷的夫人。听得说，如今上了年纪，越发怜贫恤老，最



much and was supporting herself as best she could on two *mu* of poor land because she had no son, she was only too glad to be taken in and cared for by her son-in-law. She did her best to make herself useful to him and her daughter.

Autumn had ended, the cold was setting in, and because they had made no provision for the winter Gouer drank a few cups to drown his cares then started venting his spleen on his family. His wife was afraid to talk back, but Granny Liu was not going to stand for this.

“You mustn’t mind me butting in, son-in-law,” she said. “We villagers are simple honest folk who eat according to the size of our bowl. Your trouble is that your father gave you such a soft time of it when you were young that you’re a bad manager. When you have money you never look ahead; when you’ve none you fly into a temper. That’s no way for a grown man to behave. We may be living outside the capital but we’re still at the feet of the Emperor. And ‘Changan’s streets are strewn with money’ — for those who know how to lay hands on it. What’s the use of flying into a huff at home?”

“It’s easy for you to jabber away on the *kang*,” Gouer retorted. “Do you want me to go out and steal? To rob someone?”

“Who’s asking you to rob anyone? But let’s put our heads together and think of something. Do you expect silver coins to come rolling in of themselves?”

“Would I have waited all this time if there was some way out?” Gouer snorted. “I’ve no relatives who live on rent, no friends in official posts — what can I do? Even if I had, they’d most likely cold-shoulder us.”

“Don’t be so sure,” said Granny Liu. “Man proposes, Heaven disposes. Work out a plan, trust to Buddha, and something may come of it for all you know.

“As a matter of fact, I’ve thought of a chance for you. In the old days you joined families with the Wangs of Jinling, and twenty years back they treated you not badly. Since then of course you’ve been too pig-headed to go near them, so that now you’ve drifted apart.

“I recollect calling on them once with my daughter. Their second young lady was really open-handed, so pleasant and free from airs. She’s now the wife of the second Lord Jia of the Rong Mansion. I hear she’s



爱斋僧敬道，舍米舍钱的。如今王府虽升了边任，只怕这二姑太太还认得咱们。你何不去走动走动，或者他念旧，有些好处，也未可知。只要他发一点好心，拔一根寒毛比咱们的腰还粗呢。”刘氏在旁接口道：“你老虽说的是，但只你我这样个嘴脸，怎么好到他们门上去的。先不先，他们那些门上人也未必肯去通报。没的去打嘴现世。”

谁知狗儿利名心最重，听如此一说，心下便有些活动起来。又听他妻子这番话，便笑接道：“姥姥既如此说，况且当年你又见过这姑太太一次，何不你老人家明日就走一趟，先试试风头再说。”刘姥姥道：“嗻哟哟！可是说的，‘侯门深似海’，我是个什么东西，他家人又不认得我，我去了也是白去的。”狗儿笑道：“不妨，我教你老一个法子：你竟带了外孙子小板儿，先去找陪房周瑞，若见了他，就有些意思了。这周瑞先时曾与我父亲交过一件事，我们极好的。”刘姥姥道：“我也知道他的。只是许多时不走动，知道他如今是怎样。这也说不得了，你又是个男人，又这样个嘴脸，自然去不得；我们姑娘年轻媳妇子，也难卖头卖脚的，倒还是舍着我这副老脸去碰一碰。果然有些好处，大家都有益；便是没银子拿来，我也到那公府侯门见一见世面，也不枉我一生。”说毕，大家笑了一回。当晚计议已定。

次日天未明，刘姥姥便起来梳洗了，又将板儿教训几句。那板儿才五六岁的孩子，一无所知，听见带他进城逛去，便喜的无不应承。于是刘姥姥带他进城，找至宁荣街。来至荣府大门石狮子前，只见簇簇的轿马，刘姥姥便不敢过去，且掸掸衣服，又教了板儿几句话，然后蹭到角门前。只



grown even more charitable and is always setting aside rice and money to give alms to Buddhists and Taoists. Her brother has been promoted to some post at the frontier, but I'm sure this Lady Wang would remember us. Why not go and try your luck? She may do something for us for old times' sake. If she's at all willing to help, one hair from her body would be thicker than our waist."

"Mother's right," put in her daughter. "But how could frights like us go to their gate? Most likely their gatekeepers would refuse to announce us. Why ask for a slap on the face?"

But Gouer had an eye to the main chance. Attracted by this suggestion, he laughed at his wife's objection and proposed:

"Since this is your idea, mother, and you've called on the lady before, why not go there tomorrow and see how the wind blows?"

"Aiya! 'The threshold of a noble house is deeper than the sea.' And who am I? The servants there don't know me, it's no use my going."

"That's no problem. I'll tell you what to do. Take young Baner with you and ask for their steward Zhou Rui. If you see him, we stand a chance. This Zhou Rui had dealings with my old man and used to be on the best of terms with us."

"I know him too. But how will they receive me after all this time? Still, you're a man and too much of a fright to go, and my daughter's too young to make a show of herself. I'm old enough not to mind risking a snub. If I have any luck we'll all share it. And even if I don't bring back any silver the trip won't be wasted — I'll have seen a little high life."

They all laughed at that, and that same evening the matter was settled.

The next day Granny Liu got up before dawn to wash and comb her hair and to coach Baner. Being an ignorant child of five or six, he was so delighted at the prospect of a trip to the city that he agreed to everything he was told.

In town they asked their way to Rong Ning Steet. But Granny Liu was too overawed by the crowd of sedan-chairs and horses there to venture near the stone lions which flanked the Rong Mansion's main gate. Having dusted off her clothes and given Baner fresh instructions, she timidly approached the side entrance where some arrogant, corpulent servants were sunning themselves on long benches, engaged in a lively discussion.

见几个挺胸叠肚、指手画脚的人，坐在大凳上，说东谈西的。刘姥姥只得蹭上来说：“太爷们纳福。”众人打量了他一会，便问：“是那里来的？”刘姥姥陪笑道：“我找太太的陪房周大爷的，烦那位太爷替我请他老出来。”那些人听了，都不瞅睬，半日，方说道：“你远远的那墙角下等着，一会子他们家有人就出来的。”内中有一年老的说道：“不要误他的事，何苦耍他。”因向刘姥姥道：“那周大爷已往南边去了。他在后一带住着，他娘子却在家。你要找时，从这边绕到后街上后门上去问就是了。”

刘姥姥听了，谢过，遂手携板儿，绕到后门上。只见门前歇着些生意担子，也有卖吃的，也有卖玩耍物件的，闹吵吵三二十个孩子，在那里厮闹。刘姥姥便拉住一个道：“我问哥儿一声，有个周大娘可在家么？”孩子们道：“那个周大娘？我们这里周大娘有三个呢，还有两个周奶奶，不知是那一行当差的？”刘姥姥道：“是太太的陪房周瑞。”孩子道：“这个容易，你跟我来。”说着，跳蹿蹿的引着刘姥姥进了后门，至一院墙边，指与刘姥姥道：“这就是他家。”又叫道：“周大娘，有个老奶奶来找你呢！我带了来了。”

周瑞家的在内听说，忙迎了出来，问：“是那位？”刘姥姥忙迎上来问道：“好呀，周嫂子！”周瑞家的认了半日，方笑道：“刘姥姥，你好呀！你说说，能几年，我就忘了。请家里来坐罢。”刘姥姥一壁里走着，一壁笑说道：“你老是贵人多忘事，那里还记得我们了？”说着，来至房中。周瑞家的命雇的小丫头倒上茶来吃着。周瑞家的又问板儿道：“倒长的这么大了！”又问些别后闲话。再问刘姥姥：“今日还是路过，还是特来的？”刘姥姥便说：“原是特来瞧瞧嫂子你，二



Granny Liu edged forward and said, "Greetings, gentlemen."

The men surveyed her from head to foot before condescending to ask where she had come from.

"I've come to see Mr. Zhou who came with Lady Wang when she was married," she told them with a smile. "May I trouble one of you gentlemen to fetch him out for me?"

The men ignored her for a while, but finally one of them said, "Wait over there by that corner. One of his family may come out by and by."

An older man interposed, "Why make a fool of her and waste her time?" He told Granny Liu, "Old Zhou has gone south but his wife is at home. His house is at the back. Go round to the back gate and ask for her there."

Having thanked him, Granny Liu took Baner round to the back gate. Several pedlars had put down their wares there and about two dozen rowdy servant boys had crowded round those selling snacks and toys.

The old woman caught hold of one of these youngsters and asked, "Can you tell me, brother, if Mrs. Zhou is at home?"

"Which Mrs. Zhou?" he retorted. "We have three Mrs. Zhous and two Granny Zhous. What's her job?"

"She's the wife of Zhou Rui who came with Lady Wang."

"That's easy then. Come with me."

He scampered ahead of her through the back gate and pointed out a compound. "That's where she lives." Then he called, "Auntie Zhou! Here's a granny asking for you."

Mrs. Zhou hurried out to see who it was while Granny Liu hastened forward crying, "Sister Zhou! How are you?"

It took the other some time to recognize her. Then she answered with a smile, "Why, it's Granny Liu! I declare, after all these years I hardly knew you. Come on in and sit down."

Smiling as she walked in, Granny Liu remarked, "The higher the rank, the worse the memory. How could you remember us?"

Once indoors, Mrs. Zhou told a maid to pour tea. Then looking at Baner she exclaimed, "What a big boy he is!" After a short exchange of polite inquiries, she asked Granny Liu whether she just happened to be passing or had come with any special object.



则也请请姑太太的安。若可以领我见一见更好，若不能，便借重嫂子转致意罢了。”

周瑞家的听了，便已猜着几分来意。只因昔年他丈夫周瑞争买田地一事，其中多得狗儿之力，今见刘姥姥如此而来，心中难却其意；二则也要显弄自己的体面。听如此说，便笑道：“刘姥姥，你放心。大远的诚心诚意来了，岂有个不教你见了真佛儿去的？论理，人来客去回话，却不与我相干。我们这里都是各占一样儿：我们男的他只管春秋两季地租子，闲时只带着小爷们出门就完了；我只管跟太太奶奶们出门的事。皆因你原是太太的亲戚，又拿我当个人，投奔了我来，我就破个例，给你通个信去。但只一件，姥姥有所不知，我们这里又不比五年前了。如今太太竟不大管事，都是琏二奶奶管家了。你道这琏二奶奶是谁？就是太太的内侄女，大舅老爷的女儿，小名叫凤哥的。”刘姥姥听了，问道：“原来是他！怪道呢，我当日就说他不错呢。这等说来，我今儿还得见他了。”周瑞家的道：“这个自然，如今太太事多心烦，有客来了，略可推的就推过去了，都是凤姑娘周旋接待。今儿宁可不会太太，倒要见见他，才不枉这里来一遭。”刘姥姥道：“阿弥陀佛！这全仗嫂子方便了。”周瑞家的道：“说那里话。俗语说的：‘与人方便，自己方便。’不过用我说一句话罢了，害着我什么。”说着，便唤小丫头到倒厅上悄悄的打听打听，老太太屋里摆了饭了没有？小丫头去了，这里二人又说些闲话。

刘姥姥因说：“这位凤姑娘，今年大不过二十岁罢了，就这等有本事，当这样家，可是难得的。”周瑞家的听了道：“咳，我的姥姥，告诉不得你呢。这位凤姑娘年纪虽小，行



"I came specially to see you, sister, and also to inquire after Her ladyship's health. If you could take me to see her, that would be nice. If you can't, I'll just trouble you to pass on my respects."

This gave Mrs. Zhou a shrewd idea of the reason for her visit. Since Gouer had helped her husband to purchase some land, she could hardly refuse Granny Liu's appeal for help. Besides, she was eager to show that she was someone of consequence in this household.

"Don't worry, granny," she replied with a smile. "You've come all this way in good earnest and of course I'll help you to see the real Buddha. Strictly speaking, it's not my job to announce visitors. We all have different duties here. My husband, for instance, just sees to collecting rents in spring and autumn or escorting the young gentlemen in his spare time, while all I do is accompany the ladies on their outings. But since you're related to Her Ladyship and have come to me for help as if I were someone, I'll make an exception and take in a message for you.

"I must tell you, though, that things have changed here in the last five years. Her Ladyship doesn't handle much business any more but leaves everything to the second master's wife. And who do you think she is? My lady's own niece, the daughter of her elder brother and the one whose childhood name was 'Master Feng.'"

"You don't say!" cried Granny Liu. "No wonder I predicted great things for her. In that case I must see her today."

"Of course. Nowadays Her Ladyship can't be troubled with much business, so whenever possible she leaves it to the young mistress to entertain visitors. Even if you don't see Her Ladyship you must see her, or your visit will have been wasted."

"Buddha be praised! I'm most grateful for you help, sister."

"Don't say that. 'He who helps others helps himself.' All I need do is say one word — no trouble at all." She sent her little maid in to see if the Lady Dowager's meal had been served.

"This young mistress Feng can't be more than twenty," remarked Granny Liu as the two of them went on chatting. "Fancy her being able to run a great household like this!"

"You don't know the half of it, my dear granny. Young as she is, she handles things much better than anyone else. She's grown up a beauty

事却比世人都大。如今出挑的美人一样的模样儿，少说些有一万个心眼里。再要赌口齿，十个会说话的男人，也说他不过。回来你见了就信了。就只一件，待下人未免太严了些儿。”说着，只见小丫头回来说：“老太太屋里已摆完了饭，二奶奶在太太屋里呢。”周瑞家的听了，连忙起身，催着刘姥姥说：“快走，快走。这一下来他吃饭，是个空子，咱们先赶着去。若迟了，回事的人多了，难说话。再歇了中觉，越发没了时候了。”说着一齐下了炕，打扫打扫衣服，又教了板儿几句话，随着周瑞家的，逶迤往贾琏的住处来。

先到了倒厅，周瑞家的将刘姥姥安插在那里略等一等。自己先过影壁，进了院门，知凤姐未下来，先找着凤姐的一个心腹通房大丫头名唤平儿的。周瑞家的先将刘姥姥起初来历说明，又说：“今日大远的特来请安。当日太太是常会的，今儿不可不见，所以我带了他进来了。等奶奶下来，我细细问明，奶奶想也不责备我莽撞的。”平儿听了，便作了主意：“叫他们进来。先在这里坐着就是了。”周瑞家的听了，方出去领了他们进入院来。上了正房台矶，小丫头打起了猩红毡帘，才入堂屋，只闻一阵香扑了脸来，竟不辨是何气味，身子如在云端里一般。满屋之物都是耀眼争光的，使人头悬目眩。刘姥姥此时惟点头咂嘴念佛而已。于是来至东边这间屋内，乃是贾琏的女儿大姐儿睡觉之所。平儿站在炕沿边，打量了刘姥姥两眼，只得问个好让坐。刘姥姥见平儿遍身绫罗，插金带银，花容玉貌的，便当是凤姐儿。才要称姑奶奶，忽见周瑞家的称他是“平姑娘”，又见平儿赶着周瑞家的称“周大娘”，方知不过是个有些体面的丫头。于是让刘姥姥和板儿上了炕，平儿和周瑞家的对面坐在炕沿上，小丫头们斟了茶，来吃茶。



too. Clever isn't the word for her! As for talking, ten eloquent men are no match for her. You'll see for yourself by and by. If she has a fault, it's that she's rather hard on those below her."

At this point the maid came back to report, "The old lady's finished her meal. The second mistress is with Lady Wang."

At once Mrs. Zhou urged Granny Liu to hurry. "Come on! Our chance is while she has her own meal. Let's go and wait for her. Later on such a crowd will be going there on business, we'll hardly get a look in. And after her nap there'll be even less chance to see her."

They both got down from the *kang* and brushed their clothes. After some last-minute instructions to her grandson, Granny Liu followed Mrs. Zhou by winding ways to Jia Lian's quarters, then waited in a covered passageway while Mrs. Zhou went past the spirit screen into the court and, before Xifeng's return, explained who Granny Liu was to her trusted maid Pinger, who had come here as part of Xifeng's dowry and then become Jia Lian's concubine.

"She's come all this way today to pay her respects. In the old days Her Ladyship always used to see her, so I'm sure she'll receive her: that's why I've brought her in. When your mistress comes I'll tell her the whole story. I don't think she'll blame me for taking too much on myself."

Pinger decided to invite them in to sit down and accordingly Mrs. Zhou went out to fetch them. As they mounted the steps to the main reception room, a young maid raised a red wool portière and a waft of perfume greeted them as they entered. Granny Liu did not know what it was but felt she was walking on air. And she was so dazzled by everything in the room that her head began to swim. She could only nod, smack her lips and cry "Gracious Buddha!"

Pinger was standing by the *kang* in the east room, the bedroom of Jia Lian's daughter. Casting two searching glances at Granny Liu she greeted her rather curtly and bade her be seated.

Pinger's silk dress, her gold and silver trinkets, and her face which was pretty as a flower made Granny Liu mistake her for her mistress. But before she could greet her as "my lady" she heard the girl and Mrs. Zhou address each other as equals and realized that this was just one of



刘姥姥只听见“咯当咯当”的响声，大有似乎打箩柜筛面的一般，不免东瞧西望的。忽见堂屋中柱子上挂着一个匣子，底下又坠着一个秤砣般的一物，却不住的乱幌。刘姥姥心中想着：“这是什么爱物儿？有煞用呢？”正呆想时，听得“当”的一声，又若金钟铜磬一般，不防倒唬的一展眼。接着又是一连八九下。方欲问时，只见小丫头们一齐乱跑，说：“奶奶下来了。”平儿、周瑞家的忙起身，命刘姥姥“只管坐着，等是时候我们来请你。”说着，都迎出去了。

刘姥姥屏声侧耳默候。只听远远有人笑声，约有一二十妇人，衣裙窸窣，渐入堂屋内去了。又见两三个妇人，都捧着大漆捧盒，进这边来等候。听得那边说了声“摆饭”，渐渐的人才散出，只有伺候端菜的几人。半日鸦雀不闻之后，忽见二人抬了一张炕桌来，放在这边炕上，桌上碗盘森列，仍是满满的鱼肉在内，不过略动了几样。板儿一见了，便吵着要肉吃，刘姥姥一巴掌打了他去。忽见周瑞家的笑嘻嘻走过来，招手儿叫他。刘姥姥会意，于是携了板儿下炕，至堂屋中，周瑞家的又向他嘱咐了一会，方蹭到这边屋里来。

只见门外鍍铜钩上悬着大红撒花软帘，南窗下是炕，炕上大红毡条，靠东边板壁立着一个锁子锦靠背与一个引枕，铺着金心闪缎大坐褥，旁边有银唾盒。那凤姐儿家常带着紫貂昭君套，围着攒珠勒子，穿着桃红撒花袄，石青刻丝灰鼠皮褂，大红洋绉银鼠皮裙，粉光脂艳，端端正正坐在那里，



the more favoured maids.

Granny Liu and Baner were given seats on the *kang*, while Pinger and Mrs. Zhou sat face to face on the edge. Maids brought tea and as she sipped it the old woman heard a steady *tock-tock-tock* like the sound made by a flour-bolting machine. Staring about her she saw a box-like object attached to one of the pillars in the room, with a weight of sorts swinging to and fro below it.

“Whatever can that be?” she wondered. “What’s it doing?”

The next instant she started at a loud *dong* like the sound of a bronze bell or copper chimes repeated eight or nine times. Before she could clear up this mystery, a flock of maids ran in crying:

“The mistress is coming!”

Pinger and Mrs. Zhou stood up at once, telling Granny Liu to wait till she was sent for. They left her straining her ears, with bated breath, as she waited there in silence.

In the distance laughter rang out. Ten to twenty serving women swished through the hall to another inner room, while two or three bearing lacquered boxes came to this side to wait. When the order was given to serve the meal, all left but a few who handed round the dishes. A long silence followed. Then two women brought in a low table covered with scarcely touched dishes of fish and meat which they set down on the *kang*. At once Baner set up a clamour for some meat, but his grandmother slapped him and told him to keep away.

Next Mrs. Zhou came to beckon them with a smile. Granny Liu at once lifted her grandson off the *kang* and led him into the hall. After some whispered advice from Mrs. Zhou she followed her slowly into Xifeng’s room.

A soft scarlet flowered portière hung from brass hooks over the door, and the *kang* below the south window was spread with a scarlet rug. Against the wooden partition on the east were a back-rest and bolster of brocade with chain designs next to a glossy satin mattress with a golden centre. Beside them stood a silver spittoon.

Xifeng had on the dark sable hood with a pearl-studded band which she wore at home. She was also wearing a peach-red flowered jacket, a turquoise cape lined with grey squirrel and a skirt of crimson foreign



手内拿着小铜火箸儿拨手炉内的灰。平儿站在炕沿边，捧着小小的一个填漆茶盘，盘内一小盖钟。凤姐也不接茶，也不抬头，只管拨手炉内的灰，慢慢的问道：“怎么还不请进来？”一面说，一面抬头要茶时，只见周瑞家的已带了两个人在地下站着呢。这才忙欲起身，犹未起身时，满面春风的问好，又嗔周瑞家的怎么不早说。刘姥姥在地下已是拜了数拜，问姑奶奶安。凤姐忙说：“周姐姐，快搀起来！别拜罢，请坐。我年轻，不大认得，可也不知是什么辈数，不敢称呼。”周瑞家的忙回道：“这就是我才回的那姥姥了。”凤姐点头。刘姥姥已在炕沿上坐下了。板儿便躲在他背后，百端的哄他出来作揖，他死也不肯。

凤姐笑道：“亲戚们不大走动，都疏远了。知道的呢，说你们弃厌我们，不肯常来；不知道的那起小人，还只当我们眼里没人似的。”刘姥姥忙念佛道：“我们家道艰难，走不起，来在这里，没的给姑奶奶打嘴，就是管家爷们看着也不像。”凤姐笑道：“这话没的叫人恶心。不过借赖着祖父虚名，作个穷官儿，谁家有什么，不过是旧日的空架子。俗语说，‘朝廷还有三门子穷亲戚’呢，何况你我？”说着，又问周瑞家的回了太太没有。周瑞家的道：“如今等奶奶的示下。”凤姐道：“你去瞧瞧，要是有人有事就罢，得闲呢就回，看怎么说。”周瑞家的答应着去了。





crêpe lined with snow-weasel fur. Dazzlingly rouged and powdered she sat erect, stirring the ashes of her hand-stove with a tiny brass poker. Pinger stood by the *kang* with a small covered cup on a little lacquered tray, but Xifeng ignored the tea and kept her head lowered as she stirred the ashes.

“Why haven’t you brought her in yet?” she finally asked.

Then, raising her head to take the tea, she saw Mrs. Zhou with her two charges before her. She made a motion as if to rise and greeted them with a radiant smile, scolding Mrs. Zhou for not speaking up before.

Granny Liu had already curtseyed several times to Xifeng, who now hastily said:

“Help her up, Sister Zhou, she mustn’t curtsey to me. Ask her to be seated. I’m too young to remember what our relationship is, so I don’t know what to call her.”

“This is the old lady I was just telling you about,” said Mrs. Zhou.

Xifeng nodded.

By now Granny Liu had seated herself on the edge of the *kang*, and Baner took refuge behind her. Coaxed to come forward and bow, he would not budge.

“When relatives don’t call on each other they drift apart,” observed Xifeng with a smile. “People who know us would say you’re neglecting us. Petty-minded people who don’t know us so well might imagine we look down on everyone else.”

“Gracious Buddha!” exclaimed Granny Liu. “We’re too hard up to gad about. And even if Your Ladyship didn’t slap our faces for coming, your stewards might take us for tramps.”

“That’s no way to talk!” Xifeng laughed. “We’re simply poor officials trying to live up to our grandfather’s reputation. This household is nothing but an empty husk left over from the past. As the saying goes: ‘The Emperor himself has poor relations.’ How much more so in our case?”

She asked Mrs. Zhou if she had notified Lady Wang.

“I was waiting for madam’s instructions,” was the reply.

“Go and see how busy she is. If she has visitors, never mind. But if she’s free, let her know and see what she says.”



这里凤姐叫人抓些果子与板儿吃，刚问些闲话时，就有家下许多媳妇管事的来回话。平儿回了，凤姐道：“我这里陪着客呢，晚上再来回。若有很要紧的，你就带进来现办。”平儿出去，一会进来说：“我都问了，没什么紧事，我就叫他们散了。”凤姐点头。只见周瑞家的回来，向凤姐道：“太太说了，今日不得闲，二奶奶陪着便是一样。多谢费心想着。白来逛逛呢便罢；若有甚说的，只管告诉二奶奶都是一样。”刘姥姥道：“也没甚说的，不过是来瞧瞧姑太太、姑奶奶，也是亲戚们的情分。”周瑞家的道：“没什么说的便罢；若有说的，只管回二奶奶，是和太太一样的。”一面说，一面递眼色与刘姥姥。刘姥姥会意，未语先飞红了脸，欲待不说，今日又所为何来？只得忍耻说道：“论理，今儿初次见姑奶奶，却不该说，只是大远的奔了你老来，也少不的说了。”刚说到这里，只听二门上小厮们回说：“东府里小大爷来了。”凤姐忙止刘姥姥：“不必说了。”一面便问：“你蓉大爷在那里呢？”只听一路靴子脚响，进来了一个十七八岁的少年，面目清秀，身材妖矫，轻裘宝带，美服华冠。刘姥姥此时坐不是，立不是，藏没处藏。凤姐笑道：“你只管坐着，这是我侄儿。”刘姥姥方扭扭捏捏在炕沿上坐了。

贾蓉笑道：“我父亲打发我来求婶子，说上回老舅太太给婶子的那架玻璃炕屏，明日请一个要紧的客，借了略摆一摆，就送过来。”凤姐道：“说迟了一日，昨儿已经给了人了。”贾蓉听说，嘻嘻的笑着在炕沿上半跪道：“婶子若不

红楼梦
脂砚斋
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After Mrs. Zhou left on this errand, Xifeng told the maids to give Baner some sweetmeats. She was asking Granny Liu questions when Pinger announced the arrival of a number of servants to report on affairs in their charge.

“I have a guest. They can come back this evening,” said Xifeng. “Only bring in anyone whose business won’t wait.”

Pinger went out, reappearing to say, “They’ve nothing pressing so I sent them away.”

As Xifeng nodded, Mrs. Zhou came back.

“Her Ladyship isn’t free today,” she said. “She hopes you’ll entertain them and thank them for coming. If they just dropped in for a call, well and good. If they have any business they should tell you, madam.”

“I’ve no special business,” put in Granny Liu. “I just came to call on Her Ladyship and Madam Lian, seeing as how we’re related.”

“If you’ve nothing special, all right,” said Mrs. Zhou. “If you have, telling our second mistress is just the same as telling Her Ladyship.”

She winked at Granny Liu, who took the hint. Although her face burned with shame, she forced herself to pocket her pride and explain her reason for coming.

“By rights, I shouldn’t bring this up at our first meeting, madam. But as I’ve come all this way to ask your help, I’d better speak up. . . .”

Just then pages by the second gate called out, “The young master from the East Mansion is here.”

Cutting Granny Liu short Xifeng asked, “Where is Master Rong?”

Booted footsteps sounded and in walked a handsome youth of seventeen or eighteen. Slender and graceful in light furs, he wore a jewelled girdle, fine clothes and a gorgeous hat. Granny Liu didn’t know whether to sit or stand and longed for some hiding-place.

“Sit down,” said Xifeng with a twinkle. “It’s only my nephew.”

Granny Liu perched gingerly on the edge of the *kang*.

Jia Rong announced cheerfully, “My father’s sent me to ask a favour, aunt. He’s expecting an important guest tomorrow, and he’d like to borrow that glass screen for the *kang* that our Grand-Aunt Wang gave you. He’ll return it promptly.”

“You’re too late,” replied Xifeng. “I gave it to somebody only yester-

借，又说我不会说话了，又挨一顿好打呢。婶子只当可怜侄儿罢。”凤姐笑道：“也没见我们王家的东西都是好的不成？你们那里放着那些好东西，只是看不见。偏我的就是好的。”贾蓉笑道：“那里有这个好呢！只求开恩罢。”凤姐道：“要碰一点儿，你可仔细你的皮！”因命平儿拿了楼房的钥匙，传几个妥当人来抬去。贾蓉喜的眉开眼笑，忙说：“我亲自带了人拿去，别由他们乱碰。”说着便起身出去了。

这里凤姐忽又想起一事来，便向窗外叫：“蓉儿回来！”外面几个人接声说：“蓉大爷，快回来！”贾蓉忙复身转来，垂手侍立，听何指示。那凤姐只管慢慢的吃茶，出了半日的神，方笑道：“罢了，你且去罢。晚饭后你再来说罢。这会子有人，我也没精神了。”贾蓉应了一声，方慢慢的退去。

这里刘姥姥心身方安，才又说道：“今日我带了侄儿来，也不为别的，只因他老子娘在家里，连吃的都没有。如今今天又冷了，越想没个派头儿，只得带了侄儿奔了你老来。”说着又推板儿道：“你那爹在家怎么教导你了？打发咱们作煞事来？只顾吃果子咧。”凤姐早已明白了，听他不会说话，因笑止道：“不必说了，我知道了。”因问周瑞家的：

“刘姥姥不知可用了早饭没有呢？”刘姥姥忙说道：“一早就往这里赶咧，那里还有吃饭的工夫咧。”凤姐听说，忙命快传饭来。一时周瑞家的传了一桌客饭来，摆在东边屋内，过来带了刘姥姥和板儿过去吃饭。凤姐说道：“周姐姐，好生让着些儿，我不能陪了。”于是过东边房里来。凤姐又叫过周瑞家的去，问他方才回了太太，说了些什么？周瑞家的道：

“太太说，你们家原不是一家子，不过因为一姓，当年又与



day.”

Chuckling, Jia Rong half knelt by the foot of the *kang*. “If you won’t lend it, aunt, I’ll be given another sound thrashing for not asking properly. Have pity on your nephew!”

“You seem to imagine all the Wangs’ things are special. Haven’t you plenty of stuff of your own over there?”

“Nothing half as good.” He laughed. “Please, aunt, be kind!”

“Then look out for your skin if you chip it!”

She ordered Pinger to fetch the keys to the upstairs rooms and find trustworthy people to deliver the screen.

“I’ve brought men to carry it.” Jia Rong’s face lit up, his eyes twinkled. “I’ll see that they’re careful.”

He had barely left when she suddenly called him back.

Servants outside echoed, “Master Rong, you’re asked to go back.”

The young man hurried in again and stood at attention to hear his aunt’s instructions. Xifeng sipped her tea slowly and thoughtfully for a while, then said with a laugh:

“Never mind. Come back again after supper. I’ve company now and don’t feel in the mood to tell you at the moment.”

So Jia Rong slowly withdrew.

Granny Liu felt easy enough at last to say, “The reason I brought your nephew here today is that his parents haven’t a bite to eat. And winter’s coming on, making things worse. So I brought your nephew here to ask for your help.” She nudged Baner. “Well, what did your dad tell you? What did he send us here for? Was it just to eat sweets?”

Xifeng smiled at this blunt way of talking. “Don’t say any more. I understand.” She asked Mrs. Zhou, “Has granny eaten yet?”

“We set out first thing in such a rush, we’d no time to eat anything,” said Granny Liu.

At once Xifeng ordered a meal for the visitors. Mrs. Zhou passed on the order and a table was set for them in the east room.

“Sister Zhou, see that they have all they want,” said Xifeng. “I can’t keep them company.”

When Mrs. Zhou had taken them to the east room, Xifeng called her back to hear what Lady Wang had said.

太老爷在一处作官，偶然连了宗的。这几年来也不大走动。当时他们来一遭，却也没空了他们。今儿来了瞧瞧我们，是他的好意，也不可简慢了他。便是有什么说的，叫奶奶裁夺着就是了。”凤姐听了说道：“我说呢，既是一家子，我如何连影儿也不知道。”

说话时，刘姥姥已吃毕饭，拉了板儿过来，舔舌抹嘴的道谢。凤姐笑道：“且请坐下，听我告诉你老人家。方才的意思，我已知道了。若论亲戚之间，原该不待上门来就该有照应才是。但如今家里杂事太烦，太太渐上了年纪，一时想不到也是有的。况是我近来接着管些事，都不大知道这些亲戚们。二则外头看着这里，虽是烈烈轰轰的，殊不知大有大的艰难去处，说与人也未必信。罢了，今儿你既老远的来了，又是头一次见我张口，怎好叫你空回去呢。可巧昨儿太太给我的丫头们做衣裳的二十两银子，我还没动呢。你们不嫌少，就暂且先拿了去罢。”

那刘姥姥先听见告艰难，只当是没有，心里便突突的；后来听见给他二十两，喜的浑身又发痒起来，说道：“嗳，我也是知道艰难的。但俗语说的：‘瘦死的骆驼比马大’，凭他怎么，你老拔根寒毛比我们的腰还粗呢！”周瑞家的在旁听他说的粗鄙，只管使眼色止他。凤姐看见，笑而不睬，只命平儿把昨日那包银子拿来，再拿一串钱来，都送到刘姥姥跟前。凤姐乃道：“这是二十两银子，暂且给这孩子做件冬衣罢。若不拿着，可真是怪我了。这钱雇了车子坐罢。改日无事，只管来逛逛，方是亲戚们的意思。天也晚了，也不虚留你们了，到家里该问好的问个好儿罢。”一面说，一面就站



“Her ladyship says they don’t really belong to our family,” Mrs. Zhou told her. “They joined families because they have the same surname and their grandfather was an officail in the same place as our old master. We haven’t seen much of them these last few years, but whenever they came we didn’t let them go away empty-handed. Since they mean well, coming to see us, we shouldn’t slight them. If they need help, madam should use her own discretion.”

“I was thinking, if we were really relatives it was funny I didn’t know the first thing about them.”

As Xifeng was speaking Granny Liu came back from her meal with Baner, loud in her thanks.

“Sit down now and listen to me, dear old lady,” said Xifeng cheerfully. “I know what you were hinting at just now. We shouldn’t wait for relatives to come to our door before we take care of them. But we’ve plenty of troublesome business here, and now that Her Ladyship’s growing old she sometimes forgets things. Besides, when I took charge recently I didn’t really know all our family connections. Then again, although we look prosperous you must realize that a big household has big difficulties of its own, though few may believe it. But since you’ve come so far today and this is the first time you’ve asked me for help, I can’t send you away empty-handed. Luckily Her Ladyship gave me twenty taels of silver yesterday to make clothes for the maids, and I haven’t yet touched it. If you don’t think it too little, take that to be going on with.”

Talk of difficulties had dashed all Granny Liu’s hopes and set her heart palpitating. The promise of twenty taels put her in a flutter of joy.

“Ah,” she cried, “I know what difficulties are. But ‘A starved camel is bigger than a horse.’ No matter how, ‘A hair from your body is thicker than our waist.’”

Mrs. Zhou kept signalling to her not to talk in the crude way, but Xifeng merely laughed and seemed not to mind. She sent Pinger for the package of silver and a string of cash and presented these to the old woman.

“Here’s twenty taels to make the child some winter clothes. If you refuse it, I shall think you’re offended. With the cash you can hire a cart. When you’ve time, drop in again as relatives should. It’s growing late, I



了起来。

刘姥姥只管千恩万谢的，拿了银钱，随周瑞家的来至外厢。周瑞家的道：“我的娘啊！你见了他，怎么倒不会说了？开口就是‘你侄儿’。我说句不怕你恼的话，便是亲侄儿，也要说和软些。那蓉大爷才是他的正经侄儿呢，他怎么又跑出这么个侄儿来了。”刘姥姥笑道：“我的嫂子，我见了他，心眼儿里爱还爱不过来，那里还说的上话来了。”二人说着，又到周瑞家的屋子里坐了片刻。刘姥姥便要留下一块银子与周瑞家的儿女买果子吃，周瑞家的如何放在眼里，执意不肯。刘姥姥感谢不尽，仍从后门去了。要知端详，且听下回分解。

正是：

得意浓时易接济，受恩深处胜亲朋。





won't keep you for no purpose. Give my compliments to everyone at home to whom I should be remembered."

She stood up and Granny Liu, having thanked her profusely, took the silver and cash and followed Mrs. Zhou towards the servants' quarters.

"Gracious me!" exclaimed Mrs. Zhou. "What possessed you when you saw her to keep on about 'your nephew'? At the risk of offending you I must say this: Even if he were a real nephew you should have glossed it over. Master Rong, now, he's her honest-to-goodness nephew — where would she get a nephew like Baner?"

"My dear sister!" Granny Liu beamed. "I was struck all of a heap at sight of her and didn't know what I was saying."

Chatting together they reached Zhou Rui's house and sat down for a few moments. Granny Liu wanted to leave a piece of silver to buy sweets for Mrs. Zhou's children, but this Mrs. Zhou most resolutely declined — such small sums meant nothing to her. Then with boundless thanks Granny Liu left by the back gate.

To know what followed, you must read the next chapter.

Truly:

In affluence, charity is freely dispensed,
One deeply grateful is better than kinsmen or friends.



第七回

尤氏女独请王熙凤 宴宁府宝玉会秦钟

题曰：

十二花容色最新，不知谁是惜花人。

相逢若问何名氏，家住江南姓本秦。

话说周瑞家的送了刘姥姥去后，便上来回王夫人话。谁知王夫人不在上房，问丫鬟们时，方知往薛姨妈那边闲话去了。周瑞家的听说，便转东角门出，至东院，往梨香院来。刚至院门前，只见王夫人的丫鬟金钏，和一个才留了头的小女孩儿站在台阶坡上玩。见周瑞家的来了，便知有话回，因向内努嘴儿。

周瑞家的轻轻掀帘进去，只见王夫人和薛姨妈长篇大套的说些家务人情的话。周瑞家的不敢惊动，遂进里间来。只见薛宝钗穿着家常衣服，头上只散挽着鬓儿，坐在炕里边，伏在小炕几上同丫鬟莺儿正描花样子呢。见他进来，宝钗便放下笔，转过身来，满面堆笑让：“周姐姐坐。”周瑞家的也忙陪笑问“姑娘好？”一面炕沿边坐了，因说：“这两三天也没见姑娘到那边逛逛去，只怕是你宝玉兄弟冲撞了你不成？”宝钗笑道：“那里的话？只因我那种病又发了所以且静养两日。”周瑞家的道：“正是呢，姑娘到底有什么病根儿，也该趁早儿请个大夫来，好生开个方子，认真吃几剂药，一势





Chapter 7

Madam You Invites Xifeng Alone At a Feast in the Ning Mansion Baoyu First Meets Qin Zhong

The theme:

Twelve maids pretty as flowers,
But who is it that loves them?
Do you ask the name of the one he meets?
It is Qin whose home is south of the Yangtze River.

After seeing off Granny Liu, Mrs. Zhou went to report to Lady Wang. On being told by her maids that their mistress had gone to chat with Aunt Xue, she made her way through the east side gate and the east courtyard to Pear Fragrance Court. On the verandah steps there, Lady Wang's maid Jinchuan was playing with a girl who had just let her hair grow. Realizing that Mrs. Zhou had come on business, Jinchuan nodded towards the door.

Mrs. Zhou softly raised the portière and went in. Lady Wang and her sister were having a good long gossip on domestic matters, and not wanting to disturb them she went into the inner room where Baochai in a house dress, her hair pinned into a loose knot, was copying an embroidery pattern with her maid Yinger at the low table on the *kang*. She put down her brush and turned with a smile to offer the visitor a seat.

"How are you, miss?" asked Mrs. Zhou, sitting on the edge of the *kang*, "I haven't seen you over on our side for several days. Did Baoyu do something to annoy you?"

"What an idea! I've been staying in for a couple of days because an old ailment's been troubling me again."

"Why, miss, what is it? Better send for a doctor at once to make out a prescription. A few doses should set you right once and for all. It's no joke being an invalid at your age."

"Don't talk to me about medicine!" Baochai laughed. "Goodness knows how much silver we've squandered on doctors and medicines to



儿除了根才是。小小的年纪，倒做下个病根儿，也不是玩的。”宝钗听说，便笑道：“再不要提吃药。为这病，请大夫吃药，也不知白花了多少银子钱呢？凭你什么名医仙药，不见一点儿效。后来还亏了一个秃头和尚，说专治无名之症，因请他看了。他说我这是从胎里带来的一股热毒，幸而我先天健壮，还不相干；若吃凡药，是不中用的。他就说了一个海上方，又给了一包末药作引，异香异气的，不知是那里弄来的。他说发了时，吃一丸就好。倒也奇怪，这倒效验些。”

周瑞家的因问道：“不知是个什么海上方儿？姑娘说了，我们也记着，说与人知道，倘遇见这样的病，也是行好的事。”宝钗见问，乃笑道：“不问这方儿还好，若问起这方儿，真真把人琐碎坏了。东西药料一概都有限易得的，只难得‘可巧’二字：要春天开的白牡丹花蕊十二两，夏天开的白荷花蕊十二两，秋天开的白芙蓉蕊十二两，冬天开的白梅花蕊十二两。这四样花蕊，于次年春分这日晒干，和在末药一处，一齐研好。又要雨水这日的雨水十二钱……”周瑞家的忙道：“暖哟哟！这样说来，这就得三年的工夫。倘或雨水这日竟不下雨，这又怎处呢？”宝钗笑道：“所以了，那里有这样可巧的雨？便没雨，也只好再等罢了。白露这日的露水十二钱，霜降这日的霜十二钱，小雪这日的雪十二钱，把这四样水调匀，和了丸药，再加十二钱蜂蜜，十二钱白糖，丸成龙眼大的丸子，盛在旧磁坛内，埋在花根底下。若发了病时，拿出来吃一丸，用十二分黄柏煎汤送下。”

周瑞家的听了笑道：“阿弥陀佛，真巧死了人！等十年未



cure this illness of mine. The most famous physicians and the most fabulous drugs were of no use at all. In the end, luckily, there came a tonsured monk who claimed to specialize in mysterious diseases. We called him in and he diagnosed my trouble as a choleric humour I'd brought from the womb, but which thanks to my good constitution wasn't too serious. No ordinary pills bring any relief, but he gave us an exotic prescription from across the seas, together with a packet of aromatic powder he'd procured as adjuvant goodness knows where. He prescribed one pill each time an attack comes on. And strange to say that's done me good."

"What is this prescription from across the seas? If you'll tell me, miss, we'll keep it in mind and recommend it to others with the same trouble. That would be a good deed."

"Well, better not ask. But if you must know, it's the most troublesome prescription." Baochai laughed. "There aren't too many ingredients and they're easily obtainable, but each has to be gathered at just the right time. You have to take twelve ounces of the stamens of white peonies that bloom in the spring, twelve ounces of the stamens of white lotus that blooms in the summer, twelve ounces of the stamens of white hibiscus that blooms in the autumn, and twelve ounces of the stamens of white plum that blooms in the winter. These four kinds of stamens must be dried in the sun on the following vernal equinox, then mixed well with the powder. Then you must take twelve drams of rain that fell on the day Rain Begins...."¹

"Aiya!" broke in Mrs. Zhou. "That would take three years. And what if it doesn't rain on the day Rain Begins?"

"Exactly. You can't always count on it. If it doesn't, you just have to wait. You also have to collect twelve drams of dew on the day White Dew,² twelve drams of frost on the day Frost Falls,³ and twelve drams of snow on the day Slight Snow.⁴ These liquids are mixed with the other ingredients, then twelve drams of honey and twelve of white sugar are added to make pills the size of longans. These must be kept in an old porcelain jar and buried beneath the roots of flowers. When the illness comes on, this jar can be dug up and one pill taken with twelve candareens of a phellodendron concoction."

"Gracious Buddha!" Mrs. Zhou chuckled. "How terribly chancy! You



必都这样巧的呢。”宝钗道：“竟好，自他说了去后，一二年间可巧都得了，好容易配成一料。如今从南带至北，现就埋在梨花树底下呢。”周瑞家的又道：“这药可有名字没有呢？”宝钗道：“有。这也是那癞头和尚说下的，叫作‘冷香丸’。”周瑞家的听了点头儿，因又说：“这病发了时，到底觉怎么着？”宝钗道：“也不觉什么，只不过喘嗽些，吃一丸也就罢了。”

周瑞家的还欲说话时，忽听王夫人问：“谁在里头？”周瑞家的忙出去答应了，趁便回了刘姥姥之事。略待半刻，见王夫人无语，方欲退出，薛姨妈忽又笑道：“你且站住。我有一宗东西，你带了去罢。”说着叫香菱。只听帘栊响处，方才和金钏玩的那个小丫头进来了，问：“奶奶叫我作什么？”薛姨妈道：“把那匣子里的花儿拿来。”香菱答应了，向那边捧了个小锦匣子来。薛姨妈乃道：“这是宫里头做的新鲜样法，堆纱的花儿十二支。昨儿我想起来，白放着，可惜了儿的，何不给他们姊妹们戴去。昨儿要送去，偏又忘了。你今儿来的巧，就带了去罢。你家的三位姑娘，每人一对，下剩六枝，送林姑娘两枝，那四枝给了凤哥儿罢。”王夫人道：“留着给宝丫头戴罢了，又想着他们作什么？”薛姨妈道：“姨娘不知道，宝丫头古怪着呢，他从来不爱这些花儿粉儿的。”

说着，周瑞家的拿了匣子，走出房门，见金钏儿仍在那里晒日阳儿。周瑞家的因问道：“那香菱小丫头子，可就是时常说临上京时买的、为他打人命官司的那个小丫头子？”金钏道：“可不就是。”正说着，只见香菱笑嘻嘻的走来。周瑞家的便拉了他的手，细细的看了一会，因向金钏儿笑道：



might wait ten years without such a run of luck.”

“Well, we were lucky enough to collect all the ingredients and have them carefully made up within two years of the monk’s telling us. We brought the pills up from the south. They’re buried under one of the pear trees now.”

“Has this medicine any name?”

“Yes, the scabby monk told us they’re called Cold Fragrance Pills.”

Mrs. Zhou nodded. “What are the symptoms of this illness of yours, miss?”

“Nothing serious. Slight fits of coughing and shortness of breath. But one pill clears it up.”

Before they could say more, Lady Wang asked who was there. Mrs. Zhou hurried out and seized this chance to tell her about Granny Liu. It seemed Lady Wang had no further instructions for her, and she was on the point of leaving when Aunt Xue stopped her.

“Wait a minute,” she said with a smile. “I’ve something for you to take back.”

She called for Xiangling and the portière clacked as in came the girl who had been playing with Jinchuan.

“Did you call, madam?” she asked.

“Bring me that box of flowers,” ordered Aunt Xue.

Xiangling accordingly fetched a brocade box.

“These are twelve sprays of gauze flowers of the new sort made in the Palace,” explained Aunt Xue. “I remembered them yesterday, and thought it a pity to leave them tucked away when the girls might like to wear them. I meant to send them over yesterday, but forgot. You may as well take them now that you’re here. Give two each to your three young ladies. Of the six left, give a couple to Miss Lin and the other four to Master Feng.”

“It’s kind of you to think of them,” remarked Lady Wang. “But why not keep them for Baochai?”

“You don’t know what an odd girl she is, sister. She dislikes wearing flowers or make-up.”

Going out with the box, Mrs. Zhou found Jinchuan still sunning herself on the steps. “Tell me,” she said, “isn’t Xiangling the girl there was all that talk about? The one bought just before they came to the capital, who

“倒好个模样儿，竟有些像咱们东府里蓉大奶奶的品格儿。”金钏儿笑道：“我也是这么说呢。”周瑞家的又问香菱：“你几岁投身到这里？”又问：“你父母今在何处？今年十几岁了？本处是那里人？”香菱听问，都摇头说：“记不得了。”周瑞家的和金钏儿听了，倒反为叹息伤感一回。

一时间，周瑞家的携花至王夫人正房后头来。原来近日贾母说孙女儿们太多了，一处挤着倒不便，只留宝玉、黛玉二人在这边解闷，却将迎、探、惜三人移到王夫人这边房后三间小抱厦内居住，令李纨陪伴照管。如今周瑞家的故顺路先往这里来，只见几个小丫头子都在抱厦内听呼唤呢。迎春的丫鬟司棋与探春的丫鬟待书二人正掀帘子出来，手里都捧着茶盘、茶钟，周瑞家的便知他姊妹在一边坐着，遂进房内，只见迎春、探春二人正在窗下围棋。周瑞家的将花送上，说明缘故。他二人忙住了棋，都欠身道谢，命丫鬟们收了。

周瑞家的答应了，因说：“四姑娘不在房里，只怕在老太太那边呢。”丫鬟们道：“在那屋里不是？”周瑞家的听了，便往这边屋里来。只见惜春正同水月庵的小姑子智能儿两个一处玩笑。见周瑞家的进来，惜春便问他何事。周瑞家的便把花匣打开，说明原故。惜春笑道：“我这里正和智能儿说，我明儿也剃了头，同他做姑子去呢，可巧又送了花儿来；若剃了头，可把这花儿戴在那里？”说着，大家取笑一回，惜



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was at the bottom of that manslaughter case?"

"That's right," said Jinchuan.

Just then Xiangling came over, smiling. Mrs. Zhou took her hand and studied her intently, then turned to Jinchuan again:

"She's a handsome girl. Reminds me of Master Rong's wife in our East Mansion."

"That's what I say," agreed Jinchuan.

Mrs. Zhou asked Xiangling how old she had been when sold, where her parents were, her age now and her native place. But the girl simply shook her head and said she could not remember, so that their hearts bled for her.

Then Mrs. Zhou took the flowers to the back of Lady Wang's principal apartment. Recently the Lady Dowager had found it inconvenient to have all her grand-daughters crowded together in her compound. Keeping just Baoyu and Daiyu for company, she had sent Yingchun, Tanchun and Xichun to live in three small suites behind Lady Wang's quarters, under the care of Li Wan. Hence Mrs. Zhou stopped here first as it was on her way, and found a few maids waiting in the hall for when they should be wanted.

Yingchun's maid Siqi and Tanchun's maid Daishu raised the portiere at that moment and stepped out, each carrying a cup and saucer. This meant that their young mistresses must be together, so Mrs. Zhou went in and discovered Yingchun and Tanchun playing draughts by the window. She presented the flowers, explaining where they came from. The two girls stopped their game to bow their thanks, then ordered their maids to put the gifts away.

As Mrs. Zhou handed over the flowers she remarked, "The fourth young lady isn't here. Is she with the old lady, I wonder?"

"Isn't she there in the next room?" the maids said.

Mrs. Zhou walked into the adjoining room and found Xichun laughing and chatting with Zhineng, a young nun from the Water Moon Convent. Xichun asked Mrs. Zhou her business. The box was opened and the gift explained.

"I was just telling Zhineng that I'd shave my head some day and become a nun too, and now you turn up with flowers." Xichun smiled.



春命丫鬟人画来收了。

周瑞家的因问智能儿：“你是什么时候来的？你师父那秃歪拉那里去了？”智能儿道：“我们一早就来了。我师父见过太太，就往于老爷府里去了，叫我在这里等他呢。”周瑞家的又道：“十五的月例香供银子，可得了没有？”智能儿摇头说：“不知道。”惜春听了，便问周瑞家的：“如今各庙月例银子，都是谁管着？”周瑞家的道：“是余信管着。”惜春听了，笑道：“这就是了。他师父一来了，余信家的就赶上来，和他师父咕唧了半日，想是就为这事了。”

那周瑞家的又和智能儿唠叨了一会，便往凤姐处来。穿夹道，从李纨后窗下过，隔着玻璃窗户，见李纨在炕上歪着睡觉呢，遂越过西花墙，出西角门，进凤姐院中。走至堂屋，只见小丫头丰儿坐在凤姐的门槛子上，见周瑞家的来了，连忙摆手儿，叫他往东屋里去。周瑞家的会意，慌的蹑手蹑脚的往东边房里来，只见奶子正拍着大姐儿睡觉呢。周瑞家的悄问奶子道：“奶奶睡中觉呢？也该请醒了。”奶子摇头儿。正问着，只听那边一阵笑声，却有贾琏的声音。接着，房门响处，平儿拿着大铜盆出来，叫丰儿舀水进去。平儿便进这边来，一见了周瑞家的便问：“你老人家又跑了来作什么？”周瑞家的忙起身，拿匣子与他，说送花之事。平儿听了，便打开匣子，拿了四枝，转身去了。半刻工夫，手里又拿出两枝来，先叫彩明来，吩咐他：“送到那边府里给小蓉大奶奶戴去。”次后方命周瑞家的回去道谢。

周瑞家的这才往贾母这边来。过了穿堂，顶头忽见他女



“Where shall I wear them if my head is shaved?”

Amid the banter that followed, Xichun told her maid Ruhua to put the present away.

The Mrs. Zhou asked Zhineng, “When did you arrive? And where’s that bald-headed, crotchety abbess of yours?”

“We came here first thing this morning. After calling on Lady Wang the abbess went to Mr. Yu’s mansion, telling me to wait for her here.”

“Have you received the monthly allowance and donation for incense due on the fifteenth?”

Zhineng shook her head. “I don’t know.”

Xichun asked who was in charge of the monthly donations for different temples.

“Yu Xin,” was Mrs. Zhou’s answer.

“So that’s it.” Xichun giggled. “As soon as the abbess arrived, Yu Xin’s wife hurried over and whispered with her for a while. That must be why.”

After chatting for a time with the nun, Mrs. Zhou went on to Xifeng’s quarters. She walked through the passage, past Li Wan’s back window, and skirting the west wall entered Xifeng’s compound by the west side-gate. In the main hall outside the bedroom door sat Fenger, who hastily motioned her to the east room. Taking the hint, Mrs. Zhou tiptoed in and found a nurse patting Xifeng’s daughter to sleep.

“Is your mistress having a nap?” whispered Mrs. Zhou. “It’s time somebody woke her.”

As the nurse shook her head, from Xifeng’s room came the sound of laughter and Jia Lian’s voice. The door opened and out stepped Pinger with a large copper basin which she told Fenger to fill with water and take in. Then Pinger came over and asked Mrs. Zhou, “What brings you here again, auntie?”

Mrs. Zhou stood up and explained her errand, handing over the box. Pinger took out four sprays and went off with them, returning presently with two which she ordered Caiming to take to Master Rong’s wife in the Ning Mansion. After this she asked Mrs. Zhou to convey Xifeng’s thanks to Aunt Xue.

Only then did Mrs. Zhou make her way to the Lady Dowager’s com-



儿打扮着，才从他婆家来。周瑞家的忙问：“你这会子跑来作什么？”他女儿笑道：“妈一向身上好？我在家里等了这半日，妈竟不出去，什么事情，这样忙的不回家？我等烦了，自己先到了老太太跟前请了安了，这会子请太太的安去。妈还有什么不了的差事，手里是什么东西？”周瑞家的笑道：“嗳！今儿偏偏儿的来了刘姥姥，我自己多事，为他跑了半日；这会子又被姨太太看见了，送这几枝花儿与姑娘奶奶们。这会子还没送清白呢。你这会子跑来，一定有什么事情的。”他女儿笑道：“你老人家倒会猜。实对你说，你女婿前儿因多吃了两杯酒，和人分争起来，不知怎的被人放了一把邪火，说他来历不明，告到衙门里，要递解他还乡。所以我来和你老人家商议商议，这个情分，求那个才了事？”周瑞家的听了道：“我就知道的。有什么大不了的事情！你且回去等我，我送林姑娘的花儿去了就回家去。此时太太、二奶奶都不得闲儿，你回去等我。这没有什么忙的。”女儿听说如此，便回去了，又说：“妈，好歹快来。”周瑞家的道：“是了。小人家没经过什么的，就急得那样了！”说着，便到黛玉房中去了。

谁知黛玉此时不在自己房中，却在宝玉房中，大家解九连环作戏。周瑞家的进来笑道：“林姑娘，姨太太着我送花来与姑娘带。”宝玉听说，先便说：“什么花儿？拿来给我。”一面早伸手接过来了。开匣看时，原来是两枝宫制堆纱新巧的假花。黛玉只就宝玉手中看了一看，便问道：“还是单送我一人的，还是别的姑娘们都有呢？”周瑞家的道：“各位都有了，这两枝是姑娘的了。”黛玉冷笑道：“我就知道，别人不



pound. In the entrance hall she ran into her own daughter, dressed in her best, come from her mother-in-law's house.

"What are *you* doing here?" asked Mrs. Zhou.

"Have you been keeping well, ma?" Her daughter beamed. "I waited and waited at home but you didn't come. What's been keeping you all this time? When I got tired of waiting I went on my own to pay my respects to the old lady, and I was just going to see Lady Wang. Aren't you through yet with your business? What's that in your hand?"

"Ai! Granny Liu would choose today to call, and I put myself out running here and there for her. Then Madam Xue spotted me and asked me to deliver these flowers to the young ladies. I'm not through with it yet. But you must want something of me, coming at this time."

"You've guessed right, ma. The fact is, your son-in-law had a cup too much the other day and a row started. Someone, I don't know why, has spread ugly rumours and says he's got a shady past. A charge has been lodged against him at the yamen to have him sent back to his native place. I came to ask your advice. Who can we get to help us out?"

"I thought as much," said her mother. "A fuss about nothing. You go home while I deliver these flowers to Miss Lin. Her Ladyship and Madam Lian aren't free just now, so go back and wait for me. Why get so excited?"

"Well, be as quick as you can, ma," urged her daughter walking off.

"Of course. You young people lack experience, that's why you're so worked up."

Daiyu was not in her room but Mrs. Zhou found her in Baoyu's, trying to unravel the nine-ring puzzle with him.

Mrs. Zhou greeted her with a smile as she entered and said, "Madam Xue asked me to bring you these flowers to wear."

"What flowers?" demanded Baoyu. "Let me see them."

He reached for the box and, opening it, saw the two sprigs of gauze flowers from the Palace.

Daiyu glanced briefly at them in Baoyu's hand. "Am I the only one getting these?" she asked. "Or have the other girls been given some too?"

"Each of the young ladies has some. These two are for you, miss."



挑剩下的也不给我。”周瑞家的听了，一声儿也不言语。宝玉便问道：“周姐姐，你为什么到那边去了？”周瑞家的因说：“太太在那里，因回话去了，姨太太就顺便叫我带了来。”宝玉道：“宝姐姐在家做什么呢？怎么这几日也不过来？”周瑞家的道：“身上不大好呢。”宝玉听了，便和丫头说：“谁去瞧瞧？就说我和林姑娘打发来请姨娘、姐姐安，问姐姐是什么病，吃什么药。论理我该亲自来的，说我才从学里回来，也着了些凉，异日再亲来。”说着，茜雪便答应去了。周瑞家的自去，无话。

原来这周瑞家的女婿，便是雨村的好友冷子兴，近因卖古董和人打官司，故遣女人来讨情分。周瑞家的仗着主子的势利，把这些事也不放在心上，晚间只求求凤姐儿便完了。

至掌灯时分，凤姐已卸了妆，来见王夫人回话：“今儿甄家，送了来的东西，我已收了。咱们送他的，趁着他家有年下送鲜的船去，一并都交给他们带了去罢？”王夫人点头。凤姐又道：“临安伯老太太生日的礼已经打点了，太太派谁送去？”王夫人道：“你瞧谁闲着，只管打发四个女人去就完了，又当什么正经事问我。”凤姐又笑道：“今日珍大嫂子来，请我明日过去逛逛，明日倒没有什么事。”王夫人道：“没事有事都害不着什么。每常他来请，有我们，你自然不





“I might have known.” Daiyu smiled bitterly. “I wouldn’t get mine till the others had taken their pick.”

Mrs. Zhou had nothing to say to this, but Baoyu put in, “What were you doing over there, Sister Zhou?”

“I had a message for Her Ladyship, who’s there. And Madam Xue asked me to bring back these flowers.”

“What’s Baochai doing at home? Why hasn’t she been here for the last few days?”

“She’s not very well.”

At once Baoyu told his maids, “One of you go and see her. Tell her Miss Lin and I sent you to ask how our aunt and cousin are. Find out what’s wrong with her and what medicine she’s taking. I ought to go myself, but say I’m just back from school and have caught a chill as well. I’ll call some other time.”

As Qianxue offered to go, Mrs. Zhou left.

Now Mrs. Zhou’s son-in-law was none other than Jia Yucun’s good friend Leng Zixing. Finding himself involved in a lawsuit arising from the sale of some curios, he had sent his wife to ask for help. With full confidence in her master’s power, Mrs. Zhou did not take this to heart. In fact she settled the matter that same evening by applying to Xifeng.

When the lamps were lit and Xifeng had disrobed, she went to see Lady Wang.

“I’ve taken charge of those things the Zhens sent today,” she announced. “As for our presents to them, I have sent them back by their boats which have come for the New Year provisions.”

When Lady Wang nodded, Xifeng went on, “I’ve prepared our birthday presents for the Earl of Linan’s mother. Who should deliver them, madam?”

“Any four women you see are free. Why consult me about such trifles?”

With a smile Xifeng went on, “Today Brother Zhen’s wife invited me to spend tomorrow with them. I haven’t anything special to do that I know of.”

“Even if you had, it wouldn’t matter, She usually asks us all, which can’t be much fun for you. Since she hasn’t invited us this time, only



便意；他既不请我们，单请你，可知是他诚心请你散淡散淡，别辜负了他的心，便有事也该过去才是。”凤姐答应了。当下李纨、迎、探等姐妹们亦来定省毕，各自归房无话。

次日凤姐梳洗了，先回王夫人毕，方来辞贾母。宝玉听了，也要跟了逛去。凤姐只得答应着，立等换了衣服，姐儿两个坐了车，一时进了宁府。早有贾珍之妻尤氏与贾蓉之妻秦氏婆媳两个，引了多少姬妾、丫鬟、媳妇等接出仪门。那尤氏一见了凤姐，必先笑嘲一阵，一手携了宝玉同人上房来归坐。秦氏献茶毕，凤姐因说：“你们请我来作什么，有什么好东西孝敬我，就快献上来，我还有事呢。”尤氏秦氏未及答话，地下几个姬妾先就笑说：“二奶奶今儿不来就罢，既来了就依不得二奶奶了。”正说着，只见贾蓉进来请安。宝玉因问：“大哥哥今日不在家？”尤氏道：“出城请老爷安去了。”又道：“可是你怪闷的，也坐在这里作什么？何不去逛逛？”

秦氏笑道：“今儿巧，上回宝叔立刻要见的我那兄弟，他今儿也在这里，想在书房里呢，宝叔何不去瞧一瞧？”宝玉听了，即便下炕要走。尤氏、凤姐都忙说：“好生着，忙什么？”一面便吩咐人好生小心跟着，别委曲着他，倒比不得跟了老太太过来就罢了。凤姐说道：“既这么着，何不请进这秦小爷来，我也瞧一瞧。难道我见不得他不成。”尤氏笑道：“罢，罢！可以不必见他，比不得咱们家的孩子们，胡打



you, she obviously wants you to have a little fun, so don't disappoint her. Even if you had business you ought to go."

Xifeng had just agreed when Li Wan, Yingchun, Tanchun and the other girls came in to say goodnight, after which all retired to their own rooms.

The next day after Xifeng had finished her toilet she went to tell Lady Wang that she was off. She then went to the Lady Dowager; and when Baoyu heard where she was going he insisted on going too. Xifeng had to agree and wait until he had changed. Then the two of them drove quickly to the Ning Mansion.

Jia Zhen's wife Madam You and Jia Rong's wife Qin Keqing had gathered a troop of concubines and maids to welcome them at the ceremonial gate. Having greeted Xifeng in her usual teasing fashion, Madam You led Baoyu to a seat in the drawing room.

When Keqing had served tea Xifeng asked, "Well, what did you invite me for today? If you've something good for me, hand it over quickly, I've other things to attend to."

Before Madam You or Keqing could reply, a concubine retorted laughingly. "In that case you shouldn't have come. Now that you're here, madam, you can't have it all your own way."

Jia Rong entered then to pay his respects, and Baoyu asked if Jia Zhen were at home.

"He's gone out of town to inquire after his father's health," said Madam You. "But you must find it dull sitting here. Why not go out for a stroll?"

"As it happens," put in Keqing, "my brother whom Uncle Bao was so eager to meet last time is here today. He's probably in the library. Why don't you go and have a look, uncle?"

But as Baoyu slipped down from the *kang* Madam You and Xifeng interposed, "Steady on. What's the hurry?" They ordered some maids to go with him. "Don't let him get into any trouble," they warned. "The old lady isn't here to keep an eye on him today."

"Why not ask young Master Qin in here?" suggested Xifeng. "Then I can see him too. Or am I forbidden to see him?"

"You'd much better not," retorted Madam You. "He's not like our



海摔的惯了。人家的孩子都是斯斯文文的惯了的，乍见了你这破落户，还被人笑话死了呢。”凤姐笑道：“普天下的人，我不笑话就罢了，竟叫这小孩子笑话我不成？”贾蓉笑道：“不是这话，他生的腴腆，没见过大阵仗儿，婶子见了，没的生气。”凤姐道：“他是哪吒，我也要见一见！别放你娘的屁了。再不带来，看给我一顿好嘴巴子。”贾蓉笑嘻嘻的说：“我不敢强，就带他来。”

说着，果然出去带进一个小后生来，较宝玉略瘦巧些，清眉秀目，粉面朱唇，身材俊俏，举止风流，似在宝玉之上，只是怯怯羞羞，有女儿之态，腴腆含糊的向凤姐作揖问好。凤姐喜的先推宝玉，笑道：“比下去了！”便探身一把携了这孩儿的手，就叫他身旁坐了，慢慢问他年纪读书等事。方知他学名叫秦钟。早有凤姐的丫鬟、媳妇们，见凤姐初会秦钟，并未备得表礼来，遂忙过那边里告诉平儿。平儿素知凤姐与秦氏厚密，虽是小后生家，亦不可太俭，遂自做主意，拿了一匹尺头、两个“状元及第”的小金锞子，交付与来人送过去。凤姐犹笑说“太简薄”等语。秦氏等谢毕。一时吃过饭，尤氏、凤姐、秦氏抹骨牌，不在话下。

那宝玉、秦钟二人，随便起坐说话。那宝玉自一见了秦钟人品，心中如有所失，痴了半日，自己心中又起了呆意，乃自思道：“天下竟有这等人物！如今看了我，竟成了泥猪癞狗了。可恨我为什么生在这侯门公府之家，若生在寒儒薄宦之家，早得与他交结了，也不枉生了一世。我虽如此比他尊



boys with their rough, rowdy ways. Other people's sons behave in a more civilized fashion. How could he face a terror like you? You'd be a laughing-stock."

"I'm the one who laughs at others." Xifeng smiled. "How can a boy laugh at *me*?"

"It's not that, aunt," said Jia Rong. "He's shy and hasn't seen much of the world. You'd have no patience with him."

"Even if he's a monster, I insist on seeing him. Don't talk like a fool! Fetch him in at once or I'll give you a good slap."

"How dare I disobey?" Jia Rong chuckled. "I'll bring him in at once."

With that, he fetched in a lad more slightly built than Baoyu yet even more handsome, with fine features, a fair complexion, red lips, a graceful figure and pleasing manners, but as bashful as a girl. He bowed shyly to Xifeng and inquired almost inaudibly after her health.

Xifeng nudged Baoyu delightedly and cried, "Now you must take a back seat." She leaned forward to take the young stranger's hand and made him sit down beside her, then began questioning him about his age and the books he was studying. She learned that his school name was Qin Zhong.

Since this was Xifeng's first meeting with Qin Zhong but she hadn't prepared the usual gifts, some of her maids had hurried back to consult Pinger. And Pinger, knowing how intimate her mistress was with Qin Keqing, decided that she would want to give the boy something handsome. So she handed them a length of silk and two small gold medallions inscribed with the wish that the owner would win first place in the Palace Examination. When these were brought Xifeng protested that the gift was too poor, while Keqing and the others thanked her profusely.

After lunch Madam You, Xifeng and Keqing sat down to a game of cards, leaving the two boys to amuse themselves as they pleased.

At sight of Qin Zhong, Baoyu had felt quite eclipsed. He lapsed into a spell of stupefaction, and then gave way to foolish fancies again. "Imagine there being such people in the world!" he thought. "Why, compared with him I'm no better than a filthy pig or mangy dog. Why did I have to be born into this noble family? If I were the son of a poor scholar or some minor official, I might have made friends with him long ago and life would

贵，可知绫锦纱罗，也不过裹了我这根死木头；美酒羊羔，也不过填了我这粪窟泥沟。‘富贵’二字，不料遭我荼毒了！”秦钟自见了宝玉形容出众，举止不群，更兼金冠绣服，娇婢侈童，秦钟心中亦自思道：“果然这宝玉怨不得人溺爱他。可恨我偏生于清寒之家，不能与他耳鬓交接，可知‘贫富’二字限人，亦世间之大不快事。”二人一样的胡思乱想。忽又有宝玉问他读什么书。秦钟见问，因实而答。二人你言我语，十来句话，越觉亲密起来。

一时摆上茶果吃茶，宝玉便说：“我们两个又不吃酒，把果子摆在里门小炕上，我们那里坐去，省得闹他们。”于是二人进里间来吃茶。秦氏一面张罗与凤姐摆酒果，一面忙进来嘱宝玉道：“宝叔，你侄儿年小，倘或言语不防头，你千万看着我，不要理他。他虽然腼腆，却性子倔强，不大随和些是有的。”宝玉笑道：“你去罢，我知道了。”秦氏又嘱他兄弟一回，方去陪凤姐。

一时，凤姐、尤氏又打发人来问宝玉：“要吃什么，外面有，只管去要。”宝玉只答应着，也无心在饮食上，只问秦钟近日家务等事。秦钟因说：“业师于去岁病故，家父又年纪老迈，残疾在身，公务繁冗，因此尚未议及再延师一事，目下不过在家温习旧课而已。再读书一事，也必须有一二知己为伴，时常大家讨论，才能进益。”宝玉不待说完，便答道：“正是呢，我们家却有个家塾，合族中有不能延师的，便可入塾读书，子弟们中，亦有亲戚在内，可以附读。我因上年业师回家去了，也现荒废着。家父之意，亦欲暂送我去且



have been worth living. Although my status is higher, I'm just a stump of rotten wood swathed in silks and satins, just a cess-pool or gutter filled with choice wines and meats. Riches and rank are anathema to me."

In Qin Zhong's eyes, Baoyu's striking appearance and ingenuous behaviour were a fine foil to his rich costume, pretty maids and handsome pages. He for his part reflected, "No wonder everyone is so fond of Baoyu. Why did I have to be born into a poor family, unable to have him as an intimate friend? What a barrier there is between wealth and poverty. This is one of the greatest curses of this life."

Thus both were lost in equally foolish reflections until Baoyu abruptly asked Qin Zhong what he was reading and, the latter answering frankly, they embarked on an animated conversation which soon made them feel even more drawn to each other. Then tea and refreshments were served.

"We two shan't be drinking any wine," said Baoyu. "Why not put a plate or two of these things on that small *kang* in the inner room and let us sit there where we won't disturb you?"

So they went inside to have their tea. And Keqing, after serving Xifeng with wine and refreshments, slipped in to tell Baoyu:

"Your nephew's young, Uncle Bao. If he says anything he shouldn't, please overlook it for my sake. He's a stubborn boy for all his shyness and likes to have his own way."

"Just leave us," Baoyu laughed. "We're all right."

Having urged her brother to behave himself, Keqing returned to Xifeng.

Presently Xifeng and Madam You sent to remind Baoyu, if he wanted anything to eat from their room, just to ask for it. Baoyu agreed but he had no interest in food, so eager was he to learn more about how his new friend lived.

"My tutor died last year," confided Qin Zhong. "My father's old and unwell, with so much to keep him busy that he hasn't had time to find me another yet. At present I'm just going over old lessons at home. In any case, in studying you need one or two congenial companions to talk things over with from time to time, to get the best out of it."

"Just what I think," broke in Baoyu. "We have a school for members of our clan who can't engage a tutor, and some other relatives attend it too. My tutor went home last year, so I'm at a loose end myself for the

温习着旧书，待明年业师上来，再各自在家里亦可。家祖母因说：一则家学里子弟太多，生恐大家淘气，反不好；二则也因我病了几日，遂暂且耽搁着。如此说来，尊翁如今也为此事悬心。今日回去，何不禀明，就往我们这敝塾中来，我亦相伴，彼此有益，岂不是好事？”秦钟笑道：“家父前日在家提起延师一事，也曾提起这里的义学倒好，原要来和这里的亲翁商议引荐。因这里又事忙，不便为这点小事来聒絮的。宝叔果然度小侄或可以磨墨涤砚，何不速速的作成，彼此不致荒废，又可以常相谈聚，又可以慰父母之心，又可以得朋友之乐，岂不是美事？”宝玉道：“放心，放心。咱们回去先告诉你姐夫、姐姐和琏二嫂子。你今日回家就禀明令尊，我回去再回明祖母，再无不速成之理的。”二人计议已定。那天色已是掌灯时候，出来，又看他们玩了一回牌。算账时，却又是秦氏、尤氏二人输了戏酒的东道，言定后日吃这东道。一面又说传晚饭。

饭毕，因天黑了，尤氏说：“先派两个小子送了这秦相公家去。”媳妇们传出去半日，秦钟告辞起身。尤氏问：“派了谁人送去？”媳妇们回说：“外头派了焦大，谁知焦大醉了，又骂呢。”尤氏秦氏都说道：“偏又派他作什么！放着这些小子们，那一个派不得？偏又惹他去！”凤姐道：“我成日家说你太软弱了，纵的家里人这样，还了得呢。”尤氏叹道：“你





time being. My father wanted to send me to this school to go over the old lessons until my tutor returns next year, when I can go on studying alone at home. But my grandmother was against it, for fear so many boys would get up to mischief; and as I've been unwell for a few days the matter's been dropped for a while.

"If, as you say, your worthy father is concerned over this, why not tell him about it when you go home today, and come and study in our school? I'll be your schoolfellow, and we can help each other. What could be better?"

"The other day when my father brought up the question of a tutor he spoke highly of this free school here," replied Qin Zhong eagerly. "He meant to come and talk it over with Lord Zhen, but didn't like to trouble him about such a trifle when everyone here is so busy. If you think, Uncle Bao, I could grind your ink or wash the inkstone for you, let's try to fix it as soon as possible. Then neither of us need waste our time, we'd have plenty of chances to talk, our parent's minds would be set at rest, and we could become real friends. Wouldn't that be fine?"

"Don't worry," said Baoyu. "Let's go and tell your brother-in-law and sister, as well as Sister Xifeng. You can speak to your father when you get home, and I'll tell my grandmother. There's no reason why it shouldn't be arranged quickly."

By the time this was settled, lamps were being lit and they went out to watch the game. When the score was reckoned, Keqing and Madam You had lost again and it was agreed that they should stand treat to a meal and an opera show in two days' time. Then they chatted a while.

After dinner, because it was dark, Madam You suggested that they send two men-servants to see Qin Zhong home, and maids went out with these orders. When some time later the boy took his leave, she asked who was to accompany him.

"Jiao Da," said the maids. "But he's roaring drunk and using foul language again."

"But why send him?" protested Madam You and Keqing. "We've all those young fellows who could go. Why pick Jiao Da?"

"I've always said you're too soft with your servants," was Xifeng's comment. "Fancy letting them have their own way like this!"



难道不知这焦大的？连老爷都不理他，你珍大哥也不理他。只因他从小儿跟着太爷们出过三四回兵，从死人堆里，把太爷背了出来，得了命；自己挨着饿，却偷了东西来给主子吃；两日没得水，得了半碗水给主子喝，他自己喝马溺。不过仗着这些功劳情分，有祖宗时都另眼相待，如今谁肯难为他？他自己又老了，又不顾体面，一味的吃酒，一吃醉了，无人不骂。我常说给管事的，不要派他差事，全当一个死的就完了。今儿又派了他。”凤姐道：“我何曾不知这焦大。倒是你们没主意，有这样，何不打发他远远的庄子上去就完了。”说着，因问：“我们的车可备齐了？”地下众人都应：“伺候齐了。”

凤姐亦起身告辞，和宝玉携手同行。尤氏等送至大厅，只见灯烛辉煌，众小厮都在丹墀侍立。那焦大又恃贾珍不在家，即在家亦不好怎样，更可以恣意的洒落洒落。因趁着酒兴，先骂大总管赖二，说他不公道，欺软怕硬，“有了好差事，就派别人，像这等黑更半夜送人的事，就派我。没良心的忘八羔子！瞎充管家！你也不想想，焦大太爷跷起一支腿，比你的头还高呢。二十年头里的焦大太爷眼里有谁？别说你们这一把子杂种王八羔子们！”

正骂的兴头上，贾蓉送凤姐的车出去，众人喝他不听，贾蓉忍不得，便骂了两句，使人捆起来，“等明日酒醒了，问他，还寻死不寻死了！”那焦大那里把贾蓉放在眼里，反大叫起来，赶着贾蓉叫：“蓉哥儿，你别在焦大跟前使主子性儿。别说你这样儿的，就是你爹、你爷爷，也不敢和焦大挺



“You know Jiao Da, surely?” Madam You sighed. “Not even the master can control him, let alone your Cousin Zhen. He went out with our great-grandfather on three or four expeditions when he was young, and saved his master’s life by carrying him off a battlefield heaped with corpses. He went hungry himself but stole food for his master; and after two days without water, when he got half a bowl he gave it to his master and drank horse urine himself. Because of these services, he was treated with special consideration in our great-grandfather’s time and nobody likes to interfere with him now. But since growing old he has no regard for appearances. He does nothing but drink and when he’s drunk he abuses everyone. Time and again I’ve told the stewards to write him off and not give him any jobs. Yet he’s being sent again today.”

“Of course I know Jiao Da, but you ought to be able to handle him,” scoffed Xifeng. “Pack him off to some distant farm and have done with it.” She asked if her carriage was ready.

“Ready waiting, madam,” said the attendants.

Xifeng rose to take her leave and led Baoyu out. Madam You and the others escorted them to the main hall, where by the bright light of lanterns they saw attendants waiting in the court. Because Jia Zhen was out — though he could have done nothing even if at home — Jiao Da was fairly letting himself go. Roaring drunk, he lashed out at the head steward Lai Er’s injustice, calling him a cowardly bully.

“You give all the soft jobs to others, but when it comes to seeing someone home late at night in the dark you send me. Black-hearted son of a turtle! A fine steward you are! I can lift my leg up higher than your head. Twenty years ago I’d nothing but contempt for this household, not to mention you bastards, you crew of turtle-eggs.”

He was cursing away full blast as Jia Rong saw Xifeng in her carriage out, and ignored all the servant’s shouts to him to be quiet. Jia Rong could hardly let this pass. He swore at Jiao Da and told men to tie him up.

“We’ll ask him tomorrow, when he’s sobered up, what he means by this disgraceful behaviour,” he blustered.

Jiao Da had a low opinion, of course, of Jia Rong. He bore down on him bellowing still more angrily:

“Don’t try to lord it over Jiao Da, young Brother Rong! Not to speak



腰子呢!不是焦大一个人,你们就做官儿、享荣华、受富贵?你祖宗九死一生挣下这个家业,到如今,不报我的恩,反和我充起主子来了。不知我说别的还可,若再说别的,咱们白刀子进去红刀子出来!”凤姐在车上说与贾蓉:“以后还不早打发了,这没王法的东西,留在这里岂不是祸害?倘或亲友知道了岂不笑话咱们这样的人家,连个王法规矩都没有?”贾蓉答应“是”。

众小厮见他撒野不堪了,只得上来几个,揪翻捆倒,拖到马圈里去。焦大越发连贾珍都说出来,乱嚷乱叫说:“我要往祠堂里哭太爷去。那里承望到如今,生下这些畜牲来!每日家偷狗戏鸡,爬灰的爬灰,养小叔子的养小叔子,我什么不知道?咱们‘胳膊折了往袖子里藏’!”众小厮们听他说出这些没天日的话来,唬得魂飞魄丧,也不顾别的,便把他捆起来,用土和马粪满满的填了他一嘴。

凤姐和贾蓉等也遥遥的闻得,便都装作听不见。宝玉在车上见这般醉闹,倒也有趣,因问凤姐道:“姐姐,你听他说‘爬灰的爬灰’,什么是‘爬灰’?”凤姐听了,连忙竖眉瞪目,乱喝道:“少胡说!那是醉汉嘴里混噁。你是什么样的人,不说不听见,还要细问!等我回去回了老太太,仔细捶你不捶你!”吓的宝玉连忙央告:“好姐姐,我再不敢了。”凤姐道:“这才是呢。等咱们到了家,回了老太太,打发你同你秦家侄儿学里念书去要紧。”说着,自回荣府而来。要知



of the likes of you, not even your dad or granddad dare stand up to Jiao Da. If not for me, and me alone, you'd have no official posts, fancy titles or riches. It was your great-granddad who built up this estate, and nine times I snatched him back from the jaws of death. Now instead of showing yourselves properly grateful, you try to lord it over me. Shut up, and I'll overlook it. Say one word more, and I'll bury a white blade in you and pull it out red!"

"Why don't you get rid of this lawless wretch?" asked Xifeng from her carriage. "He's nothing but a source of trouble. If this came to the ears of our relatives and friends, how they'd laugh at the lack of rules and order here."

As Jia Rong agreed to this, some servants overpowered Jiao Da and dragged him off towards the stables, for this time he had really gone too far. Then he let loose a flood of abuse in which even Jia Zhen was included.

"Let me go to the Ancestral Temple and weep for my old master," he fumed. "Little did he expect to beget such degenerates, a houseful of rutting dogs and bitches in heat, day in and day out scratching in the ashes⁵ and carrying on with younger brothers-in-law. Don't think you can fool me. I only tried to hide the broken arm in your sleeve...."

These obscenities frightened the servants half out of their wits. Hurriedly trussing him up, they stuffed his mouth with mud and horse-dung.

Xifeng and Jia Rong pretended not to have heard, whereas Baoyu in the carriage was rather entertained by this drunken outburst.

"Did you hear that, sister?" he asked. "What's meant by 'scratching in the ashes'?"

"Don't talk nonsense," snapped Xifeng, glowering. "What's come over you? You not only listen to drunken raving but have to ask questions too. Just wait until we get back and I tell your mother — you'll pay for this with a thrashing."

"Dear sister," apologized Baoyu fearfully, "I promise not to do it again."

"That's more like it, brother. The important thing, once we're home, is to talk to the old lady about sending you and your nephew Qin Zhong to school."

They were back now in the Rong Mansion. To know what followed,

端的，且听下回分解。

正是：

不因俊俏难为友，正为风流始读书。

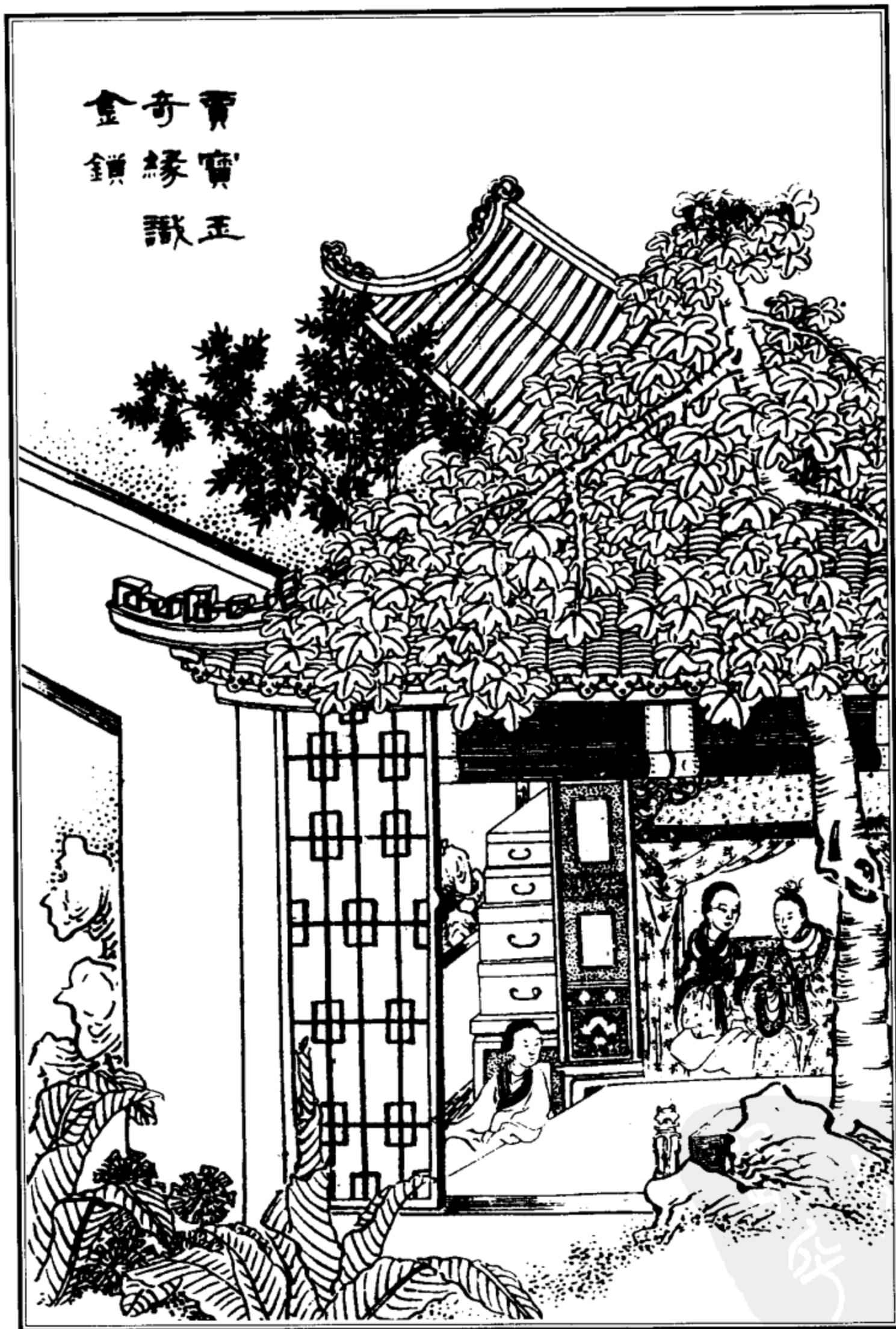




turn to the next chapter.

Good looks pave the way to friendship,
A mutual attraction starts boys studying.





第八回

拦酒兴李奶母讨厌 掷茶杯贾公子生嗔

话说凤姐和宝玉回家，见过众人。宝玉先便回明贾母秦钟要上家塾之事，自己也有了个伴读的朋友，正好发奋；又着实的称赞秦钟的人品行事，最使人怜爱。凤姐又在旁帮着说“过日他还来拜老祖宗”等语，说的贾母喜悦起来。凤姐又趁势请贾母后日过去看戏。贾母虽年老，却极有兴头。至后日，又有尤氏来请，遂携了王夫人、林黛玉、宝玉等过去看戏。至晌午，贾母便回来歇息了。王夫人本是好清净的，见贾母回来也就回来了。然后凤姐坐了首席，尽欢至晚无话。

却说宝玉因送贾母回来，待贾母歇了中觉，意欲还去看戏取乐，又恐扰的秦氏等人不便，因想起近日薛宝钗在家养病，未去亲候，意欲去望他一望。若从上房后角门过去，又恐遇见别事缠绕，再或可巧遇见他父亲，更为不妥，宁可绕远路罢了。当下众嬷嬷、丫鬟伺候他换衣服，见他不换，仍出二门去了，众嬷嬷、丫鬟只得跟随出来，还只当他去那府中看戏。谁知到了穿堂，便向东北绕厅后而去。偏顶头遇见





Chapter 8

Nanny Li Makes a Nuisance of Herself by Warning Against Drinking Baoyu Breaks a Teacup and Flies into a Temper

After Xifeng and Baoyu reached home and had paid their greetings, Baoyu told the Lady Dowager of Qin Zhong's eagerness to attend their clan school, and the incentive it would be for him to have a friend and companion in his studies. He painted a glowing picture of the other boy's admirable character and lovable qualities.

Xifeng backed him up, adding, "In a day or two Qin Zhong will be coming to pay his respects to our Old Ancestress." She then took advantage of the old lady's pleasure at this news to invite her to the opera in two days' time.

In spite of her age, the Lady Dowager looked forward to any excitement. When the day arrived and Madam You came to invite her, she took Lady Wang, Daiyu, Baoyu and others along to watch the performances.

At noon the old lady went home for her siesta. And Lady Wang, who liked peace and quiet, returned too after her mother-in-law's departure. Then Xifeng moved into the seat of honour and enjoyed herself to the full until the evening.

After Baoyu had seen his grandmother back for her nap, he would have returned to see the show if not for his reluctance to disturb Keqing and the rest. Remembering that he had not gone in person to ask after Baochai's recent indisposition, he decided to pay her a visit. He feared that if he went past the main apartment something might happen to hold him up, while he dreaded still more the thought of meeting his father. So he decided to go the long way round.

His nurses and maids were waiting to take off his ceremonial clothes, but he went out again without changing. They followed him through the second gate under the impression that he was going back to the other mansion, instead of which he turned northeast round the back of the hall.



了门下清客相公詹光、单聘仁二人走来，一见了宝玉，便都笑着赶上来，一个抱住腰，一个携着手，都道：“我的菩萨哥儿，我说作了好梦呢，好容易得遇见了你。”说着，请了安，又问好，唠叨半日，方才去了。这老嬷嬷又叫住问：

“你二位是往老爷跟前去的不是？”他二人点头道：“老爷在梦坡斋小书房里歇中觉呢，不妨事的。”一面说，一面走了。说的宝玉也笑了。于是转弯向北奔梨香院来。可巧银库房的总领名唤吴新登与仓上的头目名唤戴良，还有几个管事的头目，共有七个人，从帐房里出来，一见了宝玉，赶来都一齐垂手站住。独有一个买办名唤钱华的，因他多日未见宝玉，忙上来打千儿请安，宝玉忙含笑携他起来。众人都笑道：“前儿在一处看见二爷写的斗方，字儿益发好了，多早晚赏我们几张贴贴。”宝玉笑道：“在那里看见了？”众人道：“好几处都有，都称赞的了不得，还和我们寻呢。”宝玉笑道：“不值什么，你们说与我的小么儿们就是了。”一面说，一面前走，众人待他过去，方都各自散了。

闲言少述，且说宝玉来至梨香院中，先入薛姨妈室中来，见薛姨妈打点针黹与丫鬟们呢。宝玉忙请了安，薛姨妈忙一把拉了他，抱入怀内，笑说：“这么冷天，我的儿，难为你想着来，快上炕来坐着罢。”命人倒滚滚的茶来。宝玉因问：“哥哥不在家？”薛姨妈叹道：“他是没笼头的马，天天逛





There, however, he ran into two of his father's proteges, Zhan Guang and Shan Pinren, who hurried forward smiling. One threw an arm round him, the other took his hand.

"Little Bodhisattva!" they cried. "We so rarely see you, this is a delightful surprise."

Having paid their respects, asked after his health and chatted for a while, they were moving on when his nurse inquired if they were going to see the master.

They nodded. "His Lordship is sleeping now in his Mengpo Studio. Don't worry," they assured Baoyu, moving on.

These words made Baoyu laugh in spite of himself. He then turned north and hurried towards Pear Fragrance Court. Just then the chief treasurer Wu Xindeng and the manager of the granaries Dai Liang emerged from the counting-house with five other stewards. They hurried forward at sight of Baoyu and stood at respectful attention. One of them, Qian Hua, who had not seen Baoyu for some time, stepped forward and fell on one knee. Smiling slightly, Baoyu quickly helped him up, while one of the other men said cheerfully:

"The other day we saw some inscriptions written by you, young master. Your calligraphy's even better than before. When will you give us a few samples to put on our walls?"

"Where did you see them?" asked Baoyu.

"In several places," they answered. "People admire them so much they asked us to get them some."

"They're not worth having," protested Baoyu, laughing. "But you can ask my pages for some if you want."

The whole party waited until he had walked on before going their different ways. But enough of this digression.

On reaching Pear Fragrance Court, Baoyu went first to see Aunt Xue, whom he found distributing sewing to her maids. He paid his respects to his aunt, who caught him in her arms and hugged him.

"How good of you to come, dear boy, on a cold day like this." She beamed. "But get up here quickly on the warm *kang*." She ordered hot tea to be served.

"Is Cousin Pan at home?" asked Baoyu.



不了，那里肯在家一日？”宝玉道：“姐姐可大安了？”薛姨妈道：“可是呢，你前儿又想着打发人瞧他。他在里间呢，你去瞧他，里间比这里暖和，那里坐着，我收拾收拾就进来和你说话儿。”宝玉听说，忙下了炕，来至里间门前，只见吊着半旧的红绸软帘。宝玉掀帘，一迈步进去，先就看见薛宝钗坐在炕上作针线，头上挽着漆黑油光的鬓儿，蜜合色棉袄，玫瑰紫二色金银鼠比肩褂，葱黄绫棉裙，一色半新不旧，看去不觉奢华。唇不点而红，眉不画而翠，脸若银盆，眼如水杏。罕言寡语，人谓藏愚；安分随时，自云守拙。宝玉一面看，一面口内问：“姐姐可大愈了？”宝钗抬头，只见宝玉进来，连忙起身笑答道：“已经大好了，倒多谢记挂着。”说着，让他在炕沿上坐了，即命莺儿斟茶来。一面又问老太太、姨娘安，别的姐妹们都好？一面看宝玉头上戴着纁丝嵌宝紫金冠，额上勒着二龙抢珠金抹额，身上穿着秋香色立蟒白狐腋箭袖，系着五色蝴蝶鸾绦，项上挂着长命锁、记名符，另外有那一块落草时衔来的宝玉。宝钗因笑说道：“成日人家说你的这玉，究竟未曾细细的赏鉴，我今儿倒要瞧瞧。”说着便挪近前来。宝玉亦凑了上去，从项上摘了下来，递在宝钗手内。宝钗托于掌上，只见大如雀卵，灿若明霞，莹润如酥，五色纹缠护。这就是大荒山中青埂峰下的那块顽石的幻相。后人诗嘲云：





"Ah, he's like a horse without a halter," she sighed. "He's for ever rushing about outside. Not a day does he spend at home."

"Is Baochai better?"

"Yes, thank you. It was thoughtful of you to send over to ask how she was the other day. She's in her room now. Why not go in and see her? It's warmer there. Go and keep her company and I'll join you as soon as I'm through here."

Baoyu promptly slipped off the *kang* and went to his cousin's door, before which hung a somewhat worn red silk portière. Lifting this he stepped inside.

Baochai was sewing on the *kang*. Her glossy black hair was knotted on top of her head. She was wearing a honey-coloured padded jacket, a rose-red sleeveless jacket lined with brown- and snow-weasel fur, and a skirt of leek-yellow silk. There was nothing ostentatious about her costume, which was none too new. Her lips needed no rouge, her blue-black eyebrows no brush; her face seemed a silver disk, her eyes almonds swimming in water. Some might think her reticence a cloak for stupidity; but circumspect as she was she prided herself on her simplicity.

As Baoyu observed her he asked, "Are you better now, cousin?"

Baochai looked up and rose swiftly to her feet, saying, "Ever so much better, thank you for your kind concern."

She made him sit on the edge of the *kang* and told Yinger to pour tea. As she asked after the old lady and her aunts and cousins, she took in Baoyu's costume.

He was wearing a golden filigree coronet studded with gems, a gold chaplet in the form of two dragons fighting for a pearl, a yellowish green archer's jacket embroidered with serpents and lined with white fox-fur, and a sash embroidered with many-coloured butterflies. From his neck hung a longevity locket, a talisman inscribed with his name, and the precious jade found in his mouth at the time of his birth.

"I've heard so much about that jade of yours but I've never seen it," said Baochai edging forward. "Do let me have a good look at it today."

Baoyu leaned forward too, and taking the stone from his neck laid it in her hand. She held it on her palm. It was the size of a sparrow's egg, iridescent as clouds at sunrise, smooth as junket, and covered with coloured lines. This

女娲炼石已荒唐，又向荒唐演大荒。
 失去幽灵真境界，幻来亲就臭皮囊。
 好知运败金无彩，堪叹时乖玉不光。
 白骨如山忘姓氏，无非公子与红妆。

那顽石亦曾记下他这幻相，并癞僧所镌的篆文，今亦按图画于后。但其真体最小，方能从胎中小儿口内衔下。今若按其体画，恐字迹过于微细，使观者大费眼光，亦非畅事。故今只按其形式，无非略展放些规矩，使观者便于灯下醉中可阅。今注明此故，方无“胎中之儿口有多大，怎得衔此狼狽蠢物”等语之谤。

通灵宝玉正面图式

通灵宝玉
 莫失莫忘
 仙寿恒昌

通 灵 宝 玉

仙
寿
恒
昌

莫
失
莫
忘





was the form taken by the stupid Stone from the foot of Blue Ridge Peak in Great Waste Mountain. A later poet wrote these mocking lines:

Fantastic, Nu Wa's smelting of the stone,
Now comes fresh fantasy from the Great Waste;
The Stone's true sphere and spirit lost,
It takes a new form stinking and debased.
Know that when fortune frowns, pure gold is dulled,
And jade, in evil times, will cease to shine;
Heaped high the white bones of the nameless dead,
Who in their day were lords and ladies fine.

The stupid Stone had also recorded its transformation and below we shall reproduce the seal characters engraved on it by the scabby monk.

As the jade was small enough to be beld in the mouth of a new-born child, if we were to reproduce the real size of the characters they would be so minute that our readers would find them a troublesome strain on their eyes. We are therefore enlarging them to scale to enable readers to study them by lamplight or even in their cups. This point is made clear so that nobody may sneer, "How big a mouth could an infant in the womb have, to hold this clumsy object!"

The obverse side read:

Precious Jade of Spiritual Understanding
Never Lose, Never Forget,
Eternal Life, Lasting Prosperity.

玉寶靈通
萬劫不磨
長生不老



通灵宝玉反面图式

或为成
 舒猿除
 祥夙足
 百顺亲

三	二	一
知	疗	除
祸	冤	邪
福	疾	祟

宝钗看毕，又从新翻过正面来细看，口内念道：“莫失莫忘，仙寿恒昌。”念了两遍，乃回头向莺儿笑道：“你不去倒茶，也在这里发呆作什么？”莺儿嘻嘻笑道：“我听这两句话，倒像和姑娘的项圈上的两句话是一对儿。”宝玉听了，笑说道：“原来姐姐那项圈上也有八个字，我也赏鉴赏鉴。”宝钗道：“你别听他的话，没有什么字。”宝玉笑央：“好姐姐，你怎么瞧我的了呢？”宝钗被缠不过，因说道：“也是个人给了两句吉利话儿，所以镌上了，叫天天带着；不然，沉甸甸的有什么趣儿。”一面说，一面解了排扣，从里面大红袄上，将那珠宝晶莹、黄金灿烂的璎珞掏了出来。宝玉忙托了锁看时，果然一面有四个篆字，两面八个，共成两句吉谶。亦曾按式画下形相：

图式



弃不离不



继永龄芳



The reverse side:

1. Expels Evil Spirits.
2. Cures Mysterious Diseases.
3. Foretells Happiness and Misfortune.

After examining both sides Baochai turned the jade over to study the face more closely and read the inscription aloud, not once but twice. Then she turned to ask Yinger:

“Why are you standing gaping there instead of getting us tea?”

Yinger answered with a giggle, “Those two lines seem to match the words on your locket, miss.”

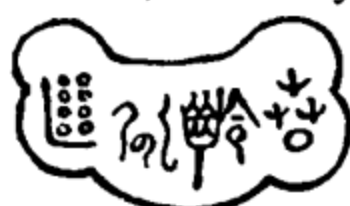
“Why, cousin,” cried Baoyu eagerly, “does that locket of yours have an inscription too? Do let me see it.”

“Don’t listen to her,” replied Baochai. “There aren’t any characters on it.”

“I let you see mine, dear cousin,” he countered coaxingly.

Cornered like this, Baochai answered, “As it happens, there is a lucky inscription on it. Otherwise I wouldn’t wear such a clumsy thing all the time.” She unbuttoned her red jacket and drew out a bright gold necklace studded with glittering pearls and jewels. Baoyu took the locket eagerly and found two inscriptions, one on either side, in the form of eight minute characters.

Never Leave, Never Abandon, Fresh Youth, Eternally Lasting.



紅樓夢
PLDG



宝玉看了，也念了两遍，又念自己的两遍，因笑问：“姐姐这八个字倒与我的是一对。”莺儿笑道：“是个癞头和尚送的，他说必须鑿在金器上……”宝钗不待他说完，便嗔他不去倒茶，一面又问宝玉从那里来。

宝玉此时与宝钗就近，只闻一阵阵凉森森、甜丝丝的幽香，竟不知是何香气，遂问：“姐姐熏的是什么香？我竟从来未闻见过这味儿。”宝钗笑道：“我最怕熏香，好好的衣服，熏的烟燎火气的。”宝玉道：“既如此，这是什么香？”宝钗想了一想，笑道：“是了，是我早起吃了丸药的香气。”宝玉笑道：“什么丸药，这么好闻？好姐姐，给我一丸尝尝。”宝钗笑道：“又混闹了，一个药也是混吃的？”

一语未了，忽听外面人说：“林姑娘来了。”话犹未了，林黛玉已摇摇的走了进来，一见宝玉，便笑道：“暖哟，我来的不巧了！”宝玉等忙起身笑让坐，宝钗因笑道：“这话怎么说？”黛玉笑道：“早知他来，我就不来了。”宝钗道：“我更不解这意。”黛玉笑道：“要来时一群都来，要不来一个也不来；今儿他来了，明儿我再来，如此间错开了来着，岂不天天有人来了？也不至于太冷落，也不至于太热闹了。姐姐如何反不解这意思？”

宝玉因见他外面罩着大红羽缎对衿褂子，因问：“下雪了么？”地下婆娘们道：“下了这半日雪珠儿了。”宝玉道：“取了我的斗篷来了不曾？”黛玉道：“是不是，我来了你就该去



Baoyu read this twice, then twice repeated his own.

“Why, cousin, this inscription of yours matches mine exactly,” he declared laughingly.

“It was given her by a scabby monk,” explained Yinger. “He said it must be engraved on something made of gold.”

Before she could say more Baochai called her to task for not bringing them some tea. Then she asked Baoyu where he had come from. He was now close enough to her to catch whiffs of some cool, sweet fragrance which he could not identify.

“What incense do you use to scent your clothes with?” he asked. “I’ve never smelt this perfume before.”

“I don’t like incense perfumes. They just make good clothes reek of smoke.”

“What is that perfume, then?”

Baochai thought for a moment. “I know. It must be the pill I took this morning.”

“What pills smell so good? Won’t you give me one to try?”

“Don’t be silly!” She laughed. “You don’t take medicine for the fun of it.”

Just then a servant outside announced, “Miss Lin is here.” And in came Daiyu.

“Ah!” she exclaimed at sight of Baoyu. “I’ve chosen a bad time to come.”

Baoyu rose with a smile to offer her a seat while Baochai asked cheerfully, “What do you mean?”

“If I’d known he was here, I wouldn’t have come.”

“That’s more puzzling than ever,” said Baochai.

“Either everybody comes at once or no one comes,” explained Daiyu mischievously. “If he came one day and I the next, spacing out our visits, you’d have callers every day and would find it neither too lonely nor too distracting. What’s so puzzling about that, cousin?”

Baoyu saw that she was wearing a crimson camlet cloak which buttoned in front. “Is it snowing outside?” he asked.

“It’s been hailing for some time,” replied the maids.

“Have they brought my cape?”



了。”宝玉笑道：“我多早晚说要去来着？不过拿来预备着。”宝玉的奶母李嬷嬷因说道：“天又下雪，也好早晚的了，就在这里同姐姐妹妹一处玩玩罢。姨妈那里摆茶果子呢。我叫丫头去取了斗篷来，说给小么儿们散了罢。”宝玉应允。李嬷嬷出去，命小厮们都各散去不提。

这里薛姨妈已摆了几样细巧茶果，留他们吃茶。宝玉因夸前日在那府里珍大嫂子的好鹅掌、鸭信。薛姨妈听了，忙也把自己糟的取了些来与他尝。宝玉笑道：“这个须得新酒才好。”薛姨妈便命人去灌了最上等的酒来。李嬷嬷便上来道：“姨太太，酒倒罢了。”宝玉笑央道：“好妈妈，我只吃一钟。”李嬷嬷道：“不中用！当着老太太、太太，那怕你吃一坛呢。想那日我眼错不见一会，不知是那一个没调教的，只图讨你的好儿，不管别人死活，给了你一口酒吃，葬送的我挨了两日骂。姨太太不知道，他性子又可恶，吃了酒，更弄性。有一日，老太太高兴了，尽着他吃；什么日子，又不许他吃，何苦我白赔在里面。”薛姨妈笑道：“老货，你只放心。吃你的去。我也不许他吃多了。便是老太太问，有我呢。”一面命小丫鬟们：“让你奶奶们去，也吃一杯搪搪雪气。”那李嬷嬷听如此说，只得和众人且去吃些酒。这里宝玉又说：“不必烫暖了，我只爱吃冷的。”薛姨妈忙道：“这可使不得，吃了冷酒，写字手打颞儿。”宝钗笑道：“宝兄弟，亏你每日家杂学旁搜的，难道就不知道酒性最热，若热吃下去，发散的就快；若冷吃下去，便凝结在内，以五脏去



“Wasn’t I right?” cried Daiyu. “As soon as I come, he must go.”

“When did I say a word about going? I just want to be prepared.”

“It’s snowing and it’s getting late now,” put in Nanny Li. “Just amuse yourself here with your cousins. Your aunt’s prepared refreshments in the other room. I’ll send a maid for your cape and tell your pages not to wait.”

As Baoyu agreed to this, his nurse went out and sent the pages away.

Meanwhile Aunt Xue had tea and other good things ready for them. When Baoyu spoke highly of the goose feet and duck tongues served a couple of days before by Madam You, she produced some of her own, pickled with distiller’s grain, for him to try.

“These taste even better with wine,” he hinted, smiling.

His aunt promptly sent for the best wine in the house.

“No wine, please, Madam Xue,” protested Nanny Li.

“Just one cup, dear nanny,” begged Baoyu.

“No, you don’t! If the Lady Dowager or Lady Wang were here I wouldn’t mind your drinking a whole jarful. But I haven’t forgotten the way they scolded me for two days on end just because some irresponsible fool who wanted to get on the right side of you gave you a sip of wine behind my back. You’ve no idea what a rascal he is, Madam Xue. And drinking brings out all the worst in him. On days when the old lady’s in a good humour she lets him drink all he wants, but on other days she won’t let him touch a drop. And I’m always the one that gets into trouble.”

“Don’t worry, poor old thing,” said Aunt Xue, laughing. “Go and have a drink yourself. I’ll see that he doesn’t drink too much. If the old lady says anything, I’ll take the blame.” She ordered her maids, “Take the nurses along to drink a few cups now to keep out the cold.” So Nanny Li had to join the other servants to enjoy her drink.

As soon as she had gone Baoyu said, “Don’t bother to heat it. I prefer cold wine.”

“That won’t do,” said his aunt. “Cold wine will make your hand shake when you write.”

“Brother Bao,” put in Baochai teasingly, “you’ve the chance every day to acquire miscellaneous knowledge. How come you don’t realize how heating wine is? Drunk hot, its fumes dissipate quickly; drunk cold, it



暖他，岂不受害？从此还不快不要吃那冷的呢。”宝玉听这话有理，便放下冷酒，命人暖来方饮。

黛玉磕着瓜子儿，只抿着嘴笑。可巧黛玉的小丫鬟雪雁走来，与黛玉送小手炉，黛玉因含笑问他说：“谁叫你送来的？难为他费心，那里就冷死我了！”雪雁道：“紫鹃姐姐怕姑娘冷，使我送来的。”黛玉一面接了，抱在怀中，笑道：

“也亏你倒听他的话。我平日和你说的，全当耳旁风；怎么他说了，你就依，比圣旨还快些！”宝玉听这话，知是黛玉借此奚落他，也无回复之词，只嘻嘻的笑两阵罢了。宝钗素知黛玉是如此惯了的，也不去睬他。薛姨妈因道：“你素日身子弱，禁不得冷的，他们记挂着，你倒不好？”黛玉笑道：

“姨妈不知道。幸亏是这里，倘或在别人家，岂不恼？难道说就看的人家连个手炉也没有，巴巴的从家里送来？不说丫头们太过于小心，还只当我素日是这等轻狂惯了呢。”薛姨妈道：“你这个多心的，有这样想，我就没这心了。”

说话时，宝玉已是三钟过去了。李嬷嬷又上来拦阻。宝玉正在心甜意洽之时，和宝、黛姊妹说说笑笑的，那肯不吃。宝玉只得屈意央告：“好妈妈，我再吃两钟就不吃了。”李嬷嬷道：“你可仔细，老爷今儿在家，提防问你的书！”宝玉听了此话，便心中大不自在，慢慢的放了酒，垂了头。黛玉慌忙的说：“别扫大家的兴！舅舅若叫你，只说姨妈留着呢。这个妈妈，他吃了酒，又拿我们来醒脾了！”一面悄推



stays in your system and absorbs heat from your vital organs. That's bad for you. So do stop drinking cold wine."

Since this made sense, Baoyu put down the wine and asked to have it warmed. Daiyu had been smiling rather cryptically as she cracked melon-seeds. Now her maid Xueyan brought in her little hand-stove.

"Who told you to bring this?" demanded Daiyu. "Many thanks. Think I was freezing to death here?"

"Zijuan was afraid you might be cold, miss, so she asked me to bring it over."

Nursing the stove in her arms Daiyu retorted, "So you do whatever she asks, but let whatever I say go in one ear and out the other. You jump to obey her instructions faster than if they were an Imperial edict."

Although Baoyu knew these remarks were aimed at him, his only reply was to chuckle. And Baochai, aware that this was Daiyu's way, paid no attention either. Aunt Xue, however, protested:

"You've always been delicate and unable to stand the cold. Why should you be displeased when they're so thoughtful?"

"You don't understand, aunt," replied Daiyu with a smile. "It doesn't matter here, but people anywhere else might well take offence. Sending a hand-stove over from my quarters as if my hosts didn't possess such a thing! Instead of calling my maids too fussy, people would imagine I always behave in this outrageous fashion."

"You take such things too seriously," said Aunt Xue. "Such an idea would never have entered my head."

By now Baoyu had already drunk three cups, and Nanny Li came in again to remonstrate. But he was enjoying himself so much talking and laughing with his cousins, he refused to stop. "Dear nanny," he coaxed, "just two more cups — that's all."

"You'd better look out," she warned. "Lord Zheng's at home today, and he may want to examine you on your lessons."

With a sinking heart, Baoyu slowly put his cup down and hung his head.

"Don't be such a spoil-sport," protested Daiyu. "If Uncle sends for you, cousin, we can say Aunt Xue is keeping you. This nanny of yours has been drinking and is working off the effects of the wine on us." She



宝玉，使他赌气；一面悄悄的咕哝说：“别理那老货，咱们只管乐咱们的。”那李嬷嬷便向黛玉笑道：“林姐儿，你不要助着他了。你倒劝劝他，只怕他还听些。”林黛玉冷笑道：“我为什么助着他？我也不犯着劝他。你这妈妈也太小心了，素日老太太又给他酒吃，如今在姨妈这里多吃一口，料也不妨事。必定姨妈这里是外人，不当在这里的，也未可知。”李嬷嬷听了，又是急，又是笑，说道：“真真这林姐儿，说出一句话来，比刀子还尖，你这算了什么？”宝钗也忍不住笑着，把黛玉腮上一拧，说道：“真真这个颦丫头的一张嘴，叫人恨又不是，喜欢又不是。”薛姨妈一面又说：“别怕，别怕，我的儿！来了这里没好的给你吃，别把这点子东西吓的存在心里，倒叫我不安。只管放心吃，有我呢。越发吃了晚饭去，便是醉了，就跟着我睡。”因命：“再烫酒来！姨妈陪你吃两杯，可就吃饭罢。”宝玉听了，方又鼓起兴来。

李嬷嬷因吩咐小丫头们：“你们在这里小心着，我家里换了衣服就来，悄悄的回姨太太，别由他的性，多给他吃。”说着便家去了。这里虽还有三两个婆子，都是不关痛痒的，见李嬷嬷走了，也都悄悄的自寻方便去了。只剩了两个小丫头，乐得讨宝玉的喜欢。幸而薛姨妈千哄万哄的，只容他吃了几杯，就忙收过了。作酸笋鸡皮汤，宝玉痛喝了两碗，吃了半碗碧粳粥。一时薛、林二人也吃完了饭，又酩酊的沏上茶来，大家吃了。薛姨妈方放了心。雪雁等三四个丫头已吃了饭，进来伺候。黛玉因问宝玉道：“你走不走？”宝玉也斜



nudged Baoyu to embolden him and whispered, "Never mind the old thing. Why shouldn't we enjoy ourselves?"

"Now, Miss Lin, don't egg him on," cried Nanny Li. "You're the only one whose advice he might listen to."

"Why should I egg him on?" Daiyu gave a little snort. "I can't be bothered with offering him advice either. You're too pernicky, nanny. The old lady often gives him wine, so why shouldn't he have a drop more here with his aunt? Are you suggesting that auntie's an outsider and he shouldn't behave like that here?"

Amused yet vexed, Nanny Li expostulated, "Really, every word Miss Lin says cuts sharper than a knife. How can you suggest such a thing?"

Even Baochai couldn't suppress a smile. She pinched Daiyu's cheek and cried, "What a tongue the girl has! One doesn't know whether to be cross or laugh."

"Don't be afraid, my child," said Aunt Xue. "I've nothing good to offer you, but I'll feel bad if you get a fright which gives you indigestion. Just drink as much as you want, I'll answer for it. You needn't leave till after supper. And if you do get tipsy you can sleep here." She ordered more wine to be heated, saying, "I'll drink a few cups with you and then we'll have our rice."

Baoyu's spirits rose again at this.

His nurse told the maids, "Stay here and keep an eye on him. I'm going home to change, then I'll come back." She urged Aunt Xue on the sly: "Madam, don't let him have it all his own way or drink too much."

When she had gone the two or three other elderly servants who were left, not being over-conscientious, slipped out to enjoy themselves. There remained only two maids eager to please Baoyu. But by dint of much coaxing and teasing, Aunt Xue kept him from drinking too many cups before the wine was whisked away. Then Baoyu had two bowls of soup made from pickled bamboo-shoots and duck-skin and half a bowl of green-rice porridge. By this time Baochai and Daiyu had finished too and all of them drank some strong tea, after which Aunt Xue felt easier in her mind.

Now Xueyan and three other maids came back from their own meal to wait on them, and Daiyu asked Baoyu:

倦眼道：“你要走，我和你一同走。”黛玉听说，遂起身道：“咱们来了这一日，也该回去了。还不知那边怎么找咱们呢？”说着，二人便告辞。

小丫头忙捧过斗笠来，宝玉便把头略低一些，命他戴上。那丫头便将这大红猩毡斗笠一抖，才往宝玉头上一合，宝玉便说：“罢，罢！好蠢东西，你也轻些儿！难道没见过别人戴过的？让我自己戴罢。”黛玉站在炕沿上道：“罗唆什么，过来，我瞧瞧罢。”宝玉忙就近前来。黛玉用手轻轻拢住束发冠，将笠沿掖在抹额上，将那一朵核桃大的绛绒簪缨扶起，颤巍巍露于笠外。整理已毕，端相了一回，说道：“好了，披上斗篷罢。”宝玉听了，方接了斗篷披上。薛姨妈忙道：“跟你们的妈妈都还没来呢，且略等等。”宝玉道：“我们倒等他们，有丫头们跟着也够了。”薛姨妈不放心，因命两个妇女跟随他兄妹方罢。他二人道了扰，一径回至贾母房中。

贾母尚未用晚饭，知是薛姨妈处来，更加欢喜。因见宝玉吃了酒，遂命他自回房去歇着，不许再出来了。因命人好生管待。忽想起跟宝玉的人来，遂问：“李嬷嬷怎不见？”众人不敢直说家去了，只说：“才进来了，想有事才去了。”宝玉踉跄回顾道：“他比老太太还受用呢，问他作什么！没有他，只怕我还多活两日。”一面说，一面来至自己的卧室。



“Are you ready to go?”

He glanced at her sidewise from under drooping eyelids. “I’ll go whenever you do.”

Daiyu promptly rose to her feet. “We’ve been here nearly all day, it’s time we left. They may be wondering where we are.”

As they took their leave their wraps were brought, and Baoyu bent his head for a maid to help him on with his hood. She shook out the crimson hood and started slipping it over his head.

“Stop, stop! Not so roughly, you silly thing,” he protested, stopping her. “Have you never seen anyone put on a hood before? Better let me do it myself.”

“What a commotion!” Daiyu stood up on the *kang*. “Come here. Let me see to it.”

Baoyu went up to Daiyu, who put her hand gently over his coronet and placed the edge of the hood on his chaplet. Then she made the red velvet pompon, the size of a walnut, bob up in front.

“That’s better,” she said, surveying her handiwork. “Now you can put on your cloak.”

As Baoyu did so his aunt remarked, “None of the nurses who came with you is here. Why not wait a bit?”

“Why should we wait for them?” he asked. “We’ve the maids to go with us. We shall be all right.”

To be on the safe side, however, Aunt Xue told two older servants to accompany them. Then Baoyu and Daiyu thanked their hostess and made their way to the Lady Dowager’s quarters.

The Lady Dowager had not yet dined but was very pleased when she learned where they had been. Observing that Baoyu had been drinking, she packed him straight off to rest, forbidding him to leave his room again that evening. As she gave orders for him to be well looked after, she wondered who was attending him and asked:

“Where’s Nanny Li?”

The maids dared not disclose that she had gone home. “She was here a moment ago,” they said. “She must have gone out on some business.”

Swaying a little, Baoyu called over his shoulder, “She has a better time of it than our old lady. Why ask for her? I wish she’d leave me in

只见笔墨在案，晴雯先接出来，笑说道：“好，好，要我研了那些墨，早起高兴，只写了三个字，丢了笔就走了，哄的我们等了一日。快来给我写完这些墨才罢！”宝玉忽然想起早起的事来，因笑道：“我写的那三个字在那里呢？”晴雯笑道：“这个人可醉了。你头里过那府里去，嘱咐我贴在这门斗上的，这会子又这么问。我还怕别人贴坏了，我亲自爬高上梯的贴上，这会子还冻的手僵冷的呢。”宝玉听了，笑道：“我忘了。你的手冷，我替你握着。”说着便伸手携了晴雯的手，同仰着看门斗上新书的三个字。

一时黛玉来了，宝玉便笑道：“好妹妹，你别撒谎，你看这三个字那一个好？”黛玉仰头看里间门斗上，新贴了三个字，写着“绛云轩”。黛玉笑道：“个个都好。怎么写的这么好？明儿也替我写一个匾。”宝玉嘻嘻的笑道：“又哄我呢。”说着又问：“袭人姐姐呢？”晴雯向里间炕上努嘴。宝玉一看，只见袭人和衣睡着在那里。宝玉笑道：“好，好，太早了些。”因又问晴雯道：“今儿我在那府里吃早饭，有碟子豆腐皮的包子，我想着你爱吃，和珍大奶奶说了，只说我留着晚上吃，叫人送过来的，你可吃了？”晴雯道：“快别提。一送了来，我知道是我的，偏我才吃了饭，就搁在那里。后来李嬷嬷来了，看见，说：‘宝玉未必吃了，拿来给我孙子吃去罢。’他就叫人拿了家去了。”接着茜雪捧上茶来。宝玉



peace to live a little longer.”

While saying this he reached his apartment, where his eye fell on the brush and ink on the desk.

Qingwen greeted him with a smile, exclaiming, “A fine one you are! You made me grind that ink for you this morning because you were feeling good; but you only wrote three characters, then threw down your brush and marched off. You’ve kept us waiting for you the whole day. You must set to work quickly now and use up this ink.”

Reminded of that morning’s happenings, Baoyu asked, “Where are the three characters I wrote?”

“This fellow’s drunk!” Qingwen laughed. “Just before you went over to the other house you told me to have them pasted above the door, yet now you ask where they are. Not trusting anyone else to do a good job, I got up on a ladder to paste them up myself. My hands are still numb with cold.”

“I forgot.” Baoyu grinned. “Let me warm your hands for you.” He took Qingwen’s hands in his while they both looked up at the inscription over the lintel.

Just then Daiyu came in and he asked her, “Tell me honestly, dear cousin, which of these three characters is the best written?”

Daiyu raised her head and read the inscription: Red Rue Studio.

“They’re all good. I didn’t know you were such a calligrapher. You must write an inscription for me some time too.”

“You’re making fun of me again.” Baoyu chuckled. “Where’s Xiren?” he asked Qingwen.

Qingwen tilted her head towards the *kang* in the inner room, where Baoyu saw Xiren lying, fully dressed.

“That’s good,” he said. “But it’s rather early to sleep. At breakfast in the other house this morning there was a plate of beancurd dumplings. Knowing you’d like them, I asked Madam You to let me have them for supper, and they were sent over. Did you get them all right?”

“Don’t ask!” answered Qingwen. “I knew at once they were meant for me, but as I’d just finished my breakfast I left them here. Then Nanny Li came and saw them. ‘Baoyu won’t be wanting these,’ she said. ‘I’ll take them for my grandson.’ She got somebody to send them home for

因让“林妹妹吃茶。”众人笑说：“林妹妹早走了，还让呢。”

宝玉吃了半碗茶，忽又想起早起的茶来，因问茜雪道：“早起沏了一碗枫露茶，我说过，那茶是三四次后才出色的，这会子怎么又沏了这个来？”茜雪道：“我原是留着的，那会子李奶奶来了，他要尝尝，就给他吃了。”宝玉听了，将手中的茶杯只顺手往地下一掷，“豁啷”一声，打了个粉碎，泼了茜雪一裙子的茶。又跳起来问着茜雪道：“他是你那一门子的奶奶，你们这么孝敬他？不过是仗着我小时候吃过他几日奶罢了。如今逞的他比祖宗还大。如今我又吃不着奶了，白白的养着祖宗似的！撵了出去，大家干净！”说着立刻要去回贾母，撵他乳母。

原来袭人并未睡着，不过故意装睡，引宝玉来恼他玩。先闻得说字问包子等事，也还可不必起来；后来摔了茶钟，动了气，遂连忙起来解释劝阻。早有贾母遣人来问是怎么了。袭人忙道：“我才倒茶来，被雪滑倒了，失手砸了钟子。”一面又安慰宝玉道：“你立意要撵他也好，我们也都愿意出去，不如趁势连我们一齐撵了，我们也好，你也不愁没有好的来伏侍。”宝玉听了这话，方无了言语，被袭人等扶至炕上，脱换了衣服。不知宝玉口内还说些什么，只觉口齿绵缠，眼眉愈加恹涩，忙伏侍他睡下。袭人伸手从他项上摘下那通灵玉来，用自己的手帕包好，塞在褥下，次日带时便冰不着脖子。那宝玉就枕便睡着了。彼时李嬷嬷等已进来



her.”

At this point Qianxue brought in tea and Baoyu said, “Do have some tea, Cousin Lin.”

The maids burst out giggling. “She’s gone long ago. Yet you offer her tea.”

After drinking half a cup himself he remembered something else and asked Qianxue, “Why did you bring me this tea? This morning we brewed some maple-dew tea, and I told you its flavour doesn’t really come out until after three or four steepings.”

“I did save that other tea,” she replied. “But Nanny Li insisted on trying it and she drank it all.”

This was too much for Baoyu. He dashed the cup to pieces on the floor, spattering the maid’s skirt with tea. Then springing to his feet he stormed:

“Is she your grandmother, that all of you treat her so respectfully? Just because she suckled me for a few days when I was small, she carries on as if she were more important than our own ancestors. I don’t need a wet-nurse any more, why should I keep an ancestress like this? Send her packing and we’ll all have some peace and quiet.”

He wanted to go straight to his grandmother to have the old woman dismissed.

Now Xiren had only been shamming sleep, in the hope that Baoyu would come in to tease her. She hadn’t troubled to get up when he asked about the dumplings; but now that he had smashed a cup and flown into a passion she jumped up and came out to smooth things over, just as a maid arrived from his grandmother to ask the reason for the noise. “I’d just poured out some tea,” said Xiren. “I slipped because of snow on my shoes and the cup was smashed.”

Then she turned to calm Baoyu. “So you’ve decided to dismiss her. Good. We’d all like to leave. Why not take this chance to get rid of the lot of us? That would suit us, and you’d get better attendants too.”

Thus silenced, Baoyu let them help him to the *kang* and take off his clothes. He was still mumbling to himself but could hardly keep his eyes open, so they put him straight to bed. Xiren took the precious jade off his neck, wrapped it up in her own handkerchief and tucked it under his

了，听见醉了，不敢前来再加触犯，只悄悄的打听睡了，方放心散去。

次日醒来，就有人回：“那边小蓉大爷带了秦相公来拜。”宝玉忙接了出去，领了拜见贾母。贾母见秦钟形容标致，举止温柔，堪陪宝玉读书，心中十分欢喜，便留茶留饭，又命人带去见王夫人等。众人因素爱秦氏，今见了秦钟是这般的人品，也都欢喜，临去时都有表礼。贾母又与了一个荷包并一个金魁星，取“文星和合”之意。又嘱咐他道：“你家住的远，或有一时寒热饥饱不便，只管住在我这里，不必限定了。只和你宝叔在一处，别跟着那一起不长进的东西们学。”秦钟一一的答应，回去禀知。

他父亲秦业，现任营缮郎，年近七十，夫人早亡。因当年无儿女，便向养生堂抱了一个儿子并一个女儿。谁知儿子又死了，只剩女儿，小名唤可儿，长大后，生的形容袅娜，性格风流。因素与贾家有些瓜葛，故结了亲，许与贾蓉为妻。那秦业至五旬之上，方得了秦钟。因去岁业师亡故，未暇延请高明之士，只得暂时在家温习旧课。正思要和亲家去商议，送往他家塾中，暂且不致荒废，可巧遇见了宝玉这个机会。又且贾家现今司塾的是贾代儒，乃当今之老儒，秦钟



mattress, so that it should not be cold to the touch when he put it on the next day.

Baoyu fell asleep as soon as his head touched the pillow. Meantime Nanny Li had come in. Hearing that he was drunk she dared not risk further trouble, and having quietly made sure that he was asleep she left easier in her mind.

Upon waking the next morning, Baoyu was told that Jia Rong from the other mansion had brought Qin Zhong over to pay his respects. He hastened to greet his new friend and presented him to the Lady Dowager, who was delighted by his handsome looks and pleasing manner. Convinced that he would make an excellent schoolmate for Baoyu, she kept him to tea and a meal, then ordered servants to take him to meet Lady Wang and the rest of the family.

Qin Keqing was a general favourite, and they liked her brother for himself as well. All gave him presents on parting. The Lady Dowager's gift was a purse containing a small golden effigy of the God of Learning symbolizing literary talent and harmony.

"You live so far away," she said, "in hot or cold weather you may find the journey too much. You are welcome to stay here and must make yourself at home. Stay with your Uncle Baoyu, and don't get into mischief with those lazy young rascals."

Qin Zhong agreed readily, then went home to report what had happened. His father Qin Ye, a secretary in the Board of Works, was nearly seventy and had lost his wife early. Having no children of his own he had adopted a son and daughter from an orphanage, but the boy had died leaving only the little girl, Keqing. She grew up to be a graceful, charming young woman. Because Qin was remotely connected with the Jia family, they arranged a match and she became Jia Rong's wife.

Qin Zhong was born when his father was over fifty. His tutor had died the previous year and Qin Ye had not yet found another; thus the boy had been revising his lessons at home. His father was thinking of approaching the Jias about sending his son to their school in order not to waste the boy's time, when as luck would have it Qin Zhong met Baoyu.

The old man was also overjoyed to learn that the school was now run by Jia Dairu, a venerable Confucian scholar under whose instruction Qin

此去，学业料必进益，成名可望，因此十分喜悦。只是宦囊羞涩，那贾家上上下下都是一双富贵眼睛，贽见礼必须丰厚，一时又不能拿出，为儿子的终身大事，说不得东拼西凑的，恭恭敬敬的封了二十四两贽见礼，亲身带了秦钟，来代儒家拜见了。然后听宝玉上学之日，好一同入塾。

正是：

早知日后闲争气，岂肯今朝错读书。





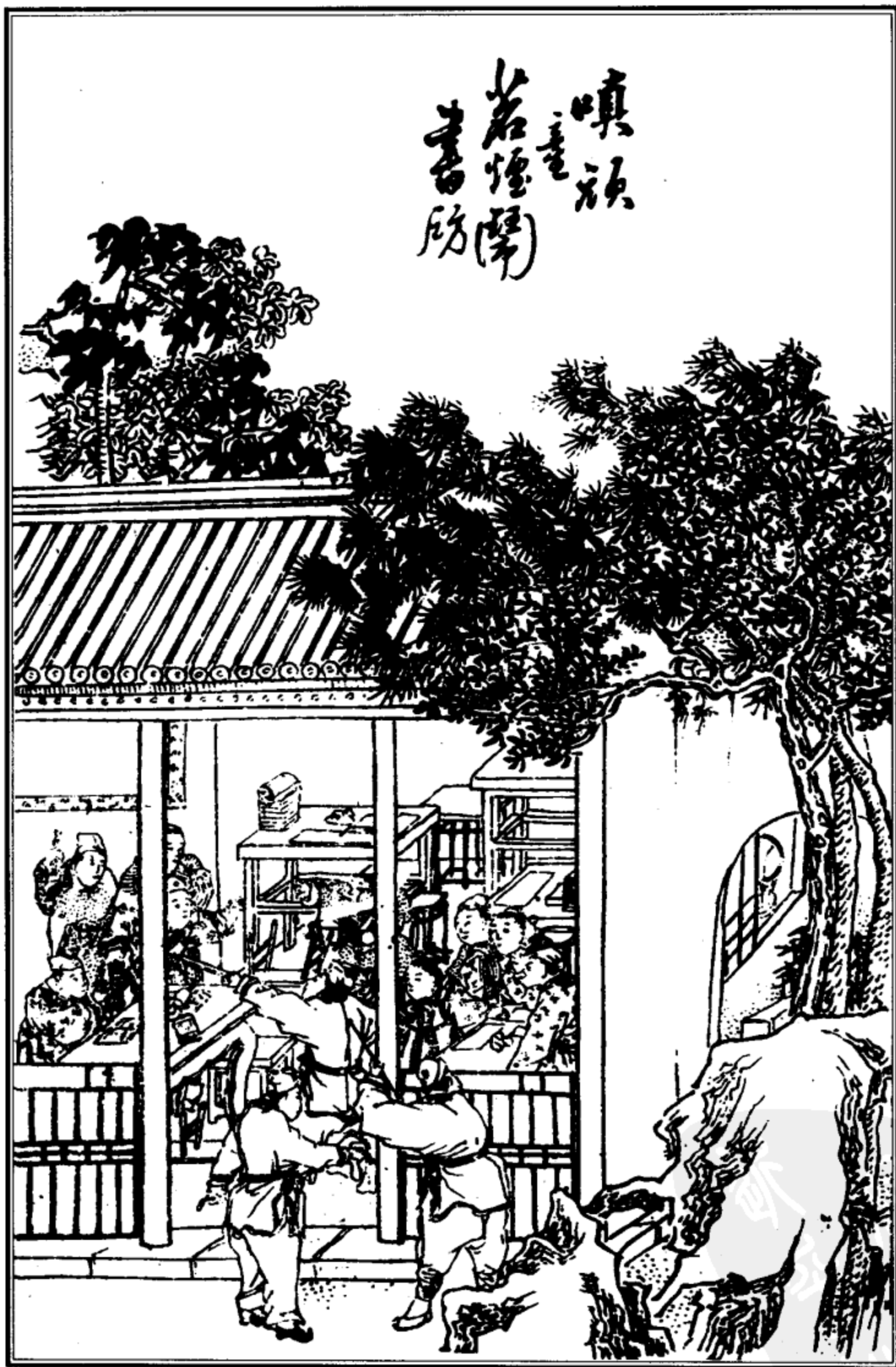
Zhong was bound to make progress and might even win a name for himself.

Qin Ye was a poor official, but the whole Jia household, high and low alike, thought so much of riches and rank that in the interest of his son's career he had to pinch and scrape to get together twenty-four taels of silver as a handsome entrance gift. Then he took Qin Zhong to pay his respects to Jia Dairu, after which they waited for Baoyu to fix a day on which both boys could enter school.

Truly:

If one knew that in time to come there would be trouble,
Who would send his son to study today?





第九回

恋风流情友入家塾 起嫌疑顽童闹学堂

话说秦业父子专候贾家的人来送上学择日之信，原来宝玉急于要和秦钟相遇，却顾不得别的，遂择了后日一定上学。“后日一早请秦相公先到我这里，会齐了，一同前去”。打发人送了信。

是日一早，宝玉未起，袭人早已把书笔文物包好，收拾得停停妥妥，坐在炕沿上发闷。见宝玉醒来，只得伏侍他梳洗。玉宝见他闷闷的，因笑问道：“好姐姐，你怎么又不自在了？难道怪我上学去，丢的你们冷清了不成？”袭人笑道：

“这是那里话。读书是极好的事，不然就潦倒一辈子，终久怎么样呢。但只一件：只是念书的时节想着书，不念的时节想着家些。别和他们一处玩闹，碰见老爷不是玩的。虽说奋志要强，那工课宁可少些，一则贪多嚼不烂，二则身子也要保重。这就是我的意思，你可要体谅着些。”袭人说一句，宝玉应一句。袭人又道：“大毛衣服我也包好了，交出给小子们去了。学里冷，好歹想着添换，比不得家里有人照看。脚炉手炉的炭也交出去了，你可着他们添。那一起懒贼，你不说，他们乐得不动，白冻坏了你。”宝玉道：“你放心，到外头我自己都会调停的。你们也别闷死在这屋里，长和林妹妹



Chapter 9

Devoted Friends Join the Clan School Mud-Slinging Boys Brawl in the Classroom

Qin Ye and his son did not have long to wait for a message from the Jia family telling them the date on which to start school, for Baoyu was so eager to be with Qin Zhong he could think of nothing else. He sent a servant with a note asking his friend to come to his house in two days' time, in the morning, to go to school together.

On the day appointed, while Baoyu was still asleep, Xiren made a neat package of his books and writing materials, then sat down dejectedly on the edge of the *kang*. When he woke, she helped him with his toilet.

"Why are you looking so unhappy, dear sister?" he asked gently. "Are you upset because you'll all feel lonely while I'm at school?"

"What an idea!" She smiled. "There's nothing like study, if you don't want to be a failure in life and get nowhere. Just remember to keep your mind on your books in class, and out of class to think of the people at home. Don't get into mischief with the other boys. It would be no joke if you were caught by the master. I know they say you should give your whole heart to study, but don't overdo it or you'll bite off more than you can chew and your health will suffer. At least that's my idea. Do think it over."

Baoyu agreed with all she said.

"I've packed your fur coats and given them to the pages," Xiren continued. "If you find the school cold, mind you put more on, because we shan't be there to look after you. I've given them charcoal for your hand-stove and foot-stove too. Mind those lazy scamps keep them filled. If you don't keep them up to scratch they won't lift a finger but leave you to freeze."

"Don't worry," Baoyu assured her. "I know how to take care of myself outside. And you mustn't stay here moping either, but drop in from time to time to chat with cousin Daiyu."

一处去玩笑才好。”说着，俱已穿戴齐备，袭人催他去见贾母、贾政、王夫人等，宝玉又嘱咐了晴雯、麝月等人几句，方出来见贾母。贾母未免也有几句嘱咐的话。然后去见王夫人，又出来书房中见贾政。

偏生这日贾政回家的早，正在书房中与相公清客们闲话。见宝玉进来请安，回说上学去，便冷笑道：“你如果再提‘上学’两个字，连我也羞死了。依我说，你竟玩你的去是正理。仔细站脏了我这地，靠脏了我的门！”众清客相公们都早起身笑道：“老世翁何必又如此。今日世兄一去，二三年就可显身成名了，断不似往年仍作小儿之态的。天也将饭时，世兄竟快请罢。”说着便有两个年老的携了宝玉的手走出去了。

贾政便问：“跟宝玉的是谁？”只听外面答应了两声，早进来了三四个大汉，打千儿请安。贾政看时，认得是宝玉的奶母之子，名唤李贵。因说道：“你跟他上了几年学，他到底念了些什么书！倒念了些流言混语在肚子里，学了些精致的淘气。等我闲了，先揭了你的皮，再和那不长进的算账！”吓的李贵忙双膝跪下，摘了帽子，碰头有声，连连答应“是”，又回说：“哥儿已念到第三本《诗经》，什么‘呦呦鹿鸣，荷叶浮萍’，小的不敢撒谎。”说的满座哄然大笑起来。贾政也撑不住笑了。说道：“那怕再念三十本《诗经》，也都是掩耳偷铃，哄人而已。你去请学里太爷的安，就说我说的：什么《诗经》、古文，一概不用虚应故事，只是先把



By now he was dressed and she urged him to pay his respects to his grandmother and parents. After some brief instructions to Qingwen and Sheyue, he took his leave of the Lady Dowager, who naturally had some advice for him too. He went next to his mother and then to his father's study.

Jia Zheng happened to have come home early today. He was talking with some secretaries and protégés when Baoyu went in to pay his respects and announce his departure to school.

"Don't make me die of shame with this talk about school." His father laughed scornfully. "All you're fit for, in my opinion, is to go on fooling about. Your presence here contaminates this place and contaminates my door."

"Your Lordship is too hard on him," protested his companions, who had risen. "A few years at school and your worthy son is sure to show his mettle and make a name. He's not a child any more. It's nearly time for breakfast, he should be off." With that, two of the older men led Baoyu out.

Jia Zheng asked who was accompanying his son, and three or four sturdy fellows who had been waiting outside came in and fell on one knee to pay their respects.

Recognizing Li Gui, the son of Baoyu's old wet-nurse, Jia Zheng demanded, "What has he learned all the time you've attended him at his lessons? Nothing but a pack of nonsense and some clever tricks. As soon as I have leisure I'll flay you alive and then settle accounts with that young reprobate."

In consternation Li Gui fell on both knees, snatched off his cap and thumped his head on the ground submissively.

"I wouldn't dare tell a lie, sir," he exclaimed. "The young master has studied three volumes of the *Book of Songs*, down to 'yu-yu cry the deer, lotus leaves and duckweed.'"

This unintentional travesty of the original line set the whole room in a roar of laughter. Even Jia Zheng himself could not help smiling.

"Even if he studied another thirty volumes, it would just be fooling people," he retorted. "Give my compliments to the school principal, and tell him from me that such works as the *Book of Songs* and classical

《四书》一气讲明背熟，是最要紧的。”李贵忙答应“是”，见贾政无话，方退了出去。

此时宝玉独站在院外屏声静候，待他们出来，便忙忙的走了。李贵等一面掸衣服，一面说道：“可听见不曾？先要揭我们的皮呢！人家的奴才跟主子赚些好体面，我们这等奴才白陪着挨打受骂的。从此后也可怜见些才好。”宝玉笑道：“好哥哥，你别委屈，我明儿请你。”李贵道：“小祖宗，谁敢望你请，只求听一两句话就完了。”说着，又至贾母这边，秦钟已早来等候了，贾母正和他说话儿呢。于是二人见过，辞了贾母。宝玉忽想起未辞黛玉，又忙至黛玉房中来作辞。彼时黛玉才在窗下对镜，听宝玉说上学去，因笑道：“好，这一去，可定是要‘蟾宫折桂’了。我不能送你了。”宝玉道：“好妹妹，等我下了学再吃晚饭，和胭脂膏子也等我来再制。”唠叨了半日，方撤身去了。黛玉忙又叫住问道：“你怎么不去辞辞你宝姐姐去？”宝玉笑而不答，竟同秦钟上学去了。

原来，贾家之义学，离此不远，不过一里之遥，系当日始祖所立，恐族中子弟，有贫穷不能请师者，即入此中肄业。凡族中有官爵之人，皆供给银两，按俸之多寡帮助，为学中之费。特共举年高有德之人为塾掌，专为训课子弟。如今宝秦二人来了，一一的都互相拜见过，读起书来。自此以



essays are a waste of time. He'd far better expound the *Four Books* and make his pupils learn them by heart."

Li Gui promised to do this and then withdrew, seeing that his master had no further orders.

All this time Baoyu had been waiting with bated breath in the courtyard. He hurried away as soon as he saw them emerging from the house.

Li Gui and the others, dusting off their clothes, asked, "Did you hear that? He's going to flay us alive. Other people's slaves get some reflected credit from their masters. All we get for waiting on you is beatings and abuse. Do have a little pity on us in future."

"Cheer up, good brothers," replied Baoyu with a smile. "I'll give you a treat tomorrow."

"Who are we to expect treats, little ancestor? Just listen to our advice once in a while."

By now they were back at the Lady Dowager's quarters. She was chatting with Qin Zhong, who had been there for some time. The two boys exchanged greetings, then took their leave of her.

Baoyu, remembering that he had not said goodbye to Daiyu, hurried to her room. She was sitting before her mirror by the window and smiled when he told her that he was off to school.

"Good," she said. "So you're going to 'pluck fragrant osmanthus in the palace of the moon.' I'm sorry I can't see you off."

"Don't have supper till I'm back, dear cousin," he begged. "And wait for me to mix your rouge."

After chatting for a while he turned to leave.

"Aren't you going to say goodbye to Baochai?" Daiyu called after him. With no answer but a smile he left with Qin Zhong.

Now this Jia family school, which was only a *li* away, had been set up several generations earlier so that members of the clan who could not afford to engage a tutor would have somewhere to educate their sons. It was supported by those with official positions, who contributed according to the size of their stipends, and an elderly man of good reputation in the clan was elected to take charge of the boys' instruction.

When Baoyu and Qin Zhong had been introduced to the other stu-

后，他二人同来同往，同坐同起，愈加亲密。又兼贾母爱惜，也时常留下这秦钟，住上三天五夜，与自己的重孙一般疼爱。因见秦钟家中不甚宽裕，更又助他些衣履等物。不上一月之后，秦钟在荣府便熟惯了。宝玉终是不安分守己的人，一味的随心所欲，因此又发了癖性，又特向秦钟悄说道：“咱二人一样的年纪，况又同窗，此后不必论叔侄，只论弟兄朋友就是了。”先是秦钟不肯，当不得宝玉不依，只叫他“兄弟”，或叫他的表字“鲸卿”，秦钟也只得混着乱叫起来。

原来，这学中虽都是本族人丁与些亲戚的子弟，俗语说的好：“一龙生九种，种种各别。”未免人多了，就有龙蛇混杂，下流人物在内。自宝、秦二人来了，都生的花朵一般的模样，又见秦钟腴腆温柔，未语面先红，怯怯羞羞，有女儿之风；宝玉又是天生成惯，能作小服低，赔身下气，性情体贴，话语绵缠，因此二人又这般亲厚，也怨不得那起同窗人起了嫌疑之念，背地里你言我语，淫污之谈，布满书房内外。

原来薛蟠自来王夫人处住后，便知有一家学，学中广有青年子弟，不免偶动了龙阳之兴，因此也假说来上学读书，不过是三日打鱼，两日晒网，白送些束脩礼物与贾代儒，却不曾有一些进益，只图结交些契弟。谁想这学内就有好几个小学生，图了薛蟠的银钱吃穿，被他哄上手的，也不消多记。更又有两个多情的小学生，亦不知是那一房的亲眷，亦未考真名姓，只因生得妩媚风流，满学中都送了他两个外



dents, they embarked on their studies. From this day onward the two of them became inseparable, going to school and leaving it together. And thanks to the Lady Dowager's partiality, Qin Zhong often stayed for a few days with the Jia family. Indeed, she treated him like one of her own grandsons, giving him clothes, shoes and other necessities when she saw that his family was hard up. In less than a month he was on good terms with everyone in the Rong Mansion.

Since Baoyu always followed his own bent regardless of what was due to his position, in his usual unconventional way he privately urged Qin Zhong: "We're the same age, and schoolmates too. Let's forget that we're uncle and nephew and just be brothers and friends."

At first Qin Zhong would not agree to this, but since Baoyu kept calling him "brother" or using his courtesy name, he started doing the same.

Now although all the pupils in this school were members of the Jia clan or relations by marriage, as the proverb so aptly says, "A dragon begets nine offspring, each one different." And inevitably among so many boys there were low types too, snakes mixed up with dragons.

These two new arrivals were both remarkably handsome. Qin Zhong was bashful and gentle, so shy that he blushed like a girl before he spoke, while Baoyu was naturally self effacing and modest, considerate to others and pleasant in his speech. And they were on such intimate terms, it was no wonder that their schoolmates suspected the worst. They began to talk about the pair behind their backs, spreading ugly rumours inside the school and out.

Now Xue Pan had not been long in the Rong Mansion before he learned of this school, and the thought of all the boys there appealed to his baser instincts. So he enrolled as a student. But he was like the fisherman who fishes for three days and then suns his net for two. The fee he paid Jia Dairu was thrown away, for he had no intention of really studying, his sole aim being to find some 'sweet-hearts' there. In fact, tempted by his money and other gifts several boys did fall into his clutches, but we need not dwell on this.

Chief among these were two amorous youths whose real names have not been ascertained, nor the branches of the family to which they belonged. But on account of their good looks and charm they were nick-



号，一个叫“香怜”，一个叫“玉爱”。虽都有窃慕之意，将不利于孺子之心，只是都惧薛蟠的威势，不敢来沾惹。如今宝、秦二人一来了，见了他两个，也不免缱绻羡慕，亦因知系薛蟠相知，故未敢轻举妄动。香、玉二人心中，也一般的留情与宝、秦。因此四人心中虽有情意，只未发迹。每日一入学中，四处各坐，却八目勾留，或设言托意，或咏桑寓柳，遥以心照，却外面自为避人眼目。不意偏又有几个滑贼，看出形景来，都背后挤眼弄眉，或咳嗽扬声，这也非止一日。

可巧这日代儒有事，早已回家去了，只留下一句七言对联，命学生对了，明日再来上书；将学中之事，又命长孙贾瑞暂且管理。妙在薛蟠如今不大来学中应卯了，因此秦钟趁此和香怜挤眉弄眼，递暗号儿，二人假作出小恭，走到后院说私己话。秦钟先问他：“家里的大人可管你交朋友不管？”一语未了，只听背后咳嗽了一声。二人唬的回头看时，原来是窗友名金荣者。香怜本有些性急，便羞怒相激，问道：

“你咳嗽什么？难道不许我们说话不成？”金荣笑道：“许你们说话，难道不许我咳嗽不成？我只问你们：有话不明说，谁许你们这样鬼鬼祟祟的，干什么故事？我可也拿住了，还赖什么！先得让我抽个头儿，咱们一声儿不言语；不然，大家就奋起来。”秦、香二人急的飞红了脸，便问道：“你拿住什么了？”金荣笑道：“我现拿住了是真的。”说着，又拍着手笑嚷道：“贴的好烧饼！你们都不买一个吃去？”秦钟、香怜又气又急，忙进来向贾瑞前，告金荣无故欺负他两个。



named Sweetie and Lovely. Although the object of general admiration, so that others also had designs on them, they were left unmolested for fear of Xue Pan.

Baoyu and Qin Zhong were naturally attracted by these boys too, but knowing them to be Xue Pan's friends they did not venture to make any overtures. Sweetie and Lovely were equally drawn to them. But not one of the four spoke of what was in his heart. Every day from four different seats four pairs of eyes kept meeting, and while trying to escape detection they contrived by hints and allusions to reveal their thoughts. However, some sly rascals discovered their secret and began to raise their eyebrows, wink, and cough or clear their throats behind their backs.

This had been going on for some time when one day, as luck would have it, Jia Dairu went home early on business, giving the boys a seven-character line to be matched with another and promising them a new lesson in the classics the next day. He left his eldest grandson Jia Rui in charge. Qin Zhong took advantage of the fact that nowadays Xue Pan had virtually stopped coming even to roll-call to make eyes at Sweetie and secretly signal to him. Having asked to be excused, they went out to the back courtyard for a quiet chat.

"Do your parents mind what friends you make?" asked Qin Zhong.

The words were barely out of his mouth when a cough behind them made both boys look round in dismay. It was their schoolmate Jin Rong. Sweetie was a hot-tempered lad. In embarrassment and annoyance he demanded:

"What are you coughing for? Can't we talk if we want to?"

"If you can talk, why can't I cough?" Jin Rong sniggered. "But why not talk openly instead of in this hole-and-corner fashion? I've caught you at last. There's no use denying it. Let me have a go first, and I'll keep quiet about it. Otherwise I'll rouse the whole school."

Flushing crimson the two boys demanded indignantly, "What have you caught us at?"

"I've caught you red-handed!" Clapping and grinning, he yelled, "Fine pancakes for sale. Come on, fellows, and buy one."

The two friends rushed furiously in to complain to Jia Rui of Jin Rong's uncalled-for insult.

原来这贾瑞最是个图便宜、没行止的人，每在学中，以公报私，勒索子弟们请他；后又辅助着薛蟠，图些银钱酒肉，一任薛蟠横行霸道，他不但不管约，反助纣为虐讨好儿。偏那薛蟠本是浮萍心性，今日爱东，明日爱西，近来又有了新朋友，把香、玉二人又丢开一边。就连金荣亦是当日好友，因有了香、玉二人，便弃了金荣。近日连香、玉亦已见弃。故贾瑞便无了提携帮助之人，他不说薛蟠弃旧迎新，只怨香、玉二人不在薛蟠前提携他了，因此贾瑞、金荣等一干人，也正正醋妒他两个。今见秦、香二人来告金荣，贾瑞心中便不自在起来，虽不好呵叱秦钟，却拿着香怜作法，反说他多事，着实的抢白了几句。香怜反讨了没趣，连秦钟也讪讪的各归坐位去了。金荣益发得了意，摇头咂嘴的，口内还说许多闲话，玉爱偏又听见了不忿，两个人隔着桌子咕咕唧唧的角起口来。金荣只一口咬定说：“方才明明的撞见他两个，在后院里亲嘴摸屁股，一对一肉，撮草根儿抽长短，谁长谁先干。”金荣只顾得意乱说，却不防还有别人，谁知早又触怒了一个。你道这一个是谁？

原来此人名唤贾蔷，亦系宁府中之正派玄孙，父母早亡，从小儿跟着贾珍过活，如今长了十六岁，比贾蓉生的还风流俊俏。他弟兄二人最相亲厚，常相共处。宁府人多口杂，那些不得志的奴仆们，专能造言诽谤主人，因此不知又有什么小人诟谮谣诼之词。贾珍亦风闻得些口声不大好听，自己也要避些嫌疑，如今竟分给房舍，命他搬出宁府，自去立门户过活去了。这贾蔷外相既美，内性又聪明，虽应名来上学，不过虚掩耳目而已。仍是斗鸡走狗，赏花玩柳。总恃



Now Jia Rui was an unscrupulous, grasping scoundrel who used his position in the school to fleece the boys. In return for money and good meals from Xue Pan, he had not checked his disgraceful behaviour but actually abetted him in order to curry favour.

But Xue Pan was as fickle as water-weed which drifts east today, west tomorrow. Having recently acquired new friends he had dropped Sweetie and Lovely, to say nothing of Jin Rong whom they had replaced; and now that they were discarded, Jia Rui had nobody to put in a good word for him. Instead of blaming Xue Pan's fickleness, he bore his favourites a grudge for this. And because he, Jin Rong and the rest all had this grievance against the two boys, when Qin Zhong and Sweetie came in with their complaint it only increased his annoyance. Not daring to reprove Qin Zhong he made a scapegoat of Sweetie, abusing him roundly for being a trouble-maker.

After this rebuff, Sweetie and Qin Zhong returned sullenly to their seats while Jin Rong triumphantly wagged his head and smacked his lips as he poured out more abuse. This was too much for Lovely, and they started bickering from their respective places.

"I saw them just now as plain as day in the back yard," insisted Jin Rong. "They were discussing where and how to meet."

He held forth wildly regardless of who might hear, although one of his listeners was already enraged. And who do you think this was? It was Jia Qiang, a direct descendant of the Duke of Ningguo, who had been brought up by Jia Zhen after the untimely death of his own parents. He was now sixteen and even more handsome and engaging than Jia Rong, from whom he was virtually inseparable.

Now "the more people, the more talk," and the disgruntled servants in the Ning Mansion were good for nothing but slandering their masters. When their dirty talk reached Jia Zhen's ears, to avoid coming under suspicion himself he had given Jia Qiang his own establishment outside the Ning Mansion and told him to live on his own.

Jia Qiang was as intelligent as he was handsome, but he attended the school only as a blind for his visits to cock-fights, dog-races and brothels. None of his clansmen dared to cross him, however, because he was a favourite with Jia Zhen and had Jia Rong to stand by him. Naturally,



上有贾珍溺爱，下有贾蓉匡助，因此族中不敢触逆于他。他既和贾珍、贾蓉最好，今见有人欺负秦钟，如何肯依？如今自己要挺身出来报不平，心中且又忖度一番，“金荣、贾瑞都是薛大叔的相知，素来我又与薛大叔相好，倘或我一出头，他们告诉了老薛，岂不伤了和气？待要不管，如此谣言，说的大家都没趣。如今何不用计制伏，又止息口声，又不伤脸面。”想毕，也装作出恭，走至外面，悄悄把跟宝玉的书童名唤茗烟者，唤到身边，如此这般，调拨他几句。

这茗烟乃是宝玉第一个得用的，而且又年轻不谙世事，如今听贾蔷说金荣如此欺负秦钟，连他的爷宝玉都干连在内，不给他个利害，下次越发狂纵难制了。这茗烟无故就要欺压人的，如今听了这话，又有贾蔷助着，便一头进来找金荣，也不叫相公，只说：“姓金的，你是什么东西！”贾蔷便跺一跺靴子，故意整整衣服，看了看日影儿说：“是时候了。”遂先向贾瑞说有事要早走一步。贾瑞不敢强他，只得由他去了。这里茗烟走进来便一把揪住金荣，问道：“我们的事管你甚么相干，你是好小子，出来动动你茗大爷！”唬的满室中子弟都怔怔的痴看。贾瑞忙吆喝：“茗烟不许撒野！”金荣气黄了脸，说：“反了！反了！奴才小子都敢如此撒野，我只和你主子说。”便夺手要去抓打宝玉、秦钟。尚未去时，从脑后飕的一声，早见一方瓦砚飞来，并不知系何人打来的，幸未打着，却又打在旁人座上，这座上便是贾兰贾茵。

这贾茵亦系荣府近派的重孙，其母亦少寡、独守，这贾



intimate as he was with them, he was not going to let anyone bully Qin Zhong with impunity! His first impulse was to take his side openly, but on second thought he decided, "Jin Rong, Jia Rui and that lot are thick with Uncle Xue, who has always been on good terms with me. If I side against them and they tell Old Xue, that will spoil our friendly relations. If I do nothing, though, they'll just spread these tiresome rumours. I must find some way of stopping their mouths without any loss of face."

He left the room on the customary excuse and quietly got hold of Mingyan, one of Baoyu's pages, to work on his feelings with his account of the matter.

Mingyan was Baoyu's most serviceable page but he was young and inexperienced. Jia Qiang told him that the insults to Qin Zhong reflected on his master, and if Jin Rong were allowed to get away with this he would take even greater liberties the next time.

Mingyan always liked to throw his weight about, and with this encouragement from Jia Qiang he rushed in to beard Jin Rong. Not addressing him as a servant should, he cried, "Hey, you fellow Jin! Who do you think you are?"

At this point Jia Qiang stamped the dust off his boots, straightened his clothes and looking at the height of the sun remarked, "It's time I was off." He asked Jia Rui's permission to leave early to deal with some business, and Jia Rui dared not stop him.

By now Mingyan had grabbed hold of Jin Rong. "What *we* do is no business of yours," he yelled. "If you've any guts, come and take on your Master Ming."

The whole roomful of boys was dumbfounded.

"How dare you, Mingyan!" bellowed Jia Rui.

Livid with anger Jin Rong bawled, "The rebel! How dare a slave run wild like this? I'll have a word with your master." Tearing himself loose he rounded on Baoyu and Qin Zhong.

Wham! A square inkstone hurled by some unknown assailant whizzed past Jin Rong's head to crash on to the next desk, one occupied by Jia Lan and Jia Jun.

Jia Jun was a great-great-grandson of the Duck of Rongguo, and the only son of his mother who had been widowed early. He sat at the same



茵与贾兰最好，所以二人一同坐。谁知贾茵年纪虽小，志气最大，极是不怕人爱淘气的。他在座上冷眼看见金荣的朋友暗助金荣，飞砚来打茗烟，偏没打着，反落在他座上，正打在面前，将个砚水壶打了个粉碎，溅了一书墨水。贾茵如何依得，便骂：“好囚攘的们，这不都动了手了么！”骂着，也便抓起砖砚来要打回去。贾兰是个省事的，忙按住砚，极口的劝道：“好兄弟，不与咱们相干。”贾茵如何忍得住，他见按住砚，他便两手抱起书匣子来，照这边抡了来。终是身小力薄，却抡到半道，至宝玉、秦钟桌案上就落了下来。只听得“豁啷”一声响，砸在桌上，书本纸片笔墨等物撒了一桌，又把宝玉的一碗茶也砸得碗碎茶流。贾茵便跳出来，要揪打那一个飞砚的。金荣此时随手抓了一根毛竹大板在手，地狭人多，那里经得舞动长板。茗烟早吃了一下，乱嚷道：

“你们还不来动手！”宝玉还有三个小厮：一名锄药，一名扫红，一名墨雨。这三个岂有不淘气的，一齐都嚷道：“小妇养的！动了兵器了！”墨雨遂掇起一根门闩，扫红、锄药手中都是马鞭子，蜂拥而上。贾瑞急的拦一回，这里劝一回，谁听他的话，肆行大闹。众顽童也有趁势帮着打太平拳助乐的，也有胆小藏过一边的，也有直立在桌上拍着手儿乱笑，喝着声儿叫打的。登时间鼎沸起来。

外边李贵等几个大仆人，听见里边作起反来，忙都进来一齐喝住。问是何故，众口不一，这个如此说，那个如彼说。李贵且喝骂了茗烟等四人一顿，撵了出去。秦钟的头早撞在金荣的板子上，打去一层油皮，宝玉正拿褂襟子给他揉，见喝住了众人，使命：“李贵，收书！拉马来，我去回太



desk as Jia Lan because they were firm friends. This hot-tempered, fearless little scamp had watched indifferently while one of Jin Rong's friends hurled an inkstone at Mingyan; but when the stone landed smack in front of him, smashing his water-bottle and spattering his books with ink, this was more than he could stand.

"You gaolbirds!" he swore. "If you want a fight, you can have it." He grabbed his own inkstone ready to let it fly.

Timid Jia Lan intervened, saying this was none of their business. But Jia Jun paid no attention. Since his inkstone was pinned down he caught up his satchel and hurled it at the offender. Being small and weak, he missed his target. The satchel landed with a tremendous crash in front of Baoyu and Qin Zhong, scattering books, paper, brushes and ink over their desk and smashing Baoyu's teacup so that tea poured all over it too.

Jia Jun launched himself at the boy who had thrown the inkstone, while Jin Rong caught up a bamboo pole and played havoc with it in that narrow crowded room.

Mingyan was the first to be hit. "What are you waiting for?" he roared to Baoyu's other pages Chuyao, Saohong and Moyu, all of whom were ready for mischief.

"Sons of bitches!" they shouted. "They're using weapons now."

In they charged, Moyu armed with a door bar, the other two brandishing whips.

Jia Rui tried desperately to hold back or persuade the combatants in turn. But no one listened to him, the place was a bedlam. Some boys threw themselves eagerly into the scrimmage, punching those who could not hit back, the more timid shrank aside, others stood on their desks clapping and laughing wildly as they urged the combatants on. The school was like a seething cauldron.

Li Gui and the servants outside hearing this uproar hurried in to stop the fight. When they asked how it had started, everyone answered at once, each blaming another. With an oath Li Gui drove Mingyan and the pages out.

Qin Zhong had been hit on the head and bruised by Jin Rong's pole, and Baoyu was rubbing the place with his coat lapel. Now that order had been restored he told Li Gui:



爷去!我们被人欺负了,不敢说别的,按礼来告诉瑞大爷,大爷反派我们的不是,听着人家骂我们,还调唆他打我们。茗烟见人欺负我,岂有不为我的,他们反打伙儿打了茗烟。连秦钟的头也打破了,还在这里念什么书!”李贵劝道:“哥儿不要性急。太爷既有事回家去了,这会子为这点子事去聒噪他老人家,倒显的咱们没理似的。依我的主意,那里的事那里了结,何必惊动他老人家?这都是瑞大爷的不是,太爷不在这里,你老人家就是这学里的头脑了,众人看着你行事。众人有了不是,该打的打,该罚的罚,如何等闹到这步田地还不管?”贾瑞道:“我吆喝着都不听。”李贵笑道:

“不怕你老人家恼我,素知你老人家到底有些不正,所以这些兄弟才不听。就闹到太爷跟前去,连你老人家也是脱不过的。还不快作个主意撕罗开了罢。”宝玉道:“撕罗什么?我必要回去的!”秦钟哭道:“有金荣,我是不在这里念书的了。”宝玉道:“这是为什么?难道有人家来的,咱们倒来不得?我必回明白了众人,撵了金荣去。”又问李贵:“金荣是那一房的亲戚?”李贵想一想道:“也不用问了。若问起那一房的亲戚来,更伤了弟兄们的和气。”

茗烟在窗外道:“他是东胡同的璜大奶奶的侄儿。那是什么硬正仗腰子,也唬我们来了。璜大奶奶是他姑娘,你那姑妈只会打旋磨儿,给我们琏二奶奶跪着借当头。我看不起他那样的主子奶奶!”李贵忙乱喝不止,道:“偏你这小狗彘的知道,有这些蛆嚼!”宝玉冷笑道:“我只当是谁的亲戚,原来是璜嫂子的侄儿。我就去问问他来!”说着便要走。叫茗



“Collect my books and bring round my horse. I’m going to report this to the principal. They insulted us gratuitously, but when we complained quite properly to Mr. Jia Rui he laid the blame on us. He let them abuse us and actually encouraged them to beat us. Mingyan seeing us bullied naturally took our side, but then they ganged up to beat him. They’ve even broken open Qin Zhong’s head. How can we go on studying here after this?”

Li Gui begged him not to be hasty. “It would look very inconsiderate to disturb the principal over such a little thing when he’s busy. Trouble should be settled on the spot, I say. There’s no need to go and disturb the old gentleman. It’s Mr. Jia Rui who’s to blame. You’re in charge here, sir, in the old gentleman’s absence. If anyone misbehaves, you should punish him. How could you let them get so out of hand?”

“I did tell them to stop,” said Jia Rui. “But no one paid any attention.”

“You mustn’t mind if I speak frankly, sir,” rejoined Li Gui. “It’s because your own conduct leaves much to be desired that these boys don’t obey you. So if this business comes to the principal’s ears, it will go hard with you. Hurry up and think of a way to hush it up.”

“I won’t have it hushed up,” declared Baoyu. “I’m going to report it.”

“I’m not coming here any more,” sobbed Qin Zhong, “if Jin Rong is allowed to stay.”

“What an idea!” cried Baoyu. “Why should *we* have to keep away because *they* come? I’m going to tell everyone and have him expelled.” He asked Li Gui to which branch of the family Jin Rong was related.

Li Gui thought for a moment, then said, “Better not ask. If I tell you, it will only cause bad feeling among relatives.”

“He’s the nephew of Mrs. Jia Huang of the East Lane,” called Mingyan through the window. “I don’t know how he had the nerve to beard us. Mrs. Jia Huang is his aunt on the father’s side. She’s a sponger who sucks up to people and goes down on her knees to Madam Lian for things to pawn. How can we respect a ‘mistress’ like that?”

“Shut up, you dirty bugger. Don’t talk such rot,” roared Li Gui.

“So that’s who he is!” said Baoyu scornfully. “Cousin Jia Huang’s nephew. I shall go and see her about this.”



烟进来包书。茗烟进来包书，又得意道：“爷也不用自去，等我去他家，就说老太太有话问他呢，雇上一辆车拉进去，当着老太太问他，岂不省事。”李贵忙喝道：“你要死！仔细回去我好不好先捶了你，然后再回老爷太太，就说宝玉全是你调唆的。我好容易哄的好了一半，你又来生个新法子。你闹了学堂，不说变法儿压息了才是，倒要往大里闹！”茗烟方不敢作声。

此时贾瑞也恐怕闹大了，自己不干净，只得委屈着来央告秦钟，又央告宝玉。先是他二人不肯。后来宝玉说：“不回去也罢了，只叫金荣赔不是便罢。”金荣先是不肯，后来禁不起贾瑞也来逼他去赔不是，李贵等只得好劝金荣说：“原是你起的端，你不这样，怎得了局？”金荣强不过，只得与秦钟作了一个揖。宝玉还不依，偏定要磕头。贾瑞只要暂息此事，又悄悄的劝金荣说：“俗语说的好：‘杀人不过头点地。’你既惹出事来，少不得下点气儿，磕个头就完事了。”金荣无奈，只得进前来，与秦钟磕头。且听下回分解。





He ordered Mingyan to come in and wrap up his books.

The page did so, saying exultantly, "Why go yourself, sir? Let me go and tell her the old lady wants her. I'll hire a carriage to bring her, and you can question her in the Lady Dowager's presence. Wouldn't that save trouble?"

"Do you want to die?" shouted Li Gui. "Just wait, I'll give you such a thrashing when we get back. Then I'll tell our master and mistress that you were the one who put Baoyu up to this. I've had trouble enough getting him halfway calmed down, and here you go again. You started this rumpus, but instead of trying to smooth things over you're adding fuel to the fire."

Mingyan dared say no more then. And Jia Rui, afraid of being incriminated if this went any further, had to pocket his grievance and ask Qin Zhong and Baoyu to forget it.

After holding out for some time Baoyu said, "All right, I won't tell if Jin Rong apologizes."

At first Jin Rong refused. But Jia Rui put pressure on him, and Li Gui and the others joined in.

"You started this," Li Gui pointed out. "It's up to you to end it."

Under pressure from all sides, Jin Rong bowed to Qin Zhong. But Baoyu would not be satisfied with anything less than a full kowtow.

Jia Rui, anxious to smooth things over, urged Jin Rong softly, "Remember the proverb 'A murderer can only lose his head.' Since you began this you must humble yourself a little. Once you've kowtowed, that will be the end of it."

So at last Jin Rong stepped forward and kowtowed to Qin Zhong.

To know what followed, read the next chapter.



第十回

金寡妇贪利权受辱 张太医论病细穷源

话说金荣因人多势众，又兼贾瑞勒令，赔了不是，给秦钟磕了头，宝玉方才不吵闹了。大家散了学，金荣回到家中，越想越气，说：“秦钟这奴才，是贾蓉的小舅子，又不是贾家的子孙，附学读书，也不过和我一样。他因仗着宝玉和他好，他就目中无人。他既是这样，就该行些正经事，人也没的说。他素日又和宝玉鬼鬼祟祟的，只当人都是瞎子，看不见。今日他又勾搭人，偏偏的撞在我眼睛里。就闹出事来，我还怕什么不成？”

他母亲胡氏，听见他咕咕唧唧的说，因问道：“你又要争什么闲气？好容易我望你姑妈说了，你姑妈又千方百计的向他们西府里的琏二奶奶跟前说了，你才得了这个念书的地方。若不是仗着人家，咱们家里还有力量请的起先生？况且人家学里，茶饭也是现成的。你这二在那里念书，家里也省好大的嚼用呢。省出来的，你又爱穿件鲜明衣服。再者，不是因你在那里念书，你就认得什么薛大爷了？那薛大爷一年不给不给，这二年也帮了咱们也有七八十两银子。你如今要闹出了这个学房，再要找这么一个地方，我告诉你罢，比登天还难呢！你给我老老实实的玩一会子，睡你的觉去，好多着呢！”于是金荣忍气吞声，不多一时，他自己去睡了。次日仍旧上学去了，不在话下。

且说他姑娘，原聘给的是贾家玉字辈的嫡派，名唤贾璜。但其族人那里皆能像宁、荣二府的富势，原不用细说，





Chapter 10

Widow Jin Pockets Her Pride Because of Self-Interest Dr. Zhang Diagnoses Keqing's Illness

With heavy pressure on him and orders from Jia Rui to apologize, Jin Rong had to appease Baoyu by kowtowing to Qin Zhong. Then school was dismissed and he went home, where the more he brooded the angrier he grew.

“That flunkey Qin Zhong is only Jia Rong’s brother-in-law, not a son or grandson of the Jia family,” he fumed. “He’s only in the school on sufferance, just as I am. But on the strength of his friendship with Baoyu he looks down on everyone else. If he at least behaved decently no one would mind; but the two of them must think the rest of us are blind, the way they carry on. Well, I caught him today making up to someone else, so I needn’t be afraid even if the whole thing comes out.”

“What scrape are you in now?” asked his mother, née Hu, when she heard this muttering. “I had to rope in your aunt and put her to no end of trouble to beg Madam Xifeng in the West Mansion to get you this place in the family school. Where would we be if not for their help? We couldn’t afford a tutor. Besides, you get free meals there, don’t you? That’s meant a great saving on your board these last two years. It’s fitted you out in all those smart clothes you’re so fond of. It was through the school, too, that you met Mr. Xue who’s helped us this last year or so to the tune of seventy or eighty taels of silver at least. If you’re expelled because of this row, don’t expect me to find another school like this. I can tell you, that would be harder than climbing up to heaven. Just amuse yourself quietly now before going to bed. That would be much better.”

Jin Rong had to swallow his anger and hold his tongue, and very soon he turned in. The next day he went back to school as if nothing had happened.

Now Jin Rong’s paternal aunt had married Jia Huang of that generation of the family which used the “jade” (*yu*) radical in personal names.



这贾璜夫妻守着些小的产业，又时常到宁、荣二府里去请请安，又会奉承凤姐儿并尤氏，所以凤姐儿、尤氏也时常资助资助他，方能如此度日。却说这日贾璜之妻金氏，因天气晴朗，家中又无事，遂带了一个婆子，坐上车，来家里走走，瞧瞧寡嫂侄儿。

闲话之间，金荣的母亲偏提起昨日贾家学房里的那事，从头至尾，一五一十都向他小姑子说了。这璜大奶奶不听则已，听了，一时怒从心上起，说道：“这秦钟小崽子是贾门的亲戚，难道荣儿不是贾门的亲戚？人都别忒势利了，况且都作的是什么有脸的好事！就是宝玉，也不犯着向他到这个田地。等我去到东府瞧瞧我们珍大奶奶，再向秦钟他姐姐说说，叫他评评这个理。这金荣的母亲听了这话，急的了不得，忙说道：“这都是我的嘴快，告诉了姑奶奶，求姑奶奶快别去说去，别管他们谁是谁非。倘或闹起来，怎么在那里站得住。若是站不住，家里不但不能请先生，反倒在他身上添出许多嚼用来呢。”璜大奶奶听了，说道：“那里管得许多，你等我去说了，看是怎么样！”也不容他嫂子劝，一面叫老婆子瞧了车，就坐上往宁府里来。

到了宁府，进了车门，到了东边小角门前下了车，进来见了贾珍之妻尤氏。也未敢气高，殷殷勤勤叙过寒温，说了些闲话，方问道：“今日怎么不见蓉大奶奶？”尤氏说道：

“他这些日子，不知道他怎么着，经期有两个多月没来。叫大夫瞧了，又说并不是喜。那两日，到了下半天就懒待动，话也懒待说，眼神也发眩。我说他：‘你且不必拘礼，早晚不用照例上来，你竟好生养养罢。就是有亲戚一家儿来，有我呢。就有长辈们怪你，等我替你告诉。’连蓉哥我都嘱咐



Needless to say, not all members of the clan were as wealthy as those in the Ning and Rong Mansions. Jia Huang and his wife had very slender means and were only able to live as they did by keeping on good terms with both households and by making up to Xifeng and Madam You, who often helped them out.

Since today was fine and she had nothing to do, Jia Huang's wife, née Jin, accompanied by a woman-servant, came over by carriage to see her widowed sister-in-law and nephew.

In the course of conversation Jin Rong's mother described the quarrel in the school the previous day, giving a detailed account of the whole affair. Aunt Huang immediately flew into a passion.

"Our boy Rong is just as much a relative of the Jia family as that young fool Qin Zhong," she cried. "How can some people suck up like that to the rich? Especially when they behave so disgracefully. As for Baoyu, he's no call to make such a favourite of him. I'm going to the East Mansion to see Madam You, then I'll tell Qin Zhong's sister about this and see what she has to say."

"I should never have told you, sister." Jin Rong's mother was frantic. "For goodness' sake don't say anything to them. Never mind who's right and who's wrong. If trouble came of it my boy would lose his place. And apart from the fact that we couldn't afford a tutor we'd have to spend a lot more on his food and clothes."

"Never mind that!" retorted Aunt Huang. "Let me tell them the facts and we'll see what they have to say."

Ignoring the widow's protests, she called for her carriage and drove to the Ning Mansion, alighting at the small gate on the east side and going in on foot to see Madam You.

Not daring to vent her anger, she made polite conversation for a while, then asked, "Why don't I see Madam Rong today?"

"I don't know what the matter is," said Madam You. "But she's missed her periods for two months and more, yet the doctors say she's not expecting. She's too tired to move or talk by the afternoon nowadays, and she has dizzy spells. I told her, 'Don't trouble to pay your respects here mornings and evenings, just have a good rest. If relatives call, I'll receive them. And if the old folk wonder at your absence, I'll



了，我说：‘你不许累措他，不许招他生气，叫他静静的养养就好了。他要想什么吃，只管到我这里取来。倘或我这里无有，只管往琏二嫂子那里要去。倘或他有了好歹，再要这么一个媳妇，这么个模样儿，这么一个情性的人儿，打着灯笼也没地方找去。’他这为人行事，那个亲戚，那个一家的长辈不喜欢他？所以我这两日好不心烦，焦的我了不得。偏偏今儿早晨他兄弟来瞧他，谁知那小孩子家，不知好歹，看见姐姐身上不大爽快，就有事也不当告诉他，别说是这么点子小事，就是你受了一万分的委屈，也不该向他说才是。谁知他们昨儿学房里打架，不知是那里附学来的一个人，欺负他了。里头还有些不干不净的话，都告诉了他姐姐。嫂子，你是知道那媳妇的：虽则见了人有说有笑，会行事儿，他可心细，心又重，不拘听见了什么话儿，都要度量个三日五夜才罢。这病就是打这个秉性上头思虑出来的。今儿听见了有人欺负了他兄弟，又是恼，又是气。恼的是那群混帐、狐朋狗友的扯是搬非、调三惑四的那些人；气的是他兄弟不学好，不上心读书，以致如此学里吵闹。他听了这事，今日索性连早饭也不吃。我听见了，我方才到他那边安慰了他一会子，又劝解了他兄弟一会子。我叫他兄弟到那边府里找宝玉去了，我才瞧着他吃了半盏燕窝汤，我才过来了。嫂子，你说我心焦不心焦？况且如今又没有好大夫，我想到他这病上，我心里倒像针扎的。你们知道有什么好大夫没有？”

金氏听了这半日话，把方才在他嫂子家里那一团要向秦氏理论的盛气，早吓的都丢在爪哇国去了。听见尤氏问他有知道的好大夫的话，连忙答道：“我们这么听着，实在也没见人说有个好大夫。如今听见大奶奶这个来，定不得还是喜呢。嫂子倒别叫人混治。倘或认错了，这可是了不得的。”尤氏道：“可不是呢。”正说话间，贾珍从外进来，见了金氏，便向尤氏问道：“这不是璜大奶奶么？”金氏向前给贾珍



make apologies for you.' I told Rong not to let anyone tire or annoy her, so that she can rest quietly until she's better. 'If she fancies anything to eat, come to me for it,' I said. 'If we don't have it you can ask Xifeng. If anything were to happen to her, you'd never find another wife with her good looks and sweet temper, not if you were to search around with a lantern.' She's quite won the hearts of the old folk and all our relations. So I've been most dreadfully worried the last few days.

"But then her brother had to come and see her this morning. He's too young to know any better, but when he saw she was ill he shouldn't have troubled her with his affairs, not to say a trifle like this. Even if he was treated unfairly, he shouldn't have told her. They had a fight, you know, in school yesterday. Some other boy bullied him and there was dirty talk — he repeated it all to her. You know how she is. For all she's so pleasant and so capable, she's sensitive and takes everything to heart. She'll brood over the least little thing for days on end. It's this habit of worrying that's made her ill. When she heard today that someone had picked on her brother, it upset her and made her angry. Angry with those dirty dogs who cause trouble and gossip; upset because Qin Zhong doesn't study hard or give his mind to his books, and that's how this trouble started. Because of this, she wouldn't touch any breakfast.

"When word of this reached me I went over to soothe her. I gave her brother a talking-to, then packed him off to Baoyu in the other mansion. I didn't come back till I'd seen her take half a bowl of bird's-nest soup. You can't imagine how worried I am, sister. We haven't got any good doctors nowadays, either. This illness is keeping me on tenterhooks. Do you know of any good doctor?"

Aunt Huang's furious determination while with her sister-in-law to have it out with Keqing had, during this recital, been scared away into the Sea of Java.

"We've been hoping to hear of some good doctors, but so far we don't know of any," she replied. "But judging by what you tell me, this may still mean she's pregnant. Don't let anyone give her the wrong medicine, though. That could be dangerous."

"Just what I think," agreed Madam You.

At this point Jia Zhen came in. Seeing Jia Huang's wife he inquired,



请了安。贾珍向这尤氏说道：“让这妹子吃了饭去。”贾珍说着话，就过那屋里去了。金氏此来，原要向秦氏说说秦钟欺负了他侄儿的事，听见秦氏有病，不但不能说，亦且不敢提了。况且贾珍、尤氏待的也很好，反转怒为喜的，又说了一会子话儿，方回家去了。

金氏去后，贾珍方过来坐下，问尤氏道：“今日他来，有什么说的事情么？”尤氏答道：“倒没说什么。一进来的时候，脸上倒像有些着恼的气色似的，及至说了半天话，又提起媳妇这病，他倒渐渐的气色平静了。你又叫他吃饭，他听见媳妇这么病，也不好意思只管坐着，又说了几句闲话儿就去了，倒没有求什么事。如今且说媳妇这病，你到那里寻个好大夫来，给他瞧瞧要紧，可别耽误了。现今咱们家走的这群大夫，那里要得，一个个都是听着人的口气儿，人怎么说，他也添几句文话儿说一遍。可倒殷勤的很，三四个人一日轮流着倒有四五遍来看脉。他们大家商量着立个方子，吃了也不见效，倒弄得一日换四五遍的衣裳，坐起来见大夫，其实于病人无益。”贾珍说道：“可是。这孩子也糊涂，何必脱脱换换的，倘或又着了凉，更添一层病，那还了得。衣裳任凭是什么好的，可又值什么，孩子的身子要紧，就是一天穿一套新的，也不值什么。我正进来要告诉你：方才冯紫英来看我，他见我有些抑郁之色，问我是怎么了。我才告诉他说，媳妇忽然身子有好大的不爽快，因为不得好太医，断不透是喜是病，又不知有妨无妨，所以我这两日心里着实着急。冯紫英因说起他有一个幼时从学的先生，姓张名友士，学问最渊博，更兼医理精明，且能断人的生死。今年是上京给他儿子来捐官，现在他家住着呢。这么看来，竟是合该媳妇的病，在他手里除灾，亦未可知。我即刻差人拿我的名帖



“Is this Mrs. Huang?”

She stepped forward to greet him, and before returning to his room he urged his wife to keep her to a meal.

Aunt Huang had come there to complain about Qin Zhong’s treatment of her nephew, but after hearing of Keqing’s illness she hadn’t the courage to mention this, much less to complain. Moreover Jia Zhen’s and Madam You’s kind reception had transformed her indignation into pleasure. She chatted a little longer, then took her leave.

Once she had gone, Jia Zhen came in and sat down.

“What business brought her here today?” he asked.

“She didn’t seem to have any,” replied his wife. “She looked rather put out when she arrived but she calmed down little by little as I told her about our daughter-in-law’s illness. Because of that she couldn’t very well stop to a meal, as you suggested. She left quite soon without making any requests.

“But to get back to our daughter-in-law, you really must find a good doctor for her without any more delay. These that have been attending her are useless. They just listen to what we tell them and then dress it up in high-sounding language. They go to a lot of trouble, to be sure, three or four of them coming several times a day to feel her pulse in turn. After consulting together they write their prescriptions, but the medicine hasn’t done her the least bit of good. In fact, it’s bad for a patient to have to change her clothes four or five times a day and sit up to see the doctor.”

“Why should the silly child keep changing?” asked Jia Zhen. “If she caught cold that would be even worse. This will never do. The finest clothes are nothing compared with her health. She can wear new ones every day if it comes to that.

“What I was going to tell you is that Feng Ziyong called just now. He asked why I looked so worried. I told him I was upset because our daughter-in-law isn’t well but we can’t find a good doctor to tell whether she’s ill or pregnant, and whether there’s any danger or not. Well, Feng knows a doctor named Zhang Youshi who was his childhood tutor, a very learned man with a comprehensive knowledge of medicine, and an excellent diagnostician. He’s come to the capital this year to purchase an official rank for his son, and he’s staying with Feng. Fate may have meant him to cure our daughter-in-law. You never can tell. I’ve sent a

请去了。今日倘或天晚了不能来，想来明日一定来。况且冯紫英又即刻回家亲自去求他，务必叫他来瞧瞧。等这个张先生来瞧了再说罢。”

尤氏听了，心中甚喜，因说道：“后日是太爷的寿日，到底怎么办？”贾珍说道：“我方才到了太爷那里去请安，兼请太爷来家受一受一家子的礼。太爷因说道：‘我是清净惯了的，我不愿意往你们那是非场中去闹去。你们必定说是我的生日，要叫我去受众人的礼，莫过你把我从前注的《阴骘文》你给我叫人好好的写出来刻了，比叫我受众人的头强百倍呢。倘或明日后日这两天一家子要来，你就在家里好好的款待他们就是了。也不必给我送什么东西来，连你后日也不必来；你若心中不安，你今日就给我磕了头去。倘或后日你来，又跟随多少人来闹我，我必和你不依。’如此说了又说，后日我是不敢去的。且叫来升来，吩咐他预备两日筵席。”尤氏因叫人叫了贾蓉来，“吩咐来升照旧例预备两日的筵席，要丰丰富富的。你再亲自到西府里去请老太太、大太太、二太太和你琏二婶子来逛逛。你父亲今日又听见一个好大夫，业已打发人去请了，想必明日必来。你可将他这些日子的病症，细细的告诉他。”

贾蓉一一的答应着出去了。正遇着方才去冯紫英家请那张先生的小子回来了，因回道：“奴才方才到了冯大爷家，拿了老爷的名帖请那张先生去。那张先生说道：‘方才这里大爷也向我说了。但是今日拜了一天的客，才回到家，此时精神实在不能支持，就是去到府上，也不能看脉。’他说等待调息一夜，明日务必到府。他又说，他‘医学浅薄，本不敢当



servant with my card to invite him. It may be too late today, but I'm sure he'll come tomorrow. Especially as Feng Ziying promised to ask him as soon as he reached home. Let's wait, then, till this Dr. Zhang has seen her."

Madam You cheered up at this. "And how are we to celebrate your father's birthday the day after tomorrow?"

"I've just been to pay my respects to him," answered Jia Zhen. "I invited him here to receive congratulations from the whole family, but he said, 'I'm used to a peaceful life and don't want to be disturbed by all the commotion in your house. Of course, you're inviting me to go and have everyone kowtow to me because it's my birthday, but it would be a hundred times more to my liking if you had my annotated *Rewards and Punishments*¹ neatly copied out and printed. Suppose you entertain the two families for me at home the day after tomorrow instead of having them come here. Don't send me any presents either. In fact, there's no need for you to come yourself the day after tomorrow. You can kowtow to me now, if that will make you feel better. If you bring a great crowd to disturb me on my birthday, I shall be very displeased.'

"Since he made such a point of this, I shan't venture to go again. You had better order Lai Sheng to arrange for the two days' banqueting. It must be handsomely done. You can go to the West Mansion to deliver invitations in person to the old lady, Lady Xing, lady Wang and Xifeng."

As he was saying this, Jia Rong came in to pay his respects, and Madam You told him what her husband had said.

"Your father has heard today of a good doctor," she added. "We've sent to ask him round and he should be coming tomorrow. You'll have to tell him all your wife's symptoms."

Her son assented and had just withdrawn when he met the page sent to invite Dr. Zhang.

"I've been to Mr. Feng's house with His Lordship's card," said the page. "The doctor said Mr. Feng had just told him about it, but he was so exhausted after a whole round of visits that even if he came now he couldn't take the pulse. He'll come tomorrow after a good night's rest. He added, 'I know very little about medicine and really shouldn't presume to take up this responsibility, but since Mr. Feng has done me the

此重荐，因我们冯大爷和府上大爷既已如此说了，又不得不去，你先代我回明大爷就是了。大爷的名帖实不敢当。’仍叫奴才拿回来了。哥儿替奴才回一声儿罢。”贾蓉复转身进去，回了贾珍、尤氏的话，方出来叫了来升，吩咐他预备两日的筵席的话。来升听毕，自去照例料理，不在话下。

且说次日午间，人回道：“请的那张先生来了。”贾珍遂延入大厅坐下。茶毕，方开言道：“昨承冯大爷示知老先生人品学问，又兼深通医学，小弟不胜钦仰之至。”张先生道：“晚生粗鄙下士，本来见识浅陋，昨因冯大爷示知，大人第谦恭下士，又承呼唤，敢不奉命。但毫无实学，倍增颜汗。”贾珍道：“先生何必过谦。就请先生进去看看儿妇，仰仗高明，以释下怀。”

于是，贾蓉同了进去。到了贾蓉居室，见了秦氏，向贾蓉说道：“这就是尊夫人了？”贾蓉道：“正是。请先生坐下，让我把贱内的病源说一说，再看脉如何？”那先生道：“依小弟的意思，先看过脉，再说的为是。我是初造尊府的，也不晓得什么，但是我们冯大爷务必叫小弟过来看看，小弟所以不得不过来。如今看了脉息，看小弟说的是不是，再将这些日子的病势讲一讲，大家斟酌一个好方儿，可用不可用，那时大爷再定夺。”贾蓉道：“先生实在高明，如今恨相见之晚。就请先生看一看脉息，可治不可治，以便使家父母放心。”于是家下媳妇们捧过大迎枕来，一面给秦氏拉着袖口，露出



honour of recommending me to your master I mustn't decline. Go and give your master this message. As for His Lordship's card, I really can't presume to keep it.' So I've brought it back. Will you please pass on this message for me, sir?"

Jia Rong went back to tell his parents this, after which he sent for Lai Sheng to instruct him to prepare the two days' feast. And the steward went off to make his preparations.

The next day at noon the doctor was announced. Jia Zhen conducted him into the reception hall and made him take a seat. When they had drunk tea he broached the subject, saying, "Yesterday I was overwhelmed with admiration by all Mr. Feng told me of your character, learning and profound knowledge of medicine, sir."

"I am simply an ignorant layman," replied Dr. Zhang. "But when I heard yesterday from Mr. Feng that Your Lordship's family is considerate to ordinary scholars and had condescended to send for me, how could I disobey your orders? I am ashamed, though, that I have no real learning."

"You are too modest, sir. May I trouble you to have a look at my daughter-in-law? I am relying on your superior knowledge to relieve our anxiety."

Jia Rong accompanied the doctor to Keqing's bedside.

"Is this your worthy wife?" asked Dr. Zhang.

"Yes, sir," said Jia Rong. "Do sit down! Would you like me to describe her symptoms to you before you take the pulse?"

"May I suggest that I take her pulse before you enlighten me?" countered the doctor. "This is my first visit to your honourable mansion, and being quite unqualified I would not have come but for Mr. Feng's insistence. Let me take her pulse, and you may gauge the correctness of my diagnosis before you describe her condition recently. Then we can devise an efficacious prescription and submit it to the discretion of His Lordship."

"I see you are an authority," replied Jia Rong. "I am only sorry we did not meet earlier. Do examine her and let us know if she can be cured, to spare my father further anxiety."

Some maids rested Qin Keqing's arm on a pillow and raised her sleeve



脉来。先生方伸手按在右手脉上，调息了至数，宁神细诊了有半刻的工夫，方换过左手，亦复如此。诊毕脉息，说道：“我们外边坐罢。”

贾蓉于是同先生到外间房里炕上坐下，一个婆子端了茶来。贾蓉道：“先生请茶。”于是陪先生吃茶，遂问道：“先生看这脉息，还治得治不得？”先生道：“看得尊夫人这脉息：左寸沉数，左关沉伏；右寸细而无力，右关需而无神。其左寸沉数者，乃心气虚而生火；左关沉伏者，乃肝家气滞血亏。右寸细而无力者，乃肺经气分太虚；右关需而无神者，乃脾土被肝木克制。心气虚而生火，应现经期不调，夜间不寐。肝家血亏气滞者，必然肋下疼胀，月信过期，心中发热。肺经气分太虚者，头目不时眩晕，寅卯间必自汗，如坐舟中。脾土被肝木克制者，必然不思饮食，精神倦怠，四肢酸软。据我看这脉息，应当有这些症候才对。或以这个脉为喜脉，则小弟不敢从其教也。”旁边一个贴身伏侍的婆子道：“何尝不是这样呢。真正先生说的如神，倒不用我们告诉了。如今我们家里现有好几位太医老爷瞧着呢，都不能说这么真切。有一位说是喜，有一位说是病，这位说不相干，那位说怕冬至，总没有个准话儿。求老爷明白指示指示。”

那先生笑说道：“大奶奶这个症候，可是那众位耽搁了。要在初次行经的日期，就用药治起来，不但断无今日之患，





to expose the wrist. The doctor first took the pulse of the right wrist, feeling it carefully for a considerable time before he turned to the left wrist.

This done, he proposed, "Shall we go and sit outside?"

Jia Rong conducted him to another room, where they seated themselves on the *kang*. A serving woman brought in tea, and when they had drunk it Jia Rong asked:

"Judging by her pulse, doctor, is there any cure for her?"

"Your honourable wife's left distal pulse is deep and agitated, the median pulse deep and faint," replied the doctor. "The right distal pulse is faint and feeble, the median pulse slight and lacking in energy.

"A deep and agitated left distal pulse indicates a febrile condition arising from the weak action of the heart; the deep and faint median pulse is due to anemia caused by a sluggish liver. A faint and feeble distal pulse on the right wrist comes of debility of the lungs; a slight and listless median pulse indicates a wood element in the liver too strong for the earth element in the spleen.

"The fire produced by the weak action of the heart results in irregular menses and insomnia. A deficiency of blood and sluggish condition of the liver produce pain in the ribs, delayed menses and heartburn. Debility of the lungs leads to giddiness, perspiration in the early hours of the morning, and a feeling like sea-sickness. And the predominance of the wood element in the liver over the earth element in the spleen causes loss of appetite, general lassitude and soreness of the limbs. These are the symptoms I would expect from my reading of the lady's pulse. I cannot agree with the view that this pulse indicates a pregnancy."

An old woman who had been attending Keqing exclaimed, "That's exactly how it is. This doctor must have second sight: there's no need for us to tell him anything. Quite a few of our household physicians have seen her, but not one of them came so close to the truth. One says it's a pregnancy, another that it's an illness; this one declares it's of no consequence, that one that there'll be a crisis at the winter solstice. They can't make up their minds. Please tell us just what to do, sir."

"Those gentlemen have delayed your lady's recovery," said the doctor. "If she had taken the right medicine when she first missed her menses,

而且此时已全愈了。如今既是把病耽误到这个地位，也是应有此灾。实在依我看来，这病尚有三分治得。吃了我的药看，若是夜里睡的着，那时又添了二分拿手了。据我看这脉息：大奶奶是个心性高强聪明不过的人；聪明忒过，则不如意事常有；不如意事常有，则思虑太过。此病是忧虑伤脾，肝木忒旺，经血所以不能按时而至。大奶奶从前的行经的日子问一问，断不是常缩，必是常长日子的。是不是？”这婆子答道：“可不是，从没有缩过，或是长两日三日，以至十日都长过。”先生听了道：“妙啊！这就是病源了。从前若能够以养心调经之药服之，何至于此。这如今明显出一个水亏木旺的虚症候来，待用药再看。”于是写了方子，递与贾蓉，上写的是：

益气养荣补脾和肝汤

人 参	二钱	白 术	二钱 土炒	云 苓	三钱	熟 地	四钱
归 身	二钱 酒炒	白 芍	二钱 炒	川 芎	一钱 五分	黄 芪	三钱
香附米	二钱 制	醋柴胡	八分	怀山药	二钱 炒	真阿胶	二钱 蛤粉炒
延胡索	一钱五分 酒炒	炙甘草	八分				

引用建莲子七粒去心，红枣二枚





she'd have been quite well by now. Since she's had no effective treatment, this trouble is only to be expected. I would rate her chances of recovery at three out of ten. If she sleeps well tonight after taking my medicine, that will about double her chances.

"Judging by her pulse, your lady is highly strung and unusually intelligent. Because of this she is easily upset and prone to worry, which has affected her spleen. The element of wood in the liver has produced hot humours which have upset her menstruation. Am I right in assuming that your lady's periods always tended to be irregular and several days late?"

"Yes, to be sure," said the woman. "Never early but two or three days later than normal, sometimes as much as ten days behind time."

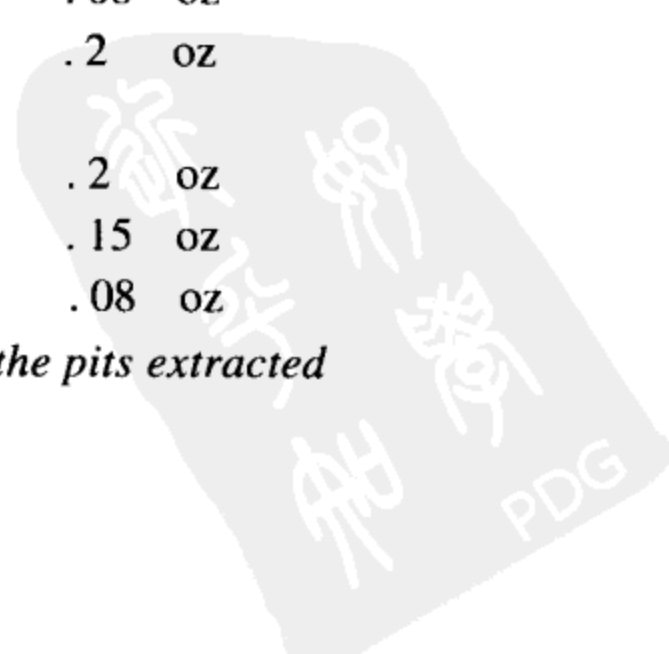
"Quite so," observed the doctor. "There's the cause of her illness. If she'd taken a tonic to regulate her menses, this could have been avoided. This is clearly a case of enervation caused by too little water and too much wood. We'll see how she responds to medicine."

Thereupon he wrote out and gave Jia Rong the following prescription:

DECOCTION TO IMPROVE THE RESPIRATION, FORTIFY
THE BLOOD AND TRANQUILLIZE THE LIVE

Ginseng	. 2	oz
Atractylis (clay baked)	. 2	oz
Pachyma cocos	. 3	oz
Prepared Ti root	. 4	oz
Aralia edulis (cooked in wine)	. 2	oz
White peony (cooked)	. 2	oz
Szechuan selinum	. 15	oz
Sophora tomentosa	. 3	oz
Cyperus rotundus (processed)	. 2	oz
Gentian soaked in vinegar	. 08	oz
Dioscorea from the Huai region (cooked)	. 2	oz
Genuine Tung-ngo glue (prepared with powdered oyster-shell)	. 2	oz
Carydalis ambigua (cooked in wine)	. 15	oz
Dried liquorice	. 08	oz

*Adjuvant: Seven Fujian lotus-seeds with the pits extracted
and two large red dates.*



贾蓉看了，说：“高明的很。还要请教先生，这病与性命终久有妨无妨？”先生笑道：“大爷是最高明的人。人病到这个地位，非一朝一夕的症候，吃了这药也要看医缘了。依小弟看来，今年一冬是不相干的。总是过了春分，就可望全愈了。”贾蓉也是一个聪明人，也不往下细问了。

于是贾蓉送了先生去了，方将这药方子并脉案都给贾珍看了，说的话也都回了贾珍并尤氏。于是尤氏向贾珍说道：

“从来大夫，不像他说的这么痛快，想必用的药也不错。”贾珍道：“人家原不是混饭吃久惯行医的人。因为冯紫英我们相好，他好容易求来了。既有这个人，媳妇的病或者就能好了。他那方子上有人参，就用前日买的那一斤好的罢。”贾蓉听毕话，方出来叫人打药去煎给秦氏吃。不知秦氏服了此药，病势如何，且听下回分解。



“Excellent,” remarked Jia Rong after reading this. “Can you tell me, doctor, if her life is in any danger?”

“A man of your intelligence must know that at this stage it is impossible to predict how long the illness may last. We must see how she responds to this treatment. In my humble opinion, there is no danger this winter and if she gets through the spring equinox we may expect a cure.”

Jia Rong was too sensible to press the matter. After seeing the doctor out he showed his father the prescription and diagnosis and told his parents all that had been said.

“No other doctor has been so definite,” observed Madam You to her husband. “His prescription must be good.”

“He is not a professional doctor,” replied Jia Zhen. “He doesn’t practise medicine for a living and only came as a favour to our friend Feng Ziyang. With his help, there’s hope that our daughter-in-law may be cured. I see his prescription calls for ginseng. You can use that catty of a superior quality we bought the other day.”

Jia Rong withdrew to see about buying the medicine, which was then prepared and given to his wife. To know the effect of the treatment, read the next chapter.



第十一回

庆寿辰宁府排家宴 见熙凤贾瑞起淫心

话说是日贾敬的寿辰，贾珍先将上等可吃的东西、稀奇些的果品，装了十六大捧盒；着贾蓉带领家下人等，与贾敬送去，向贾蓉说道：“你留神，看太爷喜欢不喜欢，你就行了礼来。你说：‘我父亲遵太爷的话不敢来，在家里率领合家都朝上行了礼了。’”听罢，即率领家人去了。

这里渐渐的就有人来了。先是贾璉、贾蔷到来，先看了各处的坐位，并问：“有什么玩意儿没有？”家人答道：“我们爷原算计请太爷今日来家，所以并不敢预备玩意儿。前日听见太爷又不来了，现叫奴才们找了一班小戏儿，并一档子打十番的，都在园子里戏台上预备着呢。”

次后邢夫人、王夫人、凤姐儿、宝玉都来了，贾珍并尤氏接了进去。尤氏的母亲已先在这里呢。大家见过了，彼此让了坐。贾珍、尤氏二人亲自递了茶，因笑说道：“老太太原是老祖宗，我父亲又是侄儿，这样日子，原不敢请他老人家；但是这个时候，天气正凉爽，满园的菊花又盛开，请老祖宗过来散散闷，看着众儿孙热闹热闹，是这个意思。谁知老祖宗又不肯赏脸。”凤姐未等王夫人开口，先说道：“老太太昨日还说要来着呢，因为晚上忽看见宝兄弟他们吃桃儿，



Chapter 11

Jia Jing's Birthday Is Celebrated in the Ning Mansion Jia Rui Meets and Lusts After Xifeng

Jia Jing's birthday had now arrived. Jia Zhen had six large hampers filled with choice delicacies and rare fruit and sent Jia Rong with some servants to deliver them.

"Make sure your grandfather's agreeable before you pay your respects," he cautioned his son. "Tell him that in compliance with his wishes I've not ventured to go, but I am assembling the whole family here to honour him."

After Jia Rong had left the guests began to arrive. First Jia Lian and Jia Qiang. Observing the seating arrangements, they asked what entertainment was to be offered.

"His Lordship originally planned to invite the old master, so he didn't prepare any theatricals," said the servants. "But the day before yesterday, when he heard that the old gentleman wouldn't be coming, he got us to hire some young actors and musicians. They're getting ready now on the stage in the garden."

Next to arrive were Lady Xing, Lady Wang, Xifeng and Baoyu. They were welcomed in by Jia Zhen and Madam You, whose mother had already come. After greetings had been exchanged they were urged to be seated. Jia Zhen and his wife handed round tea.

"The Lady Dowager is our Old Ancestress," said Jia Zhen with a smile. "My father is only her nephew, and we wouldn't have presumed to invite her on his birthday if not for the fact that the weather is refreshingly cool now and all the chrysanthemums in our garden are at their best. We thought it might prove a pleasant distraction for her to watch all her children and grandchildren enjoying themselves. She hasn't favoured us with her presence, however."

"Up to yesterday she meant to come," explained Xifeng before Lady



老人家又嘴馋，吃了有大半个，五更天的时候就一连起来了两次，今日早晨略觉身子倦些。因叫我回大爷，今日断不能来了，说有好吃的要几样，还要很烂的。”贾珍听了笑道：

“我说老祖宗是爱热闹的，今日不来，必定有个原故，若是这么着，就是了。”

王夫人道：“前日听见你大妹妹说，蓉儿媳妇身上有些不大好，到底是怎么样？”尤氏道：“他这个病的也奇。上月中旬还跟着老太太、太太们玩了半夜，回家来好好的。到了二十后，一日比一日觉懒，也懒得吃东西，这将近有半个多月了。经期又有两个月没来。”邢夫人接着说道：“别是喜罢？”

正说着，外头人回道：“大老爷、二老爷并一家的爷们都来了，在厅上呢。”贾珍连忙出去了。这里尤氏方说道：“从前大夫也有说是喜的。昨日冯紫英荐了他从过学的一个先生，医道很好，瞧了说不是喜，竟是很大的一个症候。昨日开了方子，吃了一剂药，今日头眩的略好些，别的仍不见怎么样大见效。”凤姐儿道：“我说他不是十分支持不住，今日这样的日子，再也不肯不扎挣着上来。”尤氏道：“你是初三日在这里见他的，他强扎挣了半天，也是因你们娘儿两个好的上头，他才恋恋不舍得去。”凤姐儿听了，眼圈儿红了半日，半天方说道：“真是‘天有不测风云，人有旦夕祸福’。这个年纪，倘或就因这个病上怎么样了，人还活着有甚么趣儿！”

正说话间，贾蓉进来，给邢夫人、王夫人、凤姐儿前都请了安，方回尤氏道：“方才我去给太爷送吃食去，并回说我父亲在家中伺候老爷们，款待一家子的爷们，遵太爷的话，



Wang could get a word in. "But yesterday evening she saw Baoyu eating some peaches and she couldn't resist eating nearly a whole peach. She had to get up twice just before dawn, which left her tired out this morning. She asked me to tell you that she couldn't come, but she hopes you'll send her a few delicacies if you have some that are easy to digest."

"That explains it," said Jia Zhen. "The old lady is so fond of lively parties, I was sure there must be some reason for her absence."

Lady Wang remarked, "The other day Xifeng told me that Rong's wife is indisposed. What's wrong with her?"

"It's a very puzzling illness," replied Madam You. "At the Mid-Autumn Festival last month she enjoyed herself half the night with the old lady and you, and came home none the worse. But for a fortnight since the twentieth of last month she's grown weaker and weaker every day and lost all her appetite. And she hasn't had a period for two months."

"Can she be pregnant?" asked Lady Xing.

Just then the arrival of Jia She, Jia Zheng and the other gentlemen was announced. They were in the reception hall. Jia Zhen hurried out.

Madam You continued, "Some doctors thought it might mean a happy event. But yesterday she was examined by an excellent physician recommended by Feng Ziyang, who once studied with him, and according to him it isn't a pregnancy but a serious illness. He made out a prescription, and today after one dose she feels less dizzy but there hasn't been much other improvement."

"If she weren't quite incapable of any exertion, I know she'd have made an effort to be here today," observed Xifeng.

"You saw her here on the third," said Madam You. "She forced herself to bear up for several hours, because she's so fond of you she couldn't bear to tear herself away."

Xifeng's eyes became moist. After a pause she exclaimed, "Truly, 'Storms gather without warning in nature, and bad luck befalls men overnight.' But life is hardly worth living if such an illness can carry off one so young!"

As she was speaking Jia Rong walked in. Having greeted the visitors he told his mother, "I've just taken the delicacies to my grandfather. I told him my father was waiting on Their Lordships and entertaining the

并未敢来。太爷听了甚喜欢，说：‘这才是’。叫告诉父亲母亲，好生伺候太爷、太太们；叫我们好生伺候叔叔、婶子并哥哥们。还说那《阴骘文》，叫急急的刻了出来，印一万张散人。我将此话都回了我父亲了。我这会子得快出去打发太爷们并爷们吃饭去呢。”凤姐儿说：“蓉哥儿，你且站住。你媳妇的病到底是怎么着？”贾蓉皱皱眉说道：“不好么！婶子回来，瞧瞧去，就知道了。”于是贾蓉出去了。

这里尤氏向邢夫人、王夫人道：“太太们在这里吃饭，还是在园子里吃去好？小戏儿现预备在园子里呢。”王夫人向邢夫人道：“我们索性吃了饭再过去罢，也省好些事。”邢夫人道：“很好。”于是尤氏就吩咐媳妇婆子们：“快送饭来。”门外一齐答应了一声，都各人端各人的去了。不多一时，摆上了饭。尤氏让邢夫人、王夫人并他母亲都上坐了，他与凤姐儿、宝玉侧席坐了。邢夫人、王夫人道：“我们来，原为给大老爷拜寿，这不竟是我们来过生日来了么？”凤姐儿说道：“大老爷原是好养静的，已经修炼的成了，也算得是神仙了。太太们这么一说，这就叫作‘心到神知’了。”一句话，说的满屋里的人都笑起来了。

于是，尤氏的母亲并邢夫人、王夫人、凤姐儿都吃毕饭，漱了口，净了手；才说要往园子里去，贾蓉进来向尤氏说道：“老爷们并众叔叔、哥哥、兄弟们都吃了饭了。大老爷说家里的事，二老爷是不爱听戏、又怕人闹的慌，都才去了。别的一家子的爷们都被琏二叔并蔷兄弟都让过去听戏去



young gentlemen here, and that in compliance with his orders he wouldn't presume to go over. Grandfather was very pleased. He expressed approval and told me to ask you and my father to attend to the elder generation while we entertain the younger. He also wants to have ten thousand copies of his version of *Rewards and Punishments* printed and distributed as quickly as possible. I've already given this message to my father. Now I must hurry and see to the food for all the grand-uncles, uncles and other gentlemen."

"Just a minute, Master Rong," interposed Xifeng. "Tell me, how is your wife today?"

"Not well at all." The young man's face clouded. "Do go and see her for yourself, aunt, on your way home." He left without saying any more.

Madam You asked Lady Xing and Lady Wang, "Would you prefer to eat here or in the garden? The actors are preparing out there."

"Why not eat here and then go out?" suggested Lady Wang. "That would be simple."

Lady Xing seconded this.

So Madam You ordered the meal to be served at once. There was an answering cry in unison outside the door and the maids went to fetch the dishes. Soon the feast was ready. Madam You made Lady Xing, Lady Wang and her mother take the places of honour, while she sat at a side table with Xifeng and Baoyu.

"We came to congratulate the old gentleman on his birthday," remarked Lady Xing and Lady Wang. "But now it looks, doesn't it, as if we were celebrating our own?"

"The Elder Master is fond of retirement," said Xifeng. "He's lived so long as an ascetic, we can already consider him an immortal. So he'll know by divine intuition what you've just said."

This set the whole company laughing. The ladies, having by now finished their meal, rinsed their mouths and washed their hands. Just as they were ready to go into the garden, Jia Rong turned up to tell his mother:

"All my grand-uncles, uncles and cousins have finished their meal. Lord She has some business at home, and Lord Zheng has also left as he



了。方才南安郡王、东平郡王、西宁郡王、北静郡王四家王爷，并镇国公牛府等六家，忠靖侯史府等八家，都差人持了名帖送寿礼来，都回了我父亲，先收在帐房里面，礼单都上了档子了。老爷的领谢的名帖都交给各来人了，各来人也都照旧例赏了，众人都让吃了饭才去了。母亲该请二位太太、老娘、婶子都过园子里坐着罢。”尤氏道：“也是才吃完了饭，就要过去了。”

凤姐儿说：“我回太太，我先瞧瞧蓉哥儿媳妇，我再过去。”王夫人道：“很是。我们都要去瞧瞧他，倒怕他嫌闹的慌，说我们问他好罢。”尤氏道：“好妹妹，媳妇听你的话，你去开导开导他，我也放心。你就快些过园子里来。”宝玉也要跟了凤姐儿去瞧秦氏去，王夫人道：“你看看就过去罢，那是侄儿媳妇。”于是尤氏请了邢夫人、王夫人并他母亲都过会芳园去了。

凤姐儿、宝玉方和贾蓉到秦氏这边来了。进了房门，悄悄的走到里间房门口。秦氏见了，就要站起来，凤姐儿说：“快别起来，看起猛了头晕。”于是凤姐儿就紧走了两步，拉住秦氏的手，说道：“我的奶奶！怎么几日不见，就瘦的这么着了！”于是就坐在秦氏坐的褥子上。宝玉也问了好，坐在对面椅子上。贾蓉叫：“快倒茶来，婶子和二叔在上房还未喝茶呢。”

秦氏拉着凤姐儿的手，强笑道：“这都是我没福。这样人家，公公婆婆当自己的女孩儿似的待。婶娘的侄儿虽说年





doesn't care for theatricals or anything rowdy. Uncle Lian and Cousin Qiang have taken the others over to watch the performance.

"Cards and gifts have been brought from the four princes of Nanan, Dongping, Xining and Beijing, from Duke Niu of Zhenguo and five other dukes, as well as from Marquis Shi of Zhongjing and seven other marquises. I've reported this to my father, had the presents put in the counting-house and the catalogues of gifts placed on file, and my father's 'received with thanks' cards handed to the messengers, who were given the usual tips and a meal before they left.

"Won't you ask the ladies to go and sit in the garden now, mother?"

"We've just finished our meal too," said Madam You. "We're coming over."

"I'd like to drop in and see Rong's wife first, madam," said Xifeng. "May I join you later?"

"A good idea," approved Lady Wang. "We'd all go if not for fear of disturbing her. Tell her we asked after her."

"My daughter-in-law always does as you ask her, dear sister," said Madam You. "I'll feel much easier in my mind if you go and cheer her up. But join us in the garden as soon as you can."

Baoyu asked permission to go with Xifeng.

"Go if you want, but don't be long," said his mother. "Remember she's your nephew's wife."

So Madam You took Lady Xing, Lady Wang and her own mother to the Garden of Concentrated Fragrance, while Xifeng and Baoyu went with Jia Rong to see Keqing.

They entered her room quietly and when she made an effort to rise Xifeng protested, "Don't. It would make you dizzy." She hurried forward to clasp Keqing's hand, exclaiming, "How thin you've grown, my poor lady, in the few days since last I saw you!"

She sat down on her mattress, while Baoyu also asked after his niece's health and took a chair opposite.

"Bring in tea at once," called Jia Rong. "My aunt and second uncle had none in the drawing-room."

Holding Xifeng's hand, Keqing forced a smile.

"Living in a family like this is more than I deserve," she said. "My



轻，却彼此相敬，从来没有红过脸儿。就是一家子的长辈同辈之中，除了婶子倒不用说了，别人也从没不疼我的，也无不和我好的。这如今得了这个病，把我那要强的心，一分也没了。公婆跟前未得孝顺一天；就是姨娘这样疼我，我就有十分孝顺的心，如今也不能够了。我自想着，未必熬的过年去呢。”

宝玉正眼瞅着那《海棠春睡图》，并那秦太虚写的“嫩寒锁梦因春冷，芳气袭人是酒香”的对联，不觉想起在这里睡晌觉梦到“太虚幻境”的事来。正自出神，听得秦氏说了这些话，如万箭攒心，那眼泪不知不觉就流下来了。凤姐儿虽心中十分难过，但只怕病人见了众人这个样子反添心酸，倒不是来开导劝解的意思了。见宝玉这个样子，因说道：“宝兄弟，你忒婆婆妈妈的了。他病人不过是这么说，那里就到得这个田地了？况且能多大年纪的人，略病一病儿，就这么想、那么想的，这不是自己倒给自己添病了么？”贾蓉道：“他这病也不用别的，只是吃得些饮食，就不怕了。”凤姐儿道：“宝兄弟，太太叫你快过去呢。你别在这里只管这么着，倒招的媳妇也心里不好。太太那里又惦着你。”因向贾蓉说道：“你先同你宝叔叔过去罢，我还略坐一坐儿。”贾蓉听说，即同宝玉过会芳园来了。

这里凤姐儿又劝了秦氏一番，又低低的说了许多衷肠话儿。尤氏打发人请了两三遍，凤姐儿才向秦氏说道：“你好生养着罢，我再来看你。合该你这病要好，所以前日就有人荐



father-in-law and mother-in-law treat me as their own daughter. And although your nephew's young, we have such a regard for each other that we've never quarrelled. In fact the whole family, old and young, not to mention you, dear aunt — that goes without saying — have been goodness itself to me and shown me nothing but kindness. But now that I've fallen ill all my will power's gone, and I haven't been able to be a good daughter-in-law. I want so much to show how I appreciate your goodness, aunt, but it's no longer in my power now. I doubt if I shall last the year out."

Baoyu was looking pensively at the picture *Sleeping Under a Crab-Apple Tree in Spring* and Qin Guan's couplet:

Coolness wraps her dream, for spring is chill;
A fragrance assails men, the aroma of wine.

As he raptly recalled his dream here of the Illusory Land of Great Void, Keqing's remarks pierced his heart like ten thousand arrows and unknown to himself his tears flowed. Xifeng, distressed as she was, did not want to upset the patient even more, knowing it would be better to distract and console her.

"You're a regular old woman, Baoyu," she scolded. "It's not as bad as your niece would have us believe." She turned to Keqing. "How can someone your age give way to such foolish fancies just because of a little illness? Do you want to make yourself worse?"

"She'd be all right if only she'd eat," put in Jia Rong.

"Her Ladyship told you not to be too long," Xifeng reminded Baoyu. "Don't hang about here upsetting Keqing and making Her Ladyship worry." She then turned to Jia Rong and said, "Take Uncle Bao to rejoin the others while I stay here a little longer."

So Jia Rong led Baoyu to the Garden of Concentrated Fragrance while Xifeng soothed Keqing and whispered some well-meant advice into her ear.

When Madam You sent a servant for the third time to fetch her she said to Keqing, "Take good care of yourself. I'll come back again to see you. The fact that this good doctor has been recommended to us is a sign that you're going to get better. Don't you worry."



了这个好大夫来，再也是不怕的了。”秦氏笑道：“任凭是神仙也罢，治得病，治不得命。婶子，我知道我这病，不过是挨日子。”凤姐儿说道：“你只管这么想，病那里能好呢？总要想开了才是。况且听得大夫说，若是不治，怕的是春天不好呢。如今才九月半，还有四五个月的工夫，什么病治不好呢？咱们若是不能吃人参的人家，这也难说了；你公公婆婆听见治得好你，别说一日二钱人参，就是二斤也能够吃得起。好生养着罢，我过园子里去了。”秦氏又道：“婶子，恕我不能跟过去了。闲了的时候，还求婶子常过来瞧瞧我，咱们娘儿们坐坐，多说几遭话儿。”凤姐儿听了，不觉又眼圈儿一红，遂说道：“我得了闲儿必常来看你。”

于是凤姐儿带领跟来的婆子、丫头并宁府的媳妇、婆子们，从里头绕进园子的便门来。但只见：

黄花满地，绿柳横坡。小桥通若耶之溪，曲径接天台之路。石中清流激湍，篱落飘香；树头红叶翩翩，疏林如画。西风乍紧，初罢莺啼；暖日当暄，又添蛩语。遥望东南，建几处依山之榭；纵观西北，结三间临水之轩。笙簧盈耳，别有幽情；罗绮穿林，倍添韵致。





“Even if he were an immortal, he could cure a disease but not avert my fate,” retorted Keqing with a smile. “I know it’s only a matter of time now, auntie.”

“How can you get better if you keep thinking like that? You must look on the bright side. In any case, I’m told the doctor said that even if you’re not cured there’s no danger until the spring. It’s only the middle of the ninth month now. You’ve four or five months yet, quite long enough to recover from any illness. It would be another matter if our family couldn’t afford ginseng; but your father and mother-in-law can easily give you two catties of ginseng a day, not to mention two drams. Mind you rest well. I’m off now to the garden.”

“I’m sorry I can’t go with you, dear aunt,” said Keqing. “Do come back again when you’ve time and let’s have a few more good talks.”

Xifeng’s eyes smarted again at this. “Of course I’ll come whenever I’m free,” she promised.

Accompanied by her own maids and some from the Ning Mansion, she took a winding path to the side gate of the garden. There a rare sight met her eyes.

Yellow chrysanthemums carpeted the ground;
Green willows covered the slopes;
Small bridges spanned the brooks
And winding pathways led to quiet retreats.
Clear springs welled from the rocks,
Fragrance was wafted from trellises laden with
flowers,
While russet tree-tops swayed
In scattered copses lovely as a painting.
The autumn wind was chilly
And the song of golden orioles had ceased,
But crickets were still chirping in the warm sunshine.
At the far southeast end
Cottages nestled among the hills;
On the northwest side
Pavilions brooded over the lake water.
Fluting cast a subtle enchantment over men’s senses,
And silk-gowned girls strolling through the woods



凤姐儿正自看园中的景致，一步步行来赞赏。猛然从假山石后走过一个人来，向前对凤姐儿说道：“请嫂子安。”凤姐儿猛然见了，将身子往后一退，说道：“这是瑞大爷不是？”贾瑞说道：“嫂子，连我也不认得了？不是我是谁！”凤姐儿道：“不是不认得，猛然一见，不想是大爷到这里来。”贾瑞道：“也是合该与嫂子有缘。我方才偷出了席，在这个清净地方散一散，不想就遇见嫂子也从这里来。”一面说，一面拿眼睛不住的觑着凤姐儿。

凤姐儿是个聪明人，见他这个光景，如何不猜透八九分呢，因向贾瑞假意含笑道：“怨不得你哥哥常提起，说你很好。今日见了，听你这几句话儿，就知道你是个聪明和气的人了。这会子我要到太太那里去，不得和你说话儿，等闲了，咱们再说话儿罢。”贾瑞道：“我要到嫂子家里去请安，又恐怕嫂子年轻、不见人。”凤姐儿假意含笑道：“一家子骨肉，说什么年轻不年轻的话。”贾瑞听了这话，再想不到今日得这个奇遇，那神情光景益发不堪难看了。凤姐儿说道：“你快入席去罢，仔细他们拿住，罚你酒。”贾瑞听了，身上已木了半边，慢慢的一面走着，一面回过头来看。凤姐儿故意的把脚步放迟了些儿，见他去远了，心里暗忖道：“这才是知人知面不知心呢，那里有这样禽兽样的人呢。他如果如此，几时叫他死在我的手里，他才知道我的手段！”

于是凤姐儿方移步前来，将转过了一重山坡，见两三个婆子慌慌张张的走来，见了凤姐儿，笑说道：“我们奶奶见二奶奶只是不来，急的了不得，叫奴才们又来请奶奶来了。”凤姐儿说道：“你们奶奶就是这样急脚鬼似的。”于是凤姐儿慢慢



Added to the charm of the scene.

Xifeng was strolling along enjoying this sight when a man appeared without warning from behind an artificial rockery and accosted her with, "Greetings, sister-in-law!"

She stepped back, startled, and asked, "Is it Master Rui?"

"Who else could it be? Don't tell me you don't know me."

"Of course I do, but you took me by surprise."

"We must have been fated to meet, sister-in-law." He was devouring her with his eyes as he spoke. "I slipped away from the banquet just now for a quiet stroll in this secluded spot. And I meet you here! What is this if not fate?"

Xifeng had sense enough to see through him. "No wonder Lian always speaks so highly of you," she rejoined with a smile, feigning pleasure. "From seeing you today and hearing you talk, I can see how clever and understanding you are. I've no time to spare now, I must join Her Ladyship. But perhaps we shall meet again some other day."

"I've often wanted to call and pay my respects. But I thought, being young, you might not welcome me."

"What nonsense." She assumed another smile. "Aren't we of the same family?"

Enraptured by this unexpected good fortune, Jia Rui looked ready to make more indecent advances. But Xifeng urged him, "You must hurry back before you're missed, or they'll make you drink forfeits."

Half numbed by this tantalizing remark he walked slowly away, looking back at her over his shoulder. Xifeng purposely slowed down until he was out of sight.

"You can know a man's face but not his heart," she reflected, "I'll show the beast! If he tries anything like that with me, I'll sooner or later make him die at my hands, to let him know my ability."

Then, rounding a miniature hill, she met several matrons hurrying breathlessly towards her.

"Our mistress sent us to fetch you, madam," they cried. "She was worried because you didn't come."

"Your mistress is devilish impatient!"

Continuing to saunter along, she asked how many items had been



的走着，问：“戏唱了有几出了？”那婆子回道：“有八九出了。”说话之间，已到了天香楼的后门，见宝玉和一群丫头们在那里玩呢。凤姐儿说道：“宝兄弟，别忒淘气了。”一个丫头说道：“太太们都在楼上坐着呢，请奶奶就从这边上去罢。”

凤姐儿听了，款步提衣上了楼来，见尤氏已在楼梯口等着呢。尤氏便笑道：“你们娘儿两个忒好了，见了面，总舍不得来了。你明日搬来和他住着罢。你坐下，我先敬你一钟。”于是凤姐儿在邢、王二夫人前告了坐，又在尤氏的母亲前周旋了一遍，仍同尤氏坐一桌上，吃酒听戏。尤氏叫拿戏单来，让凤姐儿点戏。凤姐儿说道：“亲家太太和太太们在这里，我如何敢点？”邢夫人、王夫人说道：“我们和亲家太太都点了好几出了，你点两出好的我们听。”凤姐儿立起身来，答应了一声，方接过了戏单，从头一看，点了一出《还魂》，一出《弹词》，递过戏单去说：“现在唱《双官诰》，唱完了，再唱这两出，也就是时候了。”王夫人道：“可不是呢，也该趁早叫你哥哥、嫂子歇歇，他们又心里不静。”尤氏说：“太太们又不常过来，娘儿们多坐会子去，才有趣儿。天还早呢。”凤姐儿立起身来望楼下一看，说：“爷们都往那里去了？”旁边一个婆子道：“爷们才到凝曦轩，带了打十番的人吃酒去了。”凤姐儿说道：“在这里不便宜，背地里又不知干什么去了！”尤氏笑道：“那里都像你这么正经人呢。”





performed. The answer was: Eight or nine. They had now reached the back door of the Pavilion of Heavenly Fragrance, where Baoyu was amusing himself with some maids.

“No silly tricks now, Cousin Baoyu,” she warned him.

“The ladies are all in the gallery,” one of the girls told her. “Just up those stairs, madam.”

Xifeng gathered up her skirts to mount the stairs and found Madam You waiting for her on the landing.

“You and your niece are so thick, I thought you’d never tear yourself away,” teased Madam You. “You’d better move over tomorrow and stay with her. Sit down now and let me give you a toast.”

Xifeng asked Lady Xing and Lady Wang’s permission to be seated and exchanged a few polite remarks with Madam You’s mother, then she sat down beside her hostess to sip wine and watch the performance. Madam You sent for the list of their repertoire and asked her to choose a few items.

“How can I presume when Their Ladyships are present?” demurred Xifeng.

“Old Mrs. You has chosen several already,” replied Lady Xing and Lady Wang. “It’s your turn to pick a couple of good ones for us.”

Xifeng rose to signify obedience. Taking the list she read through it and marked *The Resurrection*¹ and *The Rhapsody*.² Handing it back she observed, “When they’ve finished this *Double Promotion*³ there’ll be just time enough for these two.”

“Yes,” said Lady Wang. “We must let our hosts have some rest soon. Especially as this is a worrying time for them.”

“You come over so seldom,” protested Madam You, “I do hope you’ll stay a bit longer. It’s early yet.”

Xifeng stood up to look below and asked, “Where are the gentlemen?”

“They’ve gone to drink in the Pavilion of Lingering Dawn,” replied one of the matrons. “They took the musicians with them.”

“Our presence cramps their style,” remarked Xifeng. “I wonder what they’re up to behind our backs?”

“How can you expect everybody to be as proper as you?” said Madam



于是说说笑笑，点的戏都唱完了，方才撤下酒席，摆上饭来。吃毕，大家才出园子来，到上房坐下，吃了茶，方才叫预备车，向尤氏的母亲告了辞。尤氏率同众姬妾、家人、婆子、媳妇们方送出来，贾珍率领众子侄都在车旁侍立，等候着呢。见邢、王二夫人说道：“二位婶婶明日还过来逛逛。”王夫人道：“罢了，我们今日整坐了一日，也乏了，明日歇歇罢。”于是都上车去了。贾瑞犹不时拿眼睛觑着凤姐儿。贾珍等进去后，李贵才拉过马来，宝玉骑上，随了王夫人去了。这里贾珍同一家子的弟兄、子侄吃过晚饭，方大家散了。

次日，仍是众族人等闹了一日，不必细说。此后凤姐儿不时亲自来看秦氏。秦氏也有几日好些，也有几日仍是那样。贾珍、尤氏、贾蓉好不焦心。

且说贾瑞到荣府来了几次，偏都遇着凤姐儿往宁府那边去了。这年正是十一月三十日冬至，到交节的那几日，贾母、王夫人、凤姐儿日日差人去看秦氏，回来的人都说：“这几日也未见添病，也不见甚好。”王夫人向贾母说：“这个症候，遇着这样大节不添病，就有好大的指望了。”贾母说：“可是呢，好个孩子，要是有些原故，可不叫人疼死。”说着，一阵心酸，叫凤姐儿说道：“你们娘儿两个也好了一场，明日大初一，过了明日，你后日再去看看他去。你细细的瞧瞧他那光景，倘或好些儿，你回来告诉我，我也喜欢喜欢。那孩子素日爱吃的，你也常叫人做些，给他送过去。”凤姐儿一一答应了。

到了初二日，吃了早饭，来到宁府。看见秦氏的光景，



You jokingly.

So they laughed and chatted till the plays came to an end, when the wine was taken away and rice brought in. After the meal they returned to the drawing-room for tea, then ordered their carriages and took their leave of old Mrs. You. They were seen to their carriages by Madam You, attended by all the concubines and maids, and there they found the young men waiting with Jia Zhen. The latter urged Lady Xing and Lady Wang to come back again the next day, but Lady Wang declined. "We've spent the whole day here and we're tired. We shall have to rest tomorrow."

Jia Rui kept his eyes on Xifeng as the visitors got into their carriages and drove off.

After Jia Zhen and the others had gone indoors, Li Gui led round Baoyu's horse and the boy mounted it and followed his mother home. When Jia Zhen and all the young men had dined, the party broke up; and there is no need to describe the entertainment they offered all their kinsmen the next day.

Xifeng dropped in more often now to see Keqing, who seemed slightly better on some days although in general her health did not improve, to the great dismay of her husband and his parents. And Jia Rui, calling several times on Xifeng, invariably found she had gone to the Ning Mansion.

The thirtieth day of the eleventh month would be the winter solstice. As it approached, the Lady Dowager, Lady Wang and Xifeng sent daily to inquire after Keqing and were told each time that she was neither better nor worse.

"It's a hopeful sign," Lady Wang told the Lady Dowager, "if an illness grows no worse at a season like this."

"Yes, of course," replied the old lady. "If anything were to happen to the dear child, I'm sure it would break my heart."

In her distress she sent for Xifeng and said, "You and she have always been good friends. Tomorrow's the first of the twelfth month, but the day after that I want you to call on her and see just how she is. If she's any better, come and tell me. That would take a great weight off my mind. And you must have the things she used to like to eat made and sent round."

Xifeng promised to do this and after breakfast on the second she went



虽未甚添病，但是那脸上身上的肉，全瘦干了。于是和秦氏坐了半日，说了些闲话儿，又将这病无妨的话开导了一番。秦氏说道：“好不好，春天就知道了。如今现过了冬至，又没怎样，或者好的了，也未可知。婶子回老太太、太太放心罢。昨日老太太赏的那枣泥馅的山药糕，我倒吃了两块，倒像克化的动似的。”凤姐儿说道：“明日再给你送过来。我到你婆婆那里瞧瞧，就要赶着回去，回太太的话去。”秦氏道：“婶子替我请老太太、太太的安罢。”

凤姐儿答应着就出来了，到了尤氏上房坐下，尤氏道：“你冷眼瞧媳妇是怎么样？”凤姐儿低了半日头，说道：“这实在无法了。你也该将一应的东西后事用的，也该料理料理，冲他一冲也好。”尤氏道：“我也暗暗的叫人预备了。就是那件东西，不得好木头，暂且慢慢的办罢。”于是凤姐儿吃了茶，说了会子话儿，说道：“我要快回去回老太太的话去呢。”尤氏道：“你可缓缓的说，别吓着老人家。”凤姐儿道：“我知道。”

于是凤姐儿就回来了。到了家中，见了贾母，说：“蓉哥儿媳妇请老太太安，给老太太磕头。他说好些了，求老祖宗放心罢。他再略好些，还要给老祖宗磕头来呢。”贾母道：“你看他是怎么样了？”凤姐儿说道：“暂且无妨，精神还好呢。”贾母听了，沉吟了半日，因向凤姐儿说：“你换换衣服，歇歇去罢。”

凤姐儿答应着出来，见过了王夫人。到了房中，平儿将烘的家常的衣服给凤姐儿换了。凤姐儿方坐下，问道：“家里没有什么事么？”平儿方端了茶来，递了过去，说道：“没有



to the Ning Mansion to see Keqing. Although the invalid appeared no worse, she had grown very thin and wasted. Xifeng sat and chatted with her for some time, assuring her that she had no cause for alarm.

“Whether I’ll ever recover or not we’ll know when spring comes,” said Keqing. “Maybe I shall, for the winter solstice has passed and I’m no worse. Please tell the old lady and Lady Wang not to worry. Yesterday I ate two of the yam cakes stuffed with dates that the old lady sent, and I think they did me good.”

“We’ll send you some more tomorrow,” offered Xifeng. “Now I must go to see your mother-in-law before hurrying back to tell the old lady how you are.”

“Please send my respects to her and Lady Wang.”

Promising to do so, Xifeng left. She went to sit with Madam You who asked, “Tell me frankly, how did you find her?”

Xifeng lowered her head for a while. “There seems to be little hope,” she said at last. “If I were you I’d make ready the things for the funeral. That may break the bad luck.”

“I’ve had them secretly prepared. But I can’t get any good wood for you know what, so I’ve let that go for the time being.”

After drinking some tea and chatting a little longer, Xifeng said she must go back to report to the Lady Dowager.

“Don’t break it to her yet,” said Madam You. “We don’t want to alarm the old lady.”

Xifeng agreed to this and took her leave. Home again, she told the Lady Dowager, “Rong’s wife sends her respects and kowtows to you. She says she’s better and you mustn’t worry. When she’s a little stronger, she’ll come herself to kowtow and pay her respects.”

“How did she seem?”

“For the present there’s nothing to fear. She’s in good spirits.”

The Lady Dowager thought this over, then said, “Go and change your clothes now and rest.”

Xifeng withdrew and reported to Lady Wang before going back to her room. Pinger helped her into the informal clothes she had warming by the fire. Then Xifeng, taking a seat, asked what had happened during her absence.



什么事。就是那三百两银子的利银，来旺媳妇送进来，我收了。再有瑞大爷使人来打听奶奶在家没有，他要来请安说话。”凤姐儿听了，“哼”了一声，说道：“这畜生合该作死，看他来了怎么样！”平儿因问道：“这瑞大爷因为什么只管来？”凤姐儿遂将九月里在宁府园子里，遇见他的光景，他说的话，都告诉了平儿。平儿说道：“癞蛤蟆想天鹅肉吃，没人伦的混账东西，起这个念头，叫他不得好死！”凤姐儿道：“等他来了，我自有道理。”不知贾瑞来时，作何光景，且听下回分解。



“Nothing much.” The maid handed her a bowl of tea. “Lai Wang’s wife came with the interest on that three hundred taels, which I put away. And Master Rui sent round again to ask if you were in, as he wanted to pay his respects.”

“That wretch! He deserves to die,” Xifeng snorted. “Just see what I do to the beast if he comes!”

“Why does he keep calling?”

Xifeng described their meeting and all he had said to her in the Ning Mansion garden during the ninth month.

“A toad hankering for a taste of swan,” scoffed Pinger. “The beast hasn’t a shred of common decency. He deserves a bad end for dreaming of such a thing.”

“Let him come,” said Xifeng. “I know how to deal with him.”

What happened to Jia Rui when he came is told in the next chapter.





賈天祥正照風月鑑



第十二回

王熙凤毒设相思局 贾天祥正照风月鉴

话说凤姐正与平儿说话，只见有人回说：“瑞大爷来了。”凤姐急命“快请进来。”贾瑞见往里让，心中喜出望外，急忙进来，见了凤姐，满面陪笑，连连问好。凤姐也假意殷勤，让茶让坐。

贾瑞见凤姐如此打扮，亦发酥倒，因觴了眼问道：“二哥哥怎么还不回来？”凤姐道：“不知什么原故。”贾瑞笑道：

“别是在路上有人绊住了脚，舍不得回来？”凤姐道：“也未可知。男人家见一个爱一个，也是有的。”贾瑞笑道：“嫂子这话说错了，我就不这样。”凤姐笑道：“像你这样的人，能有几个呢，十个里也挑不出一个来。”贾瑞听了，喜的抓耳挠腮，又道：“嫂子，天天也闷的很？”凤姐道：“正是呢，只盼个人来说话，解解闷儿。”贾瑞笑道：“我倒天天闲着，天天过来，替嫂子解解闲闷，可好不好？”凤姐笑道：“你哄我呢，你那里肯往我这里来。”贾瑞道：“我在嫂子跟前，若有一点谎话，天打雷劈！只因素日闻得人说，嫂子是个利害人，在你跟前一点也错不得，所以唬住了。我如今见嫂子，最是个有说有笑、极疼人的，我怎么不来！死了我也愿意！”凤姐笑道：“果然你是个明白人，比贾蓉两个强远了。我看他





Chapter 12

Xifeng Sets a Vicious Trap for a Lover Jia Rui Looks into the Wrong Side of the Precious Mirror of Love

While Xifeng was talking to Pinger, Jia Rui was announced. She ordered him to be admitted at once.

Overjoyed at being received, he hastened in and greeted her effusively, beaming with smiles. With a show of regard she made him take a seat and offered him tea. The sight of her in informal dress threw him into raptures. Gazing amorously at her he asked:

“Why isn’t Second Brother Lian home yet?”

“I wouldn’t know,” Xifeng replied.

“Perhaps he’s been caught by someone and can’t tear himself away?”

“Perhaps. Men are like that. Bewitched by every pretty face they see.”

“Not all of us, sister-in-law. I’m not like that.”

“How many are there like you? Not one in ten.”

Tweaking his ears and rubbing his cheeks with delight, the young man insinuated, “You must be very bored here day in and day out.”

“Yes indeed. I keep wishing someone would drop in for a chat to cheer me up.”

“I have plenty of time. Suppose I were to drop in to amuse you every day?”

“Now you’re joking,” she replied archly. “You wouldn’t want to come and see me.”

“I mean every word I say. May a thunderbolt strike me if I don’t! I didn’t dare come before because I was told you were very strict and took offence at the least little thing. Now I see how charming and how kind you are, you may be sure I’ll come, even if it costs me my life.”

“You’re certainly much more understanding than Jia Rong and his brother. They look so refined one would expect them to be understanding, but they’re stupid fools with no insight at all into other people’s

那样清秀，只当他们心里明白，谁知竟是两个糊涂虫，一点不知人心。”

贾瑞听了这话，越发撞在心坎上，由不得又往前凑了一凑，觑着眼，看凤姐带的荷包，然后又问带着什么戒指。凤姐悄悄道：“放尊重着，别叫丫头们看见笑话。”贾瑞如听纶音佛语一般，忙往后退。凤姐笑道：“你该去了。”贾瑞道：“我再坐一会儿。好狠心的嫂子。”凤姐又悄悄的道：“大天白日，人来人往，你就在这里也不方便。你且去着，晚上起了更你来，悄悄的在西边穿堂儿等我。”贾瑞听了，如得珍宝，忙问道：“你别哄我。但只那里人过的多，怎么好躲的？”凤姐道：“你只放心。我把上夜的小厮们都放了假，两边门一关，再没别人了。”贾瑞听了，喜之不尽，忙忙的告辞而去，心内以为得手。

盼到晚上，果然黑地里摸入荣府，趁掩门时，钻入穿堂。果见漆黑无一人，往贾母那边去的门户已倒锁，只有向东的门未关。贾瑞侧耳听着，半日不见人来，忽听“咯噔”一声，东边的门也都关了。贾瑞急的也不敢作声，只得悄悄出来，将门撼了撼，关的铁桶一般。此时要求出去，亦不能够，南北皆是大房墙，要跳又无攀援。这屋内又是过门风，空落落；现是腊月天气，夜又长，朔风凛凛，侵肌裂骨，一夜几乎不曾冻死。好容易盼到早晨，只见一个老婆子先将东门开了，去叫西门。贾瑞瞅的老婆子背着脸，一溜烟抱着肩跑了出来。幸而天色尚早，人都未起，从后门一径跑回家去。



hearts.”

Inflamed by this praise, he edged closer. Staring at the purse hanging from her girdle, he asked if he might look at her rings.

“Take care,” she whispered. “What will the maids think?”

He drew back instantly as if obeying an Imperial decree or a mandate from Buddha.

“You had better go now,” Xifeng smiled.

“Don’t be so cruel. Let me stay a little longer.”

“This is no place for you during the day with so many people about,” she murmured. “Go now but come back again secretly at the first watch. Wait for me in the western entrance hall.”

To Jia Rui this was like receiving a pearl of great price.

“You’re not joking, are you?” he demanded. “How can I hide there with people passing back and forth all the time?”

“Don’t worry. I’ll dismiss all the pages on night duty. Once the gates on both sides are locked, no one can come through.”

Hardly able to contain himself for joy, the young man hurried off, convinced he would have his desire and longing for the evening.

That night, sure enough, he groped his way to the Rong Mansion, slipping into the entrance hall just before the gates were bolted. It was pitch dark and not a soul was about. Already the gate to the Lady Dowager’s quarters was locked, only the one on the east remaining open.

He waited, listening intently, but no one came. Then with a sudden clatter the east gate was bolted too. Frantic as he was, he dared not make a sound. He crept out to try the gate and found it securely closed. Escape was out of the question, for the walls on either side were too high to climb.

The entrance hall was bare and draughty. As it was the depth of winter the nights were long and an icy north wind chilled him to the bone. He almost froze to death.

At last dawn came and a matron appeared to open the east gate. As she went over to knock on the west gate and was looking the other way, Jia Rui shot out like a streak of smoke, hugging his shoulders. Luckily no one else was up at this early hour. He was able to escape unseen through



原来贾瑞父母早亡，只有他祖父代儒教养。那代儒素日教训最严，不许贾瑞多走一步，生怕他在外吃酒赌钱，有误学业。今忽见他一夜不归，只料定他在外，非饮即赌，嫖娼宿妓，那里想到这段公案，因此气了一夜。贾瑞也捻着一把汗，少不得回来撒谎，只说：“往舅舅家去了，天黑了，留我住了一夜。”代儒道：“自来出门，非禀我不敢擅出，如何昨日私自去了？据此亦该打，况且撒谎。”因此发狠，到底打了三四十板，还不许吃饭，令他跪在院内读文章，定要补出十天的工课来方罢。贾瑞直冻了一夜，今又遭了苦打，且饿着肚子，跪着在风地里读文章，其苦万状。

此时贾瑞，前心犹未改，再想不到是凤姐捉弄他。过后两日，空闲，仍来找寻凤姐。凤姐故意抱怨他失信，贾瑞急的赌身发誓。凤姐因见他自投罗网，少不得再寻别计，令他知改过。又约他道：“今日晚上，你别在那里了。你在我这房后小过道子里那间空屋里等我，可别冒撞了。”贾瑞道：“果真？”凤姐道：“谁可哄你？你不信，就别来。”贾瑞道：“来，来，死也要来！”凤姐道：“这会子你先去罢。”贾瑞料定晚间必妥，此时先去了。凤姐在这里便点兵派将，设下圈套。

那贾瑞只盼不到晚上，偏生家里亲戚又来了，直等吃了晚饭才去，那天已有掌灯时分。又等他祖父安歇了，方溜进荣府，直往那夹道中屋子里来等着，热锅上蚂蚁一般，只是





the postern door.

Jia Rui had been orphaned early and left in the charge of his grandfather Jia Dairu, a strict disciplinarian who allowed him no freedom for fear he drink or gamble outside and neglect his studies. Now that he had stayed out all night his grandfather was furious and suspected him of drinking, gambling or whoring, little guessing the truth of the matter.

In a cold sweat with fright, Jia Rui tried to lie his way out.

"I went to my uncle's house, and because it was late he kept me for the night."

"You have never dared leave home before without permission," thundered his grandfather. "You deserve a beating for sneaking off like that. And a worse one for deceiving me."

He gave Jia Rui thirty or forty strokes with a bamboo, would not let him have any food, and made him kneel in the courtyard to study ten days' lessons. This thrashing on an empty stomach and kneeling in the wind to read essays completed the wretched youth's misery after his freezing night.

But still too blinded by infatuation to realize that Xifeng was playing with him, he seized his first chance a couple of days later to call. She reproached him for his breach of faith, earnestly as he protested his innocence; and since he had delivered himself into her hands she could not but devise further means to cure him.

"Tonight you can wait for me in another place — that vacant room off the passage behind this apartment. But mind you don't make any mistake this time."

"Do you really mean it?"

"Of course I do. If you don't believe me, don't come."

"I'll come, I'll come, even if I should die for it."

"Now, you'd better go."

Assuming that this time all would go well, Jia Rui went off.

Having got rid of him, Xifeng held a council of war and baited her trap while the young man waited at home impatiently, for to his annoyance one of their relatives called and stayed to supper. By the time he left the lamps were being lit, and Jia Rui had to wait for his grandfather to retire before he could slip over to the Rong Mansion and wait in the place



干转。左等不见人影，右等不见声响，心下自思道：“别是又不来了，又冻我一夜不成？”正自胡猜，只见黑魃魃的来了一个人，贾瑞便意定是凤姐，不管皂白，饿虎一般，等那人刚至门前，便如猫捕鼠的一般，抱住叫道：“亲嫂子，等死我了。”说着，抱到屋里炕上，就亲嘴、扯裤子，满口里“亲娘”“亲爹”的乱叫起来。那人只不作声。贾瑞扯了自己裤子，硬帮帮就将顶入。忽见灯光一闪，只见贾蔷举着捻子照道：“谁在屋里？”只见炕上那人笑道：“瑞大叔要臊我呢。”贾瑞一见，却是贾蓉，真臊的无地可入，不知要怎么样才好，回身就要跑，被贾蔷一把揪住道：“别走！如今琏二婶婶告到太太跟前，说你无故调戏他。他暂用了个脱身计，哄你在这边等着，太太气死过去，因此叫我来拿你。刚才你又拦住他，没的说，跟我去见太太！”

贾瑞听了，魂不附体，只说：“好侄儿，只说没有见我，明日我重重的谢你。”贾蔷道：“你谢我，放你不值什么，只不知你谢我多少？况且口说无凭，写一文契来。”贾瑞道：“这如何落纸呢？”贾蔷道：“这也不妨，写一个赌钱输了外人帐目，借头家银若干两。”贾瑞道：“这也容易。只是此时无纸笔。”贾蔷道：“这也容易。”说罢，翻身出来，纸笔现成，





appointed. He paced the room frantic as an ant on a hot griddle, but there was no sight or sound of anyone.

“Is she really coming?” he wondered. “Or shall I be left to freeze for another whole night?”

Just then a dark figure appeared. Sure that it was Xifeng, he threw caution to the winds and barely had the figure stepped through the door than he flung himself on it like a ravenous tiger, or a cat pouncing on a mouse.

“Dearest!” he cried. “I nearly died of longing.”

He carried her to the *kang*, where he showered kisses on her and fumbled with her clothes, pouring out incoherent endearments. Not a sound came from the figure in his arms.

Jia Rui had just pulled down his pants and prepared to set to work when a sudden flash of light made him look up. There stood Jia Qiang, a taper in his hand.

“What’s going on in here?” he demanded.

The figure on the *kang* said with a chuckle, “Uncle Rui was trying to bugger me.”

When Jia Rui saw that it was Jia Rong, he wished he could sink through the ground. In utter confusion he turned to run away.

“Oh, no you don’t!” Jia Qiang grabbed him. “Aunt Xifeng has told Lady Wang that without any reason you tried to make love to her. To escape your attentions she played this trick to trap you. Lady Wang’s fainted from shock. I was sent here to catch you. I found you on top of him, you can’t deny it. So come along with me to Lady Wang!”

Jia Rui nearly gave up the ghost. “Dear nephew,” he pleaded, “do tell her you couldn’t find me. I’ll pay you well for it tomorrow.”

“I might do that. Depends how much you’re willing to pay. I can’t just take your word for it, I must have it down in writing.”

“How can I put a thing like this down in writing?”

“That’s no problem. Just write that you borrowed so much silver from the bank to pay a gambling debt.”

“All right. But I’ve no paper or brush.”

“That’s easy.” Jia Qiang disappeared for a moment and promptly returned with writing materials, where upon the two of them forced Jia



拿来命贾瑞写。他两个作好作歹，只写了五十两，然后画了押，贾蔷收起来。然后撕逗贾蓉。贾蓉先咬定牙不依，只说：“明日告诉族中的人，评评理。”贾瑞急的至于叩头。贾蔷作好作歹的，也写了一张五十两欠契才罢。贾蔷又道：“如今要放你，我就担着不是。老太太那边的门早已关了，老爷正在厅上看南京的东西，那一条路定难过去，如今只好走后门。若这一走，倘或遇见了人，连我也完了。等我先去哨探哨探，再来领你。这屋里你还藏不得，少刻就来堆东西。等我寻个地方。”说毕，拉着贾瑞，仍熄了灯，出至院外，摸着大台阶底下，说道：“这窝儿里好，你只蹲着，别哼一声，等我们来再动。”说毕，二人去了。

贾瑞此时身不由己，只得蹲在那里。心下正盘算，只听头顶上一声响，“噌拉拉”一净桶尿粪从上面直泼下来，可巧浇了他一头一身。贾瑞撑不住，“嗷哟”了一声，忙又掩住口，不敢声张，满头满脸浑身皆是尿屎，冰冷打战。只见贾蔷跑来叫：“快走，快走！”贾瑞如得了命，三脚两步从后门跑到家里，天已三更，只得叫门。开门人见他这般景况，问是怎的。少不得撒谎，说：“黑了，失了脚，掉在毛厕里了。”一面到了自己房中更衣洗濯，心下方想到是凤姐玩他，因此发了一回恨；再想一想凤姐的模样儿，又恨不得一时搂在怀内，一夜竟不曾合眼。





Rui to write and sign an I. O. U. for fifty taels which Jia Qiang pocketed. When he urged Jia Rong to leave, however, the latter at first absolutely refused and threatened to lay the matter before the whole clan the next morning. Jia Rui kowtowed to him in desperation. However, with Jia Qiang mediating between them, he was forced to write another I. O. U. for fifty taels of silver.

"I'll get the blame if you're seen leaving," said Jia Qiang. "The Lady Dowager's gate is closed, and the Second Master is in the hall looking over the things which have arrived from Jinling, so you can't get out that way. You'll have to go through the back gate. But if anyone meets you I'll be finished too. Let me see if the coast is clear. You can't hide here, they'll be bringing stuff in presently. I'll find you somewhere to wait."

He blew out the light and dragged Jia Rui out to the foot of some steps in the yard.

"Here's a good place," he whispered. "Squat down there until we come back and don't make a sound."

As the two others left, Jia Rui squatted obediently at the foot of the steps. He was thinking over his predicament when he heard a splash above him and a bucket of slops was emptied over his head. A cry of dismay escaped him. But he clapped one hand over his mouth and made not another sound, though covered with filth from head to foot and shivering with cold. Then Jia Qiang hurried over calling:

"Quick! Run for it!"

At this reprieve, Jia Rui bolted through the back door to his home. By now the third watch had sounded, and he had to knock at the gate. The servant who opened it wanted to know how he came to be in such a state.

"I fell into a cesspool in the dark," lied Jia Rui.

Back in his own room he stripped off his clothes and washed. Only then did he realize with rage the trick Xifeng had played him, yet the recollection of her charms still made him long to embrace her. There was no sleep for him that night. Afterwards, however, although he still longed for Xifeng, he steered clear of the Rong Mansion.

Both Jia Rong and Jia Qiang kept dunning him for payment, so that his



自此满心想凤姐，只不敢往荣府去了。贾蓉两个又常常来索银子，他又怕祖父知道，正是相思尚且难禁，更又添了债务；日间工课又紧，他二十来岁人，尚未娶过亲，迩来想着凤姐，未免有那指头儿告了消乏等事；更兼两回冻恼奔波，因此三五下里夹攻，不觉就得了一病：心内发膨胀，口中无滋味，脚下如棉，眼中似醋，黑夜作烧，白昼常倦，下溺连精，嗽痰带血。诸如此症，不上一年都添全了。于是不能支持，一头跌倒，合上眼还只梦魂颠倒，满口胡说乱话，惊怖异常。百般请医疗治，诸如肉桂、附子、鳖甲、麦冬、玉竹等药，吃了有几十斤下去，也不见个动静。

倏忽又腊尽春回，这病更又沉重。代儒也着了忙，各处请医疗治，皆不见效。因后来吃“独参汤”，代儒如何有这力量，只得往荣府来寻。王夫人命凤姐秤二两给他，凤姐回说：“前儿新近都替老太太配了药；那整的，太太又说留着送杨提督的太太配药，偏生昨儿我已送了去了。”王夫人道：

“就是咱们这边没了，你打发个人往你婆婆那边问问，或是你珍大哥哥那府里再寻些来凑着，给人家吃好了，救人一命，也是你的好处。”凤姐听了，也不遣人去寻，只得将些渣末泡须凑了几钱，命人送去，只说：“太太送来的，再也没了。”然后回王夫人，只说：“都寻了来，共凑了有二两送去。”

那贾瑞此时要命心胜，无药不吃，只是白花钱，不见效。忽然这日有个跛足道人来化斋，口称专治冤孽之症。贾瑞偏生在内就听见了，直着声叫喊，说：“快请那位菩萨来救我！”一面叫，一面在枕上叩首。众人只得带了那道士进来。贾瑞一把拉住，连叫：“菩萨救我！”那道士叹道：“你这



fear of being found out by his grandfather and the hopeless passion which consumed him were now aggravated by the burden of debts, while he had to work hard at his lessons every day. The unmarried twenty-year-old, constantly dreaming of Xifeng, could not help indulging in "finger-play." All this, combined with the effect of two nights of exposure, soon made him fall ill. Before a year was out he suffered from heartburn, loss of appetite, emissions in his urine and blood in his phlegm; his legs trembled, his eyes smarted; he was feverish at night and exhausted by day. And finally he collapsed in a fit of delirium.

The doctors who were called in dosed him with dozens of catties of cinnamon, aconitum roots, turtle-shell, lirioppe, polygonatum and so forth -- but all to no effect. With the coming of spring he took a turn for the worse.

His grandfather rushed to and fro in search of new physicians, yet they proved useless. And when pure ginseng was prescribed this was beyond Jia Dairu's means: he had to ask for help from the Rong Mansion. Lady Wang told Xifeng to weigh out two ounces for him.

"All our recent supply was used the other day in the old lady's medicine," said Xifeng. "You told me to keep the remaining whole roots for General Yang's wife, and as it happens I sent them round yesterday."

"If we've none, send to your mother-in-law's for some. Or your Cousin Zhen's household may let us have what's needed. If you can save the young man's life, that will be a good deed."

But instead of doing as she was told, Xifeng scraped together less than an ounce of inferior scraps which she dispatched with the message that this was all Her Ladyship had. To Lady Wang, however, she reported that she had collected two ounces and sent them over.

Jia Rui was so anxious to recover that there was no medicine he would not try, but all the money spent in this way was wasted.

One day a lame Taoist priest came begging for alms and professes to have specialized in curing diseases due to retribution. Jia Rui heard him from his sick-bed. At once, kowtowing on his pillow he loudly implored his servants to bring the priest in.

When they complied he seized hold of the Taoist and cried:

"Save me, Bodhisattva! Save me!"



病非药可医。我有个宝贝与你，你天天看时，此命可保矣。”说毕，从褡裢中取出一面镜子来，两面皆可照人，镜把上面镌着“风月宝鉴”四字。递与贾瑞道：“这物出自太虚幻境空灵殿上，警幻仙子所制，专治邪思妄动之症，有济世保生之功。所以带他到世上，单与那些聪明杰俊、风雅王孙等照看。千万不可照正面，只照他的背面，要紧，要紧！三日后我来收取，管叫你好了。”说毕，扬长而去，众人苦留不住。

贾瑞收了镜子，想道：“这道士倒有意思，我何不照一照试试。”想毕，拿起“风月鉴”来，向反面一照，只见一个骷髅立在里面，唬得贾瑞连忙掩了，骂：“道士混账，如何吓我！我倒再照照正面是什么。”想着，又将正面一照，只见凤姐站在里面，招手叫他。贾瑞心中一喜，荡悠悠的觉得进了镜子，与凤姐云雨一番，凤姐仍送他出来。到了床上，“暖哟”了一声，一睁眼，镜子从手里掉过来，仍是反面立着一个骷髅。贾瑞自觉汗津津的，底下已遗了一滩精。心中到底不足，又翻过正面来，只见凤姐还招手叫他，他又进去。如此三四次，到了这次，刚要出镜子来，只见两个人走来，拿铁锁把他套住，拉了就走。贾瑞叫道：“让我拿了镜子再走。”——只说这句，就再不能说话了。

旁边伏侍贾瑞的众人，只见他先还拿着镜子照，落下来，仍睁开眼拾在手内，末后镜子落下来，便不动了。众人



“No medicine can cure your illness,” rejoined the Taoist gravely. “However, I can give you a precious object which will save your life if you look at it every day.”

He took from his wallet a mirror polished on both sides and engraved on its handle with the inscription: Precious Mirror of Love.

“This comes from the Hall of the Illusory Spirit in the Land of Great Void,” he told Jia Rui. “It was made by the Goddess of Disenchantment to cure illnesses resulting from lust. Since it has the power to preserve men’s lives, I brought it to the world for the use of intelligent, handsome, high-minded young gentlemen. But you must only look into the back of the mirror. On no account look into the front — remember that! I shall come back for it in three days’ time, by when you should be cured.” He strode off then before anyone could stop him.

“This is a strange business,” reflected Jia Rui. “Let me try looking at this Taoist’s mirror and see what happens.” He picked it up and looked into the back. Horrors! A skeleton was standing there! Hastily covering it, he swore, “Confound that Taoist giving me such a fright! But let me see what’s on the other side.”

He turned the mirror over and there inside stood Xifeng, beckoning to him. In raptures he was wafted as if by magic into the mirror, where he indulged with his beloved in the sport of cloud and rain, after which she saw him out.

He found himself back in his bed and opened his eyes with a cry. The mirror had slipped from his hands and the side with the skeleton was exposed again. Although sweating profusely after his wet dream, the young man was not satisfied. He turned the mirror over again, Xifeng beckoned to him as before, and in he went.

But after this had happened four times and he was about to leave her for the fourth time, two men came up, fastened iron chains upon him and proceeded to drag him away. He cried out:

“Let me take the mirror with me!”

These were the last words he uttered.

The attendants had simply observed him look into the mirror, let it fall and then open his eyes and pick it up again. This time, however, when the mirror fell he did not stir. They pressed round and saw that he had breathed



上来看，已没了气，身子底下冰凉渍湿一大滩精，这才忙着穿衣抬床。代儒夫妇哭的死去活来，大骂道士：“是何妖镜！若不早毁此物，遗害于世不小。”遂命架火来烧，只听镜内哭道：“谁叫你们瞧正面了！你们自己以假为真，何苦来烧我？”正哭着，只见那跛足道人从外跑来，喊道：“谁毁‘风月鉴’，吾来救也！”说着，直入中堂，抢入手内，飘然去了。

当下，代儒料理丧事，各处去报丧。三日起经，七日发引，寄灵于铁槛寺，日后带回原籍。当下贾家众人齐来吊问，荣国府贾赦赠银二十两，贾政亦是二十两，宁国府贾珍亦有二十两，别者族中贫富不一，或三两或五两，不可胜数。另有各同窗家分资，也凑了二三十两。代儒家道虽然淡薄，倒也丰丰富富完了此事。

谁知这年冬底，林如海的书信寄来，却为身染重疾，写书特来接林黛玉回去。贾母听了，未免又加忧闷，只得忙忙的打点黛玉起身。宝玉大不自在，争奈父女之情，也不好拦劝。于是贾母定要贾琏送他去，仍叫带回来。一应土仪盘缠，不消烦说，自然要妥贴。作速择了日期，贾琏与林黛玉辞别了众人，带了仆从，登舟往扬州去了。要知端的，且听下回分解。





his last. The sheet under his thighs was cold and wet.

At once they laid him out and made ready the bier, while his grandparents gave way to uncontrollable grief and cursed the Taoist.

“This devilish mirror!” swore Jia Dairu. “It must be destroyed before it does any more harm.” He ordered it to be thrown into the fire.

A voice from the mirror cried out: “Who told you to look at the front? It’s you who’ve taken false for true. Why should you burn me?”

That same instant he hustled the lame Taoist, shouting, “I can’t let you destroy the Precious Mirror of Love!” Rushing forward he snatched it up, then was off like the wind.

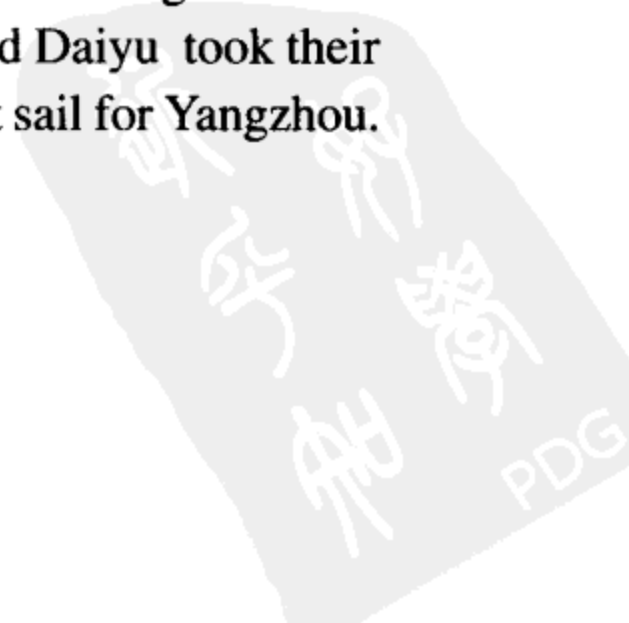
Jia Dairu lost no time in preparing for the funeral, notifying all concerned that sutras would be chanted in three days’ time and the funeral would take place in seven. The coffin would be left in Iron Threshold Temple until it could be taken to their old home.

All the members of the clan came to offer condolences. Jia She and Jia Zheng of the Rong Mansion contributed twenty taels each towards the expenses, and Jia Zhen of the Ning Mansion did the same. Others gave three or five taels according to their means, while the families of Jia Rui’s schoolmates collected another twenty or thirty taels. So Jia Dairu, although not well-off, was able to conduct the funeral in style.

And then, at the end of winter, a letter came from Lin Ruhai saying that he was seriously ill and wished to have his daughter sent home. This increased the Lady Dowager’s distress, but they had to prepare with all speed for Daiyu’s departure; and although Baoyu was most upset he could hardly come between her and her father.

The Lady Dowager decided that Jia Lian should accompany her granddaughter and bring her safely back. We need not dwell on the presents and arrangements for the journey, which naturally left nothing to be desired. A day was quickly chosen on which Jia Lian and Daiyu took their leave of everyone and, accompanied by attendants, set sail for Yangzhou.

For further details, read the next chapter.



秦死禁
可封尉
鄉龍



第十三回

秦可卿死封龙禁尉 王熙凤协理宁国府

话说凤姐儿自贾琏送黛玉往扬州去后，心中实在无趣，每到晚间，不过和平儿说笑一回，就胡乱睡了。

这日夜间，正和平儿灯下拥炉倦绣，早命浓薰绣被，二人睡下，屈指算行程该到何处，不知不觉已交三鼓。平儿已睡熟了。凤姐方觉星眼微朦，恍惚只见秦氏从外走来，含笑说道：“婶婶好睡啊！我今日回去，你也不送我一程。因娘儿们素日相好，我舍不得婶婶，故来别你一别。还有一件心愿未了，非告诉婶婶，别人未必中用。”

凤姐听了，恍惚问道：“有何心愿？你只管托我就是了。”秦氏道：“婶婶，你是个脂粉队里的英雄，连那些束带顶冠的男子也不能过你，你如何连两句俗语也不晓得？常言‘月满则亏，水满则溢’；又道是‘登高必跌重’。如今我们家赫赫扬扬，已将百载，一日倘或乐极悲生，若应了那句‘树倒猢猻散’的俗语，岂不虚称了一世的诗书旧族了！”凤姐听了此话，心胸大快，十分敬畏，忙问道：“这话虑的极是，但有何法可以永保无虞？”秦氏冷笑道：“婶婶好痴也。否极泰来，荣辱自古周而复始，岂人力可能常保的。但如今能于荣时筹画下将来衰时的世业，亦可谓常保永全了。即如



Chapter 13

Keqing Dies and a Captain of the Imperial Guard Is Appointed Xifeng Helps to Manage Affairs in the Ning Mansion

Xifeng found life excessively dull after her husband's departure with Daiyu for Yangzhou. She passed the evenings as best she could chatting with Pinger before retiring listlessly to bed.

One evening, tired of embroidering, she sat nursing her hand-stove by the lamp and told the maid to warm her embroidered quilt early, after which they both went to bed. When the third watch sounded they were still reckoning on their fingers the stage Jia Lian must have reached on his journey. Soon after that, Pinger fell fast asleep. And Xifeng's eyelids were drooping drowsily when to her astonishment in came Keqing.

"How you love to sleep, aunt!" cried Keqing playfully. "I'm going home today, yet you won't even see me one stage of the way. But we've always been so close, I couldn't go without coming to say goodbye. Besides, there's something I'd like done which it's no use my entrusting to anyone else."

"Just leave it to me," replied Xifeng, rather puzzled.

"You're such an exceptional woman, aunt, that even men in official belts and caps are no match for you. Is it possible you don't know the saying that 'the moon waxes only to wane, water brims only to overflow,' and 'the higher the climb the harder the fall'? Our house has prospered for nearly a hundred years. If one day it happens that at the height of good fortune the 'tree falls and the monkeys scatter' as the old saying has it, then what will become of our cultured old family?"

Quick to comprehend, Xifeng was awe-struck. "Your fears are well-founded," she said. "But how can we prevent such a calamity?"

"Now you're being naive, aunt," Keqing laughed caustically. "Fortune follows calamity as disgrace follows honour. This has been so from time immemorial. How can men prevent it? The only thing one can do is



今日诸事都妥，只有两件未妥，若把此事如此一行，则后日可保永全了。”

凤姐便问何事，秦氏道：“目今祖茔虽四时祭祀，只是无一定的钱粮；第二，家塾虽立，无一定的供给。依我想来，如今盛时固不缺祭祀供给，但将来败落之时，此二项有何出处？莫若依我定见，趁今日富贵，将祖茔附近多置田庄、房舍、地亩，以备祭祀；供给之费，皆出自此处，将家塾亦设于此。合同族中长幼，大家定了则例，日后按房掌管这一年的地亩、钱粮、祭祀、供给之事。如此周流，又无争竞，亦没有典卖诸弊。便是有了罪，凡物可入官，这祭祀产业连官也不入的。便败落下来，子孙回家读书务农，也有个退步，祭祀又可永久。若目今以为荣华不绝，不思后日，终非长策。眼见不日又有一件非常喜事，真是烈火烹油、鲜花着锦之盛。要知道，也不过是瞬息的繁华，一时的欢乐，万不可忘了那‘盛筵必散’的俗语。此时若不早为后虑，临期只恐后悔无益了。”凤姐忙问：“有何喜事？”秦氏道：“天机不可泄漏。只是我与婶婶好了一场，临别赠你两句话，须要记着。”因念道：

三春去后诸芳尽，各自须寻各自门。

凤姐还欲问时，只听二门上传事，云板连叩四下，将凤姐惊醒。人回：“东府蓉大奶奶没了。”凤姐闻听，吓了一身冷





to make some provision for lean years in times of plenty. All's well at present except for two things. Take care of them and the future will be secure."

Xifeng asked what she had in mind.

"Although seasonal sacrifices are offered at the ancestral tombs there's no fixed source of income for this, and although we have a family school there's no definite fund for it. Of course, while we're still prosperous, we don't lack the wherewithal for sacrifices, but where's it to come from once we fall on hard times?

"I'd like to suggest that while we're still rich and noble we should invest in some farms and estates near our ancestral tombs to provide for sacrifices. The family school should be moved to the same place.

"Let the whole family, old and young alike, draw up rules whereby each branch of the family will take it in turn to manage the land, income and sacrifices for a year. Taking turns will prevent disputes and malpractices like mortgages or sales.

"Then even if the family property were confiscated because of some crime, the estate for ancestral worship would be exempted and in those hard times the young people could go there to study and farm. They'd have something to fall back on, and there would be no break in the sacrifices.

"It would be very short-sighted not to take thought for the future in the belief that our present good fortune will last for ever. Before long something marvellous is going to happen which will really 'pour oil on the flames and add flowers to brocade.' But it will simply be a flash in the pan, a brief moment of bliss. Whatever happens don't forget the proverb, 'Even the grandest feast must have an end.' Take thought for the future before it is too late."

"What marvellous thing is going to happen?" asked Xifeng.

"Heaven's secrets mustn't be divulged. But because of the love between us let me give you some parting advice, and do remember it, aunt!" With that she declaimed:

"After the three months of the spring, all flowers will fade
And each will have to find his own way out."

Before Xifeng could ask more she was woken with a start by four



汗，出了一回神，只得忙忙的穿衣，往王夫人处来。

彼时合家皆知，无不纳罕，都有些疑心。那长一辈的想他素日孝顺，平一辈的想他素日和睦亲密，下一辈的想他素日慈爱，以及家中仆从老小想他素日怜贫恤贱、慈老爱幼之恩，莫不悲嚎痛哭者。

闲言少叙，却说宝玉因近日林黛玉回去，剩得自己孤恹，也不和人玩耍，每到晚间，便索然睡了。如今从梦中听见秦氏死了，连忙翻身爬起来，只觉心中似戳了一刀的，不忍“哇”的一声，直奔出一口血来。袭人等俱慌忙上来搂扶，问是怎么样，又要回贾母，来请大夫。宝玉笑道：“不用忙，不相干，这是急火攻心，血不归经。”说着，便爬起来，要衣服换了，来见贾母，即时要过去。袭人见他如此，心中虽放不下，又不敢拦，只是由他罢了。贾母见他要去，因说：“才咽了气的人，那里不干净；二则夜里风大，等明早再去不迟。”宝玉那里肯依。贾母命人备车，多派跟随人役，拥护前来。

一直到了宁国府前，只见府门洞开，两边灯笼，照如白昼，乱烘烘人来人往，里面哭声，摇山振岳。宝玉下了车，忙忙奔至停灵之室，痛哭一番。然后见过尤氏，谁知尤氏正犯了胃疼旧疾，睡在床上。然后又出来见贾珍。彼时贾代



blows on the chime-bar at the second gate. And a servant announced, "Madam Jia Rong of the East Mansion has passed away."

Xifeng broke into a cold sweat. When she had recovered from her stupefaction, she dressed quickly and hurried over to Lady Wang.

By that time the whole household was lamenting, distressed by this shocking news. The old people recalled Keqing's filial behaviour, the young people her affectionate ways and the children her kindness; while not one of the servants but wept for grief recollecting her compassion for the poor and humble and her loving goodness to old and young alike.

But let us return to Baoyu, who was so desolate after Daiyu's departure that he had given up playing with his companions and went disconsolate to bed each night. Roused from sleep by the announcement of Keqing's death, he sprang suddenly from his bed. At once he felt a stab of pain in his heart, and with a cry spat out a mouthful of blood.

Xiren and his other maids rushed up to help him back to bed, asking anxiously what was the matter. Should they get the Lady Dowager to send for a doctor?

"There's no need, it's nothing," he said. "A hot humour seized on my heart and stopped the normal flow of blood." He got up again and demanded to be dressed so that he could go to his grandmother and then to the other mansion.

Anxious though Xiren was, she dared not stop him when he was in this mood.

The Lady Dowager however protested, "Just after a death their house is unclean. Besides, at night the wind is high. You may just as well go tomorrow."

When Baoyu insisted, she ordered a carriage and plenty of attendants for him. They found the gates of the Ning Mansion wide open and brilliantly lit with lanterns on either side. There was an excited coming and going of people and the air was rent by the vociferous wailing from inside the house.

Alighting from his carriage Baoyu hurried to the room in which Keqing lay and having wept there went in to see Madam You, who happened to be laid up with another bout of dyspepsia. He then paid his respects to Jia Zhen.



儒、代修、贾赦、贾效、贾敦、贾赦、贾政、贾琮、贾瑞、贾珩、贾珙、贾琮、贾琛、贾琮、贾璘、贾蔷、贾菖、贾菱、贾芸、贾芹、贾蓁、贾萍、贾藻、贾蘅、贾芬、贾芳、贾兰、贾菌、贾芝等都来了。贾珍哭的泪人一般，正和贾代儒等说道：“合家大小，远近亲友，谁不知我这媳妇比儿子还强十倍？如今伸腿去了，可见这长房内绝灭无人了。”说着，又哭起来。众人忙劝道：“人已辞世，哭也无益，且商议如何料理要紧。”贾珍拍手道：“如何料理，不过尽我所有罢了！”

正说着，只见秦业、秦钟并尤氏的几个眷属、尤氏姊妹也都来了。贾珍便命贾琮、贾琛、贾璘、贾蔷四个人去陪客，一面吩咐去请钦天监阴阳司来择日，择准停灵七七四十九日，三日后开丧送讣闻。这四十九日，单请一百单八众禅僧，在大厅上拜大悲忏。超度前亡后化诸魂，以免亡者之罪；另设一坛于天香楼上，是九十九位全真道士，打四十九日解冤洗孽醮。然后停灵于会芳园中，灵前另外五十众高僧、五十众高道，对坛按七作好事。那贾敬闻得长孙媳死了，因自为早晚就要飞升，如何肯又回家染了红尘，将前功尽弃呢，因此并不在意，只凭贾珍料理。





By now Jia Dairu had arrived with Jia Daixiu, Jia Chi, Jia Xiao, Jia Dun, Jia She, Jia Zheng, Jia Cong, Jia Bin, Jia Heng, Jia Guang, Jia Chen, Jia Qiong, Jia Lin, Jia Qiang, Jia Chang, Jia Ling, Jia Yun, Jia Qin, Jia Zhen, Jia Ping, Jia Zao, Jia Heng, Jia Fen, Jia Fang, Jia Lan, Jia Jun and Jia Zhi.

Bathed in tears, Jia Zhen was telling Jia Dairu and the others, "Everyone in the family, old and young, distant kin or close friends, knows that my daughter-in-law was infinitely superior to my son. Now that she has gone, my branch of the family is fated to die out." With that he broke down again.

The men present tried to console him: "Since she has departed this world it is useless to weep. The main thing now is to decide what must be done."

"What must be done?" Jia Zhen clapped his hands. "I'm ready to dispose of all in my possession."

He was interrupted by the arrival of Qin Ye, Qin Zhong and some relatives of Madam You as well as her younger sisters. Leaving Jia Qiong, Jia Cen, Jia Lin and Jia Qiang to keep the guests company, Jia Zhen sent to invite someone from the Department of Astrology to choose auspicious days.

It was decided that the body should remain in the house for seven times seven or forty-nine days, and mourning should start the third day after her death with the issue of obituary notices. During the forty-nine days a hundred and eight Buddhist monks were to perform the Litany of Great Compassion in the main hall to release the souls of those passed away before and after her and win remission for the sins of the deceased. At an altar erected in the Heavenly Fragrance Pavilion, ninety-nine Taoists of the Perfect Truth Sect should pray for forty-nine days for absolution. The coffin would then be taken to the Garden of Concentrated Fragrance, where another fifty high bonzes and fifty high Taoists would sacrifice before it once every seventh day during the forty-nine days.

Jia Jing alone was untouched by the death of his eldest grandson's wife. Expecting to attain immortality shortly himself, how could he go home to be soiled by mundane dust and squander all the merit he had

贾珍见父亲不管，亦发恣意奢华。看板时，几副杉木板皆不中用。可巧薛蟠来吊问，因见贾珍寻好板，便说道：“我们木店里有一副板，叫作什么檣木，出在潢海铁网山上，作了棺材，万年不坏。这还是当年先父带来，原系义忠亲王老千岁要的，因他坏了事，就不曾拿去。现在还封在店内，也没有人出价敢买。你若要，就抬来使罢。”贾珍听说，喜之不尽，即命人抬来。大家看时，只见帮底皆厚八寸，纹若槟榔，味若檀麝，以手扣之，玎珰如金玉。大家都奇异称赞。贾珍笑问：“价值几何？”薛蟠笑道：“拿一千两银子来，只怕也没处买去。什么价不价，赏他们几两工钱就是了。”贾珍听说，忙谢不尽，即命解锯糊漆。贾政因劝道：“此物恐非常人可享者，殓以上等杉木，也就是了。”此时贾珍恨不能代秦氏之死，这话如何肯听。

因忽又听得秦氏之丫鬟名唤瑞珠者，见秦氏死了，他也触柱而亡。此事可罕，合族人也都称叹。贾珍遂以孙女之礼殓殡，一并停灵于会芳园中之登仙阁。小丫鬟名宝珠者，因见秦氏身无所出，乃甘心愿为义女，誓任摔丧驾灵之任。贾珍喜之不尽，即时传下，从此皆呼宝珠为小姐。那宝珠按未嫁女之丧，在灵前哀哀欲绝。于是，合族人丁并家下诸人，



acquired? So he left all the funeral arrangements to his son.

His father's indifference gave Jia Zhen a free hand to indulge his extravagance. He decided that the cedar-boards he had seen would not do for the coffin and was searching for something better when Xue Pan called to offer condolences.

"In our timber-yard is some *qiang* wood from the Iron-Net Mountain across the sea," said the young man. "A coffin made of this would last for ten thousand years. My father bought this timber for Prince Yi Zhong, but after his disgrace the prince didn't take it. It's still stored with us because no one has ventured to buy it. If you like, I'll have it sent over."

Overjoyed by this news, Jia Zhen had the timber fetched without delay. Everyone gathered round and exclaimed in wonder, for the planks for the sides and the base were eight inches thick with a grain like that of the areca palm and the perfume of sandalwood or musk. When tapped they gave off a clear ringing sound like metal or jade.

Jia Zhen, his face radiant, inquired the price.

"You couldn't buy this for a thousand taels," replied Xue Pan with a smile. "Don't worry about the price. All you need pay for is having it made up."

After copious thanks Jia Zhen lost no time in giving directions for the wood to be sawn and varnished.

Jia Zheng objected, "This seems too sumptuous for ordinary people. The best quality cedar-boards would be quite adequate."

But Jia Zhen, who would gladly have died in Keqing's place, would not listen to this suggestion.

Word was brought that after Keqing's death one of her maids, Ruizhu, had dashed out her own brains against a pillar. The whole clan praised this act of rare loyalty and Jia Zhen ordered that she be buried with the rites befitting a grandchild, her coffin resting in the Pavilion of Attained Immortality in the Garden of Concentrated Fragrance.

Another maid, Baozhu, offered to act as Keqing's god-daughter and take the chief mourner's part, since her mistress had no child. This pleased Jia Zhen so much that he directed that henceforward Baozhu should be addressed as "miss", as if she were a daughter of the house.

Then Baozhu mourned like an unmarried daughter, weeping by the

都各遵旧制行事，自然不得紊乱。

贾珍因想着贾蓉不过是个黄门监，灵幡经榜上写时不好看，便是执事也不多，因此心下甚不自在。可巧这日正是首七第四日，早有大明宫掌宫内相戴权，先备了祭礼遣人来，次后坐了大轿，打伞鸣锣，亲来上祭。贾珍忙接着，让至逗蜂轩献茶。贾珍心中打算了定主意，因而趁便就说要与贾蓉捐个前程的话。戴权会意，因笑道：“想是为丧礼上风光些。”贾珍忙笑道：“老内相所见不差。”戴权道：“事倒凑巧，正有个美缺。如今三百员龙禁尉，短了两员，昨儿襄阳侯的兄弟老三来求我，现拿了一千五百两银子，送到我家里。你知道，咱们都是老相与，不拘怎么样，看着他爷爷的分上，胡乱应了。还剩了一个缺，谁知永兴节度使冯胖子来求，要与他孩子捐，我就没工夫应他。既是咱们的孩子要捐，快写个履历来。”贾珍听说，忙吩咐：“快命书房里人恭敬写了大爷的履历来。”小厮不敢怠慢，去了一刻，便拿了一张红纸来与贾珍。贾珍看了，忙送与戴权。戴权看时，上面写道：

江南江宁府江宁县监生贾蓉，年二十岁。曾祖，原任京营节度使世袭一等神威将军贾代化；祖，乙卯科进士贾敬；父，世袭三品爵威烈将军贾珍。



coffin as if her heart would break, while all the clansmen and servants observed the etiquette traditionally prescribed for such occasions with unimpeachable propriety.

What distressed Jia Zhen now was the fact that his son was only a state scholar. This would not look well in the inscription on the funeral banner and it meant that the retinue would have to be small.

As luck would have it, however, on the fourth day of the first week of mourning servants with sacrificial offerings arrived from the eunuch Dai Quan, chamberlain of the Palace of Great Splendour, who followed in a great palanquin with an official umbrella and gonging and drumming to offer an oblation.

Jia Zhen ushered him eagerly in and offered him tea in the Bee-Teasing Pavilion. He already had a scheme in mind and soon found occasion to express his wish to purchase a rank for his son.

Dai Quan rejoined with a knowing smile, "To make the funeral more sumptuous, I presume?"

"Your assumption is correct, sir."

"By a fortunate coincidence there happens to be a good post going. There are two vacancies in the corps of three hundred officers of the Imperial Guard. Yesterday the third brother of the Marquis of Xiangyang sent me 1,500 taels and asked me for one of them; and since we are old friends, as you know, for his grandfather's sake I made no difficulties but agreed out of hand. Who would have expected that Fatty Feng, Military Governor of Yongxing, wants to buy the other appointment for his son; but I haven't yet had time to give him an answer. If your boy wants it, make haste and write out a statement of his antecedents."

Jia Zhen at once sent a servant to pass on these instructions to his secretaries. The man returned presently with a sheet of red paper. After glancing at it Jia Zhen handed it to Dai Quan, who read:

Jia Rong, twenty, State Scholar of Jiangning District, Jiangning Prefecture, Jiangnan.

Great-grandfather: Jia Daihua, commander-in-chief of the Metropolitan Garrison and a hereditary general of the first class with the appellation Spiritual Might.

Grandfather: Jia Jing, Metropolitan Scholar of the *Yi Mao* year.

戴权看了，回手便递与一个贴身的小厮收了，说道：“回来送与户部堂官老赵，说我拜上他，起一张五品龙禁尉的票，再给个执照，就把这履历填上，明儿我来兑银子送去。”小厮答应了，戴权也就告辞了。贾珍十分款留不住，只得送出府门。临上轿，贾珍因问：“银子还是我到部兑，还是一并送入老相府中？”戴权道：“若到部里，你又吃亏了。不如平准一千二百银子，送到我家就完了。”贾珍感谢不尽，只说：“待服满后，亲带小犬到府叩谢。”于是作别。

接着，便又听喝道之声，原来是忠靖侯史鼎的夫人来了。王夫人、邢夫人、凤姐等刚迎入上房，又见锦乡侯、川宁侯、寿山伯三家祭礼摆在灵前。少时，三人下轿，贾政等忙接上大厅。如此亲朋你来我去，也不能胜数。只这四十九日，宁国府街上一条白漫漫人来人往，花簇簇官去官来。

贾珍命贾蓉次日换了吉服，领凭回来。灵前供用执事等物，俱按五品职例。灵牌疏上皆写“天朝诰授贾门秦氏恭人之灵位。”会芳园临街大门洞开，旋在两边起了鼓乐厅，两班青衣按时奏乐，一对对执事摆的刀斩斧齐。更有两面朱红销金大字牌位，竖在门外，上面大书：

防护内廷紫禁道御前侍卫龙禁尉





Father: Jia Zhen, hereditary general of the third rank with the appellation Mighty Intrepidity.

Dai Quan ordered one of his attendants, "Take this to Old Zhao, chief of the Board of Revenue, with my compliments. Ask him to draw up a warrant for an officer of the fifth rank in the Imperial Guard and to fill out a commission according to these particulars. Tomorrow I will weigh out the silver and send it over."

Dai Quan then took his leave. His host, who could not detain him, saw him out. Before the eunuch mounted his palanquin Jia Zhen asked:

"Shall I take the money to the Board or to you, sir?"

"Just weigh out 1,200 taels and send it to my house. If you go to the Board, they'll fleece you."

Jia Zhen thanked him warmly and promised, "When the mourning is over I shall bring my worthless son to kowtow his thanks." And so they parted.

Then runners could be heard clearing the way for the wife of Shi Ding, Marquis of Zhongjing. Lady Wang, Lady Xing and Xifeng welcomed her into the drawing-room. Then sacrificial gifts from the Marquises of Jinxiang and Chuanning as well as the Earl of Shoushan were displayed before the coffin. Presently these three nobles alighted from their palanquins and Jia Zhen ushered them into the main hall.

So relatives and friends past counting came and went. Indeed, for forty-nine days the street outside the Ning Mansion was a sea of mourners in white interspersed by officials in their brilliant robes.

At his father's order Jia Rong changed into court dress the next day to collect his commission, after which the funerary ware in front of the coffin as well as the insignia for the cortege were made to befit an official of the fifth rank. The obituary tablet and notice were inscribed: "Obsequies of Lady Qin, Spouse of the House of Jia, Granted a Rank by Imperial Decree off the Celestial Court."

The street gate in the Garden of Concentrated Fragrance was opened, and on platforms erected at both sides groups of blue-clad musicians played at appropriate times. The retinue stood in pairs in perfect symmetry, and two large vermilion boards set up outside the gate bore the bold gilt inscriptions "Imperial Guard and Defender of the Palace Roads in

对面高起着宣坛，僧道对坛榜文，榜上大书：“世袭宁国公冢孙妇、防护内廷御前侍卫龙禁尉贾门秦氏宜人之丧。四大部洲至中之地，奉天承运太平之国，总理虚无寂静教门僧录司正堂万虚，总理元始三一教门道录司正堂叶生等，敬谨修斋，朝天叩佛”，以及“恭请诸伽蓝、揭谛、功曹等神，圣恩普锡，神威远镇，四十九日消灾洗孽平安水陆道场”等语，亦不烦记。

只是贾珍虽然此时心意满足，但里面尤氏又犯了旧疾，不能料理事条，惟恐各诰命来往，亏了礼数，怕人笑话，因此心中不自在。当下正忧虑时，因宝玉在侧问道：“事事都算安贴了，大哥哥还愁什么？”贾珍见问，便将里面无人的话说了出来。宝玉听说，笑道：“这有何难，我荐一个人与你，权理这一个月的事，管必妥当。”贾珍忙问：“是谁？”宝玉见座间还有许多亲友，不便明言，走至贾珍耳边说了两句。贾珍听了，喜不自禁，连忙起身笑道：“果然安贴，如今就去。”说着，拉了宝玉，辞了众人，便往上房里来。

可巧这日非正经日期，亲友来的少，里面不过几位近亲堂客，邢夫人、王夫人、凤姐并合族中的内眷陪坐。闻人报：“大爷进来了。”唬的众婆娘“忽”的一声，往后藏之不迭，独凤姐款款站了起来。贾珍此时也有些病症在身，二则过于悲痛了，因拄个拐踱了进来，邢夫人等因说道：“你身上不好，又连日事多，该歇歇才是，又进来做什么？”贾珍一



the Inner Court of the Forbidden City.”

Across the road, facing each other, towered two altars for Buddhist and Taoist priests. The announcement on them read:

“Obsequies of Lady Qin of the Jia Family, Consort of the Eldest Great-Grandson of the Hereditary Duke of Ningguo, Imperial Guard and Defender of the Palace Roads in the Inner Court of the Forbidden City.

“In this land of peace and empire ruled according to the will of Heaven, in the centre of the four continents, we, Chief Buddhist Abbot Wan Xu, Controller of the School of the Void and Asceticism, and Chief Taoist Abbot Ye Sheng, Controller of the Primordial School of the Trinity, having reverently purified ourselves raise our eyes to Heaven and kowtow to Buddha. We humbly invoke all divinities to show their divine compassion and display their spiritual majesty afar in these forty-nine days of grand sacrifice, that the departed may be delivered from sins and absolved from retribution....” There was more in the same vein.

Now all that still troubled Jia Zhen was the fact that his wife was ill in bed again, unable to see to things. If any breach of etiquette occurred while so many nobles were calling, the family would be laughed at.

Baoyu noticed his preoccupation and asked: “Why do you look so anxious, cousin, now that everything’s settled so satisfactorily?” When told the reason he said cheerfully, “That’s no problem. I’ll recommend someone to take charge for you. Let her see to things this month and I guarantee that everything will go smoothly.”

“Who do you mean?”

Since there were many friends and relatives present, Baoyu drew closer and whispered into his ear.

“Excellent!” Jia Zhen sprang to his feet, overjoyed. “I must see to it at once.” Taking leave of the others he hurried off with Baoyu to the drawing-room.

As this was not one of the major days on which masses were said, only a few ladies who were close relatives had come. They were being entertained by Lady Xing, Lady Wang, Xifeng and other women of the household when Jia Zhen was announced. The ladies uttered cries of astonishment and hurriedly tried to slip into the inner room. Only Xifeng

面扶拐，挣扎着要蹲身跪下请安道乏。邢夫人等忙叫宝玉搀住，命人挪椅子来与他坐。贾珍断不肯坐，因勉强陪笑道：“侄儿进来有一件事要求二位婶婶，并大妹妹。”邢夫人等忙问：“什么事？”贾珍忙笑道：“婶婶自然知道，如今孙子媳妇没了，侄儿媳妇偏又病倒，我看里头，着实不成个体统。怎么屈尊大妹妹一个月，在这里料理料理，我就放心了。”邢夫人笑道：“原来为这个。你大妹妹现在你二婶婶家，只和你二婶婶说就是了。”王夫人忙道：“他一个小孩子家，何曾经过这些事，倘或料理不清，反叫人笑话，倒是再烦别人好。”贾珍笑道：“婶婶的意思，侄儿猜着了，是怕大妹妹劳苦了。若说料理不开，我包管必料理的开，便是错一点儿，别人看着，还是不错的。从小儿大妹妹玩笑着，就有杀伐决断，如今出了阁，又在那府里办事，越发历练老成了。我想了这几日，除了大妹妹再无人了。婶婶不看侄儿、侄儿媳妇的分上，只看死了的分上罢！”说着，滚下泪来。

王夫人心中，怕的是凤姐儿未经过丧事，怕他料理不清，惹人耻笑。今见贾珍苦苦的说到这步田地，心中已活了几分，却又眼看着凤姐出神。那凤姐素日最喜揽事办，好卖弄才干，虽然当家妥当，也因未办过婚丧大事，恐人还不服，巴不得遇见这事。今见贾珍如此，一来，他心中早已欢喜；先见王夫人不允，后见贾珍说的情真，王夫人有活动之

stood up composedly.

Jia Zhen was not in good health himself at this time and, being weighed down with grief, he limped in with a cane.

"You are not well," said Lady Xing. "After all your recent exertions you ought to rest. What business brings you here?"

Still clutching his cane, Jia Zhen made an effort to kneel to greet and thank his kinswomen. Lady Xing urged Baoyu to restrain him and had a chair placed for him, but he would not take it.

Forcing a smile he announced, "Your nephew has come to ask a favour of his aunts and cousin."

"What is it?" inquired Lady Xing.

"You know how it is, aunt. With my daughter-in-law gone and my wife ill in bed, everything is at sixes and sevens in the inner apartments. If my cousin Xifeng would condescend to take charge here for a month, that would set my mind at rest."

"So that's it." Lady Xing smiled. "Xifeng is part of your Aunt Wang's establishment, so you'll have to ask her permission."

"She's young and inexperienced in these matters," said Lady Wang. "If she handled things badly people would laugh. You'd better find someone else."

"I can guess your real objection, aunt," he replied. "You're afraid she'd find it too tiring. As for handling things badly, I know that wouldn't be the case. And any little slip would be overlooked. Ever since she was a child at play Cousin Xifeng has known her own mind, and by managing the other house since her marriage she's gained experience. I've been thinking this over for some days and there's no one else so competent. If you won't agree for my sake or my wife's, aunt, do it for the one who's dead." His tears flowed again.

Lady Wang's only concern had been lest Xifeng, having no experience of funerals, might lay herself open to ridicule by managing badly. The earnestness of Jia Zhen's request softened her heart and she eyed Xifeng thoughtfully.

Now Xifeng loved nothing better than displaying her administrative ability. Although she ran the household competently, as she had never been entrusted with grand affairs like weddings or funerals she was afraid

意，便向王夫人道：“大哥哥说的这么恳切，太太就依了罢。”王夫人悄悄的道：“你可能么？”凤姐道：“有什么不能的？外面的大事，已经大哥哥料理清了，不过是里头照管照管，便是我有不知道的，问太太就是了。”王夫人见说的有理，便不作声。贾珍见凤姐允了，又陪笑道：“也管不得许多了。横竖要求大妹妹辛苦辛苦。我这里先与妹妹行礼，等事完了，我再到那府里去谢。”说着，就作揖下去，凤姐儿还礼不迭。

贾珍便忙向袖中取了宁国府对牌来，命宝玉送与凤姐，又说：“妹妹爱怎样，就怎样，要什么，只管拿这个取去，也不必问我。只求别存心替我省钱，只要好看为上；二则也要同那府里一样待人才好，不要存心怕人抱怨。只这两件外，我再没不放心的了。”凤姐不敢就接牌。只看着王夫人，王夫人道：“你哥哥既这么说，你就照看照看罢了。只是别自作主意，有了事，打发人问你哥哥、嫂子要紧。”宝玉早向贾珍手里接过对牌来，强递与凤姐了。又问：“妹妹住在这里，还是天天来呢？若是天天来，越发辛苦了。不如我这里赶着收拾出一个院落来，妹妹住过这几日倒安稳。”凤姐笑道：“不用。那边也离不得我，倒是天天来的好。”贾珍听说，只得罢了。然后又说了一回闲话，方才出去。

一时女眷散后，王夫人因问凤姐：“你今儿怎么样？”凤姐儿道：“太太只管请回去，我须得先理出一个头绪来，才回



others were not yet fully convinced of her efficiency and she was longing for a chance like this. Jia Zhen's request delighted her. Seeing that his eagerness was overcoming Lady Wang's initial reluctance, she said:

"Since my cousin is so earnest and pressing, won't you give your consent, madam?"

"Are you sure you can cope?" whispered Lady Wang.

"I don't see why not. Cousin Zhen has seen to all the important outside arrangements, it's just a question of keeping an eye on the domestic side. And in case of doubt, I can consult you."

Since this was reasonable, Lady Wang made no further objection.

"I can't see to everything," Jia Zhen said to Xifeng. "I must beg you to help us, cousin. Let me express my gratitude now, and when everything's over I shall come round to your side to thank you properly."

He made a low bow and, before she could return it, produced the Ning Mansion tally from his sleeve and asked Baoyu to hand it to her.

"You will have a free hand, cousin," he promised. "Just use this to requisition whatever you want, there's no need to consult me. I've only two requests to make. First, please don't try to spare me expense, as I want everything done handsomely. And secondly, treat the servants here as you would your own, don't be afraid they may resent it. Apart from these two provisos, nothing else worries me."

Xifeng did not venture to take the tally but glanced at Lady Wang.

"Do as your cousin asks," said Lady Wang. "But don't take too much upon yourself. If there are any decisions to make, send to ask him and your sister-in-law what should be done."

Baoyu had already taken the tally from Jia Zhen and forced it on Xifeng.

"Would you prefer to stay here or to come over every day?" Jia Zhen asked her. "Coming over every day might be rather tiring. Why not let me clear out an apartment for you to stay in. Wouldn't that save you trouble?"

"There's no need," replied Xifeng gaily. "They can't do without me over there. I'll come every day."

Jia Zhen did not insist but left them after a little further chat.

As soon as the visitors had gone Lady Wang asked Xifeng what she proposed to do now.

去得呢。”王夫人听说，便先同邢夫人等回去，不在话下。

这里凤姐儿来至三间一所抱厦内坐了，因想：头一件，是人口混杂，遗失东西；第二件，事无专执，临期推委；第三件，需用过费，滥支冒领；第四件，任无大小，苦乐不均；第五件，家人豪纵，有脸者不服铃束，无脸者不能上进。此五件，实是宁国府中风俗。不知凤姐如何处治，且听下回分解。

正是：

金紫万千谁治国，裙钗一二可齐家。



“Please don’t wait for me, madam. I must sort things out before I come home.”

So Lady Wang left first with Lady Xing, while Xifeng retired to a small three-roomed annex to reflect as follows:

“First, this household is such a mixed one that things may get lost. Secondly, unless duties are assigned the servants may shirk work. Thirdly, the heavy expenditure may lead to extravagance and faked receipts. Fourthly, if no distinction is made between large tasks and small ones, some will have a harder time than others. Fifthly, these servants are so out of hand that those with any pretensions may defy me, and those with none won’t do their best.”

These were indeed the five distinguishing features of the Ning Mansion. To know how Xifeng coped, read the following chapter.

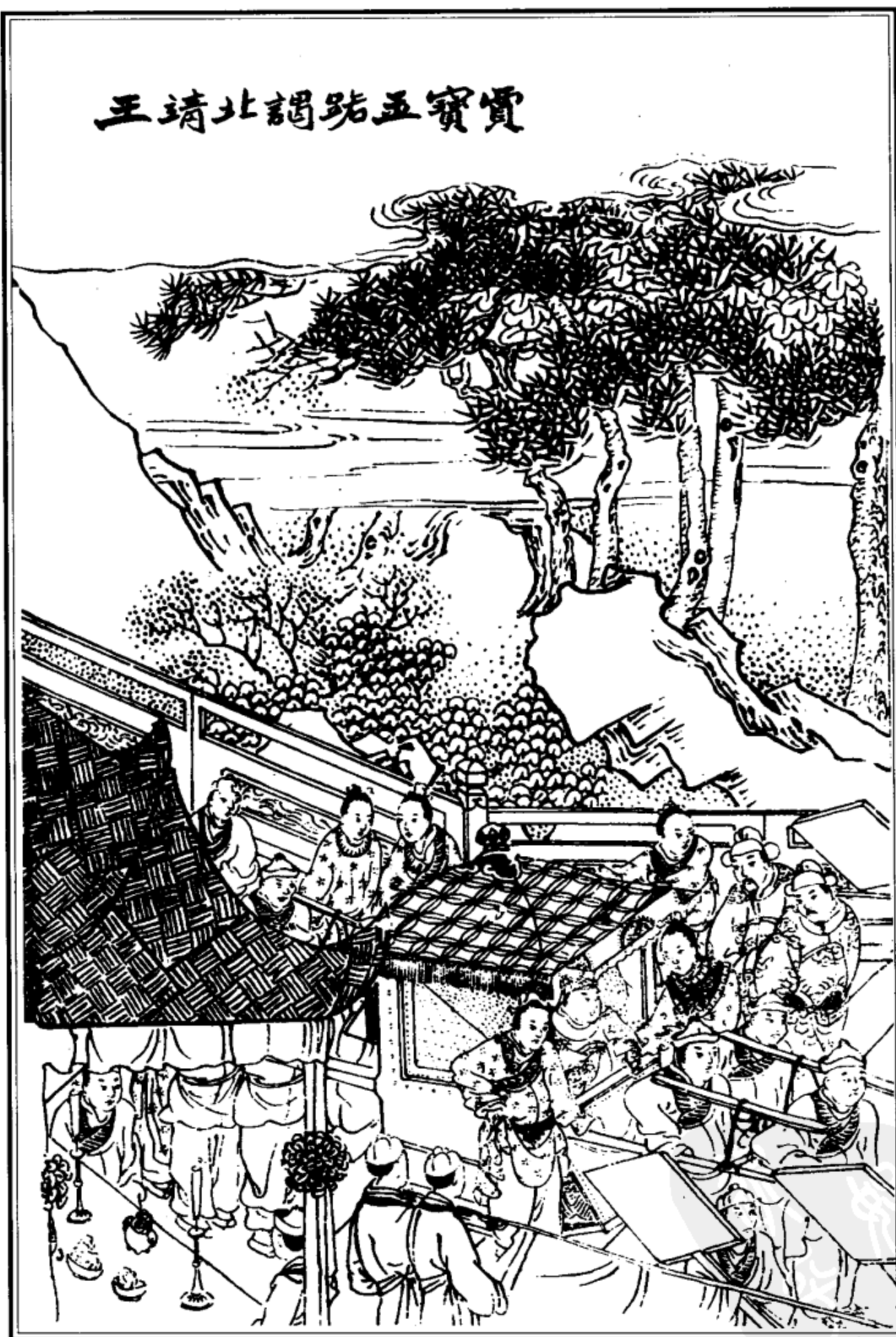
Truly:

Not one in ten thousand officials can rule the state,
Yet how splendidly a fair lady can run a household.





賈寶玉謁北靖王



第十四回

林如海捐馆扬州城 贾宝玉路谒北静王

话说宁国府中都总管来升，闻得里面委请了凤姐，因传齐同事人等，说道：“如今请了西府里琏二奶奶管理内事，倘或他来支取东西，或是说话，我们须要比往日小心些。每日大家早来晚散，宁可辛苦这一个月，过后再歇着，不要把老脸面丢了。那是个有名的烈货，脸酸心硬，一时恼了，不认人的。”众人都道：“有理。”又有一个笑道：“论理，我们里面，也须得他来整治整治。都忒不像了。”正说着，只见来旺媳妇拿了对牌来，领取呈文京榜纸札，票上批着数目。众人连忙让坐倒茶，一面命人按数取纸来，抱着，同来旺媳妇一路行来，至仪门口，方交与来旺媳妇自己抱进去了。

凤姐即命彩明钉造簿册。即时传来升媳妇，兼要家口花名册来查看，又限于明日一早，传齐家人媳妇进来听差等语。大概点了一点数目单册，问了来升媳妇几句话，便坐车回家。一宿无话。

至次日，卯正二刻便过来了。那宁国府中婆娘、媳妇闻得到齐，只见凤姐正与来升媳妇分派，众人不敢擅入，只在窗外听觑。只听凤姐与来升媳妇道：“既托了我，我就说不得要讨你们嫌了。我可比不得你们奶奶好性儿，由着你们去。



Chapter 14

Lin Ruhai Dies in Yangzhou Baoyu Meets the Prince of Beijing on the Road

When the news that Xifeng was to take charge reached Lai Sheng, chief steward of the Ning Mansion, he summoned all his colleagues.

“Madam Jia Lian of the West Mansion is coming to supervise our household,” he told them. “When she asks for things or gives orders, we must be extra careful. Better turn up earlier and leave later everyday, working hard this month and resting afterwards, in order not to lose face. You know what a terror she is, sour-faced, hard-hearted and no respecter of persons once she’s angry.”

They agreed and one remarked with a laugh, “Actually we need her to get this place into shape. Things are too out of hand.”

Along came Lai Wang’s wife just then with a tally and a receipt for the amount required, to fetch sacrificial paper and paper for supplications and prayers. They made her take a seat and have some tea while someone went for the amount required and carried it for her to the inner gate, where he handed it over to her to take inside.

Then Xifeng ordered Caiming to prepare a register and sent for Lai Sheng’s wife to bring her a list of the staff. She announced that all the men-servants’ wives were to come to her early the next morning for instructions. After checking quickly through the list and asking Lai Sheng’s wife a couple of questions, she went home in her carriage.

She was back at half past six the next morning to find all the old serving-women and stewards’ wives assembled. They did not venture into the ante-chamber when they saw that she and Lai Sheng’s wife were busy assigning tasks, but from outside the window they heard her tell the latter:

“Since I’ve been put in charge here I daresay I shall make myself unpopular. I’m not as easy-going as your own mistress who lets you do as you please; so don’t tell me how things used to be managed here, but



再不要说你们‘这府里原是这样’的话，如今可要依着我行，错我半点儿，管不得谁是有脸的，谁是没脸的，一例现清白处治。”说着，便吩咐彩明念花名册，按名一个一个的唤进来看视。

一时看完，便又吩咐道：“这二十个，分作两班，一班十个，每日在里头单管人客来往倒茶，别的事不用他们管。这二十个，也分作两班，每日单管本家亲戚茶饭，别的事也不用他们管。这四十个人，也分作两班，单在灵前上香添油，挂幔守灵，供饭供茶，随起举哀，别的事也不与他们相干。这四个人，单在内茶房收管杯碟茶器，若少一件，便叫他四个描赔。这四个人，单管酒饭器皿，少一件，也是他四个描赔。这八个，单管监收祭礼。这八个，单管各处灯油、蜡烛、纸札，我总支了来，交与你八个，然后按我的定数，再往各处去分派。这三十个，每日轮流各处上夜，照管门户，监察火烛，打扫地方。这下剩的，按着房屋分开，某人守某处，某处所有桌椅古董起，至于痰盒掸帚，一草一苗，或丢或坏，就和守这处的人算账描赔。来升家的，每日揽总查看，或有偷懒的，赌钱吃酒的，打架拌嘴的，立刻来回我。你有徇情，经我查出，三四辈子的老脸就顾不成了。如今都有定规，以后那一行乱了，只和那一行说话。素日跟我的人，随身自有钟表，不论大小事，我是皆有一定的时辰。横竖你们上房里也有时辰钟。卯正二刻我来点卯，巳正吃早饭，凡有领牌回事的，只在午初刻。戌初烧过黄昏纸，我亲到各处查一遍回来，上夜的交明钥匙。第二日仍是卯正二刻



just do as I say. The least disobedience will be dealt with publicly, no matter how much face the offender may have.”

She made Caiming call the roll and the servants entered one by one for inspection. After this she ordered:

“These twenty, divided into two shifts of ten, will be solely responsible for serving tea to the guests on their arrival and before their departure. They will have no other duties. These twenty, also in two shifts of ten, will see to the family’s meals and tea every day. They will have no other duties either. These forty, divided into two shifts, will have the job of burning incense, keeping the lamps filled with oil, hanging up curtains, watching by the coffin, offering sacrificial rice and tea, and mourning with the mourners. Nothing else.

“These four will be responsible for the cups, plates and tea things in the pantry, and will have to replace anything that is missing. These four will take charge of the dinner-sets and wine vessels, and likewise make good any loss. These eight will receive the presents of sacrificial offerings.

“These eight will look after the distribution of lamps, oil, candles and sacrificial paper to various places according to a list which I shall issue. These thirty will take night duty in turns, seeing that the gates are locked and keeping a look-out for fires, as well as sweeping the grounds.

“The rest of you will be assigned to different apartments and must stick to your posts. You will be responsible for everything there, from furniture and antiques to spittoons and dusters and each blade of grass — and will have to make good any loss or damage.

“Lai Sheng’s wife will make a general inspection every day and report to me instantly any slackness, gambling, drinking, fighting or quarrelling. If I find you being too soft, I shall make no allowances for you, even though your family has been in service here for three or four generations.

“Now you all have your duties, and if anything goes wrong I shall deal with the group concerned. My own servants have clocks and watches, because everything large or small must be done on time. Well, at least you have clocks here in your master’s rooms. I shall call the roll at half past six, you will have your meal at ten, and applications for stores or reports should be handed in punctually before half past eleven. At seven in the evening, after the burning of sacrificial paper, I shall make a tour of

过来。说不得咱们大家辛苦这几日罢，事完了，你们家大爷自然赏你们。”

说罢，又吩咐按数发与茶叶、油烛、鸡毛掸子、笤帚等物。一面又搬取家伙：桌围、椅搭、坐褥、毡席、痰盒、脚踏之类。一面交发，一面提笔登记，某人管某处，某人领某物，开得十分清楚。众人领了去，也都有了投奔，不似先时只拣便宜的做，剩下的苦差没个招揽。各房中也不能趁乱失迷东西。便是人来客往，也都安静了，不比先前一个正摆茶，又去端饭，正陪举哀，又顾接客。如这些无头绪、荒乱、推托、偷闲、窃取等弊，次日一概都蠲了。

凤姐儿见自己威重令行，心中十分得意。因见尤氏犯病，贾珍又过于悲哀，不大进饮食，自己每日从那府中煎了各样细粥，精致小菜，命人送来劝食。贾珍也另外吩咐每日送上等菜到抱厦内，单与凤姐。那凤姐不畏勤劳，天天于卯正二刻就过来点卯理事，独在抱厦内起坐，不与众妯娌合群，便有堂客来往，也不迎会。

这日乃五七正五日上，那应佛僧正开方破狱，传灯照亡，参阎君，拘都鬼，筵请地藏王，开金桥，引幢幡；那道士们正伏章申表，朝三清，叩玉帝；禅僧们行香，放焰口，拜水忏；又有十三众尼僧，搭绣衣，鞞红鞋，在灵前默诵接引诸咒，十分热闹。那凤姐必知今日人客不少，在家中歇宿



inspection, then issue those on night duty with their keys. I shall be back again at half past six the next morning. I needn't remind you that we must all do our best during this period. When it's over, no doubt your master will reward you."

She then ordered the distribution of supplies of tea, oil, candles, feather whisks, brooms and so forth, and had tablecloths, antimacassars, cushions, rugs, spittoons, stools and other furnishings issued. While this was being done, the servants in charge of each place and the articles taken by each were carefully recorded.

Now that all the servants had their respective duties, they were no longer able to pick the easy jobs and leave the hard ones undone. Nor were things mislaid any more on account of confusion. However many guests came and went, everything ran smoothly, unlike the previous disorder when a maid serving tea had to fetch in rice as well, or one accompanying the mourners was sent to welcome new arrivals. That day saw the end, too, of disorder, negligence and pilfering. And Xifeng was thoroughly gratified by the authority she now wielded.

As Madam You was ill and grief had made Jia Zhen lose his appetite, Xifeng every day sent over from the other mansion some fine congee and delicacies she had prepared especially for them. And Jia Zhen also ordered the best food to be served for her alone in her annex every day.

Xifeng was not afraid of hard work. She came over punctually every morning at half past six to call the roll and see to any business, sitting alone in her annex and not even joining the other young wives to greet lady guests.

On the thirty-third day Buddhist monks performed the rites to cleave the earth asunder, break open Hell and light the dead down with lanterns to pay homage to the King of Hell; to arrest evil demons; to invoke Prince Ksitigarbha under the ground to raise up the Golden Bridge and lead the way with streamers. Taoists offered prayers and invocations, worshipping the Three Pure Ones and the Jade Emperor. Bonzes chanting sutras burned incense, sacrificed to the hungry ghosts and intoned the *Water Penitential* while thirteen young nuns in red slippers and embroidered robes recited incantations before the coffin to lead the soul on its way. All was bustle and noise.



一夜，至寅正，平儿便请起来梳洗。及收拾完备，更衣盥手，吃了两口奶子糖粳米粥，漱口已毕，已是卯正二刻了。来旺媳妇率领诸人伺候已久。凤姐出至厅前，上了车，前面打了一对明角灯，大书“荣国府”三个大字，款款来至宁国府。大门上门灯朗挂，两边一色戳灯，照如白昼，白汪汪穿孝仆从，两边侍立。请车至正门上，小厮等退去，众媳妇上来揭起车帘。凤姐下了车，一手扶着丰儿，两个媳妇执着手把灯罩，簇拥着凤姐进来。宁府诸媳妇迎来请安接待。凤姐缓缓走入会芳园中登仙阁灵前，一见了棺材，那眼泪恰似断线之珠，滚将下来。院中许多小厮，垂手伺候烧纸。凤姐吩咐得一声：“供茶烧纸。”只听一棒锣鸣，诸乐齐奏，早有人端过一张大圈椅来，放在灵前，凤姐坐了，放声大哭。于是里外男女上下，见凤姐出声，都忙忙接声嚎哭。

一时贾珍、尤氏遣人来劝，凤姐方才止住。来旺媳妇献茶漱口毕，凤姐方起身，别过族中诸人，自入抱厦内来。按名查点，各项人数都已到齐，只有迎送亲客上的一人未到。即命传到，那人已慌张愧惧。凤姐冷笑道：“我说是谁误了，原来是你！你原比他们有体面，所以才不听我的话。”那人道：“小的天天都来的早，只有今儿醒了，觉得早些，因又睡迷了，来迟了一步，求奶奶饶过这次。”正说着，只见荣国府中的王兴媳妇来了，在前探头。

凤姐且不发放这人，却先问：“王兴媳妇作什么？”王兴





Knowing that many guests could be expected, Xifeng told Pinger to wake her up at four that day. By the time she had finished her toilet, sipped some milk and sweetened rice congee and rinsed her mouth, it was half past six and Lai Wang's wife was already waiting with the other servants. Xifeng left the hall and mounted her carriage, in front of which were two brilliant horn lanterns inscribed with the large characters: "The Rong Mansion."

As she slowly approached the Ning Mansion the lanterns above its main gate and the lamps on both sides shed a light bright as day on the two rows of attendants there in white mourning. At the main entrance her pages withdrew and maid-servants raised the curtain of the carriage. Xifeng was helped out by Fenger and escorted in by two serving-women with hand-lanterns. All the stewards' wives of the Ning Mansion advanced to greet her.

Xifeng walked slowly through the Garden of Concentrated Fragrance to the Pavilion of Attained Immortality, where at the sight of the coffin her tears fell like pearls from a broken string. Pages were waiting respectfully in the court for the burning of the sacrificial paper and now she ordered this to be done and an offering of tea presented. After one beat on the gong the music started. A large arm-chair had been set in front of the shrine and seating herself she gave way to loud lamentations. At once all the others, both men and women, high and low, joined in, until Jia Zhen and Madam You sent to persuade her to restrain her grief.

Then Lai Wang's wife brought her tea to rinse her mouth, and Xifeng rose to take her leave of her kinsmen and proceed to the annex.

All the women-servants were present at the roll-call except for one usher. She came when summoned in great fear and trembling.

"So you're the one." Xifeng smiled scornfully. "You must consider yourself above the rest to disobey me like this."

"I've been on time every day before," said the woman. "But when I woke today it was still early, so I went back to sleep. That's why I was a few minutes late. Please overlook it, madam, this once!"

Just then Wang Xing's wife from the other mansion peeped in. Without dismissing the usher, Xifeng asked her what she wanted.

Eager to have her business attended to first, Wang Xing's wife came

媳妇巴不得先问他完了事，连忙进去说：“领牌取线，打车轿网络。”说着，将个帖儿递上去。凤姐命彩明念道：“大轿两顶，小轿四顶，车四辆，共用大小络子若干根，用珠儿线若干斤。”凤姐听了，数目相合，便命彩明登记，取荣国府对牌掷下。王兴家的去了。

凤姐方欲说话时，只见荣国府的四个执事人进来，却都是要支取东西，领牌来的。凤姐命彩明要了帖，念过听了，一共四件，指两件说道：“这两件打销错了，再算清了来取。”说着，掷下帖子来。那二个扫兴而去。

凤姐因见张材家的在旁，因问：“你有什么事？”张材家的忙取帖儿回说：“就是方才车轿围作成，领取裁缝工银若干两。”凤姐听了，便收了帖子，命彩明登记。待王兴家的交过牌，得了买办的回押相符，然后方与张材家的去领。一面又命念那一个，是为宝玉外书房完竣，支买纸料糊裱。凤姐听了，即命收帖儿登记，待张材家的缴清，再发给，那人去了。

凤姐便说道：“明儿他也睡迷了，后儿我也睡迷了，将来都没有人了。本来要饶你，只是我头一次宽了，下次人就难管，不如开发的好。”登时放下脸来，喝命：“带出去，打二十板子！”一面又掷下宁国府对牌：“出去说与来升，革他一





forward and presented a request for silk thread to make tassels for the carriages and sedan-chairs. On Xifeng's instructions Caiming read out the number of strings of beads and tassels needed for two palanquins and four sedan-chairs as well as four carriages. Finding the figures correct, Xifeng told Caiming to register them and gave a Rong Mansion tally to Wang Xing's wife, who left.

Before Xifeng could deal with the offender in came four stewards from the Rong Mansion with indents for stores. Xifeng had their orders read out and pointed at two of the four items.

"These figures are wrong. Come back when you've worked them out correctly."

The two stewards whose indents she tossed back withdrew very sheepishly.

Then she noticed Zhang Cai's wife and asked her business. The woman handed her an order form, saying, "The covers for the carriages and sedan-chairs are finished, and I've come for the money for the tailor."

Xifeng told Caiming to enter this, and when Wang Xing's wife had returned the tally and fetched the accountant's receipt for the right sum Zhang Cai's wife was sent to get the money. Another order for wall-paper to paper Baoyu's outer study was read out and registered. After Zhang Cai's wife had finished her business and returned the tally, the other was sent with it to get wall-paper.

Then at last Xifeng turned to deal with the usher.

"If you're late today and I'm late tomorrow, there will soon be nobody here," she said. "I should have liked to let you off, but if I overlook the first offence the others will get out of hand. I shall be obliged to make an example of you."

With a stern look she ordered the woman to be taken out and given twenty strokes with the bamboo. She then threw down the Ning Mansion tally and gave orders that Lai Sheng should dock this usher of a month's wages.

When the others heard this and saw Xifeng's angry frown, they dared not show slackness in carrying out her orders. Some hastily dragged out the woman; others passed on the order to Lai Sheng. After the usher had been given twenty strokes she had to return to kowtow to Xifeng.



月银米!”众人听说，又见凤姐眉立，知是恼了，不敢怠慢。拖人的，出去拖人，执牌传谕的，忙去传谕。那人身不由己，已拖出去挨了二十大板，还要进来叩谢。凤姐道：“明日再有误的，打四十，后日的六十，要挨打的，只管误!”说着，吩咐：“散了罢。”窗外众人听说，方各自执事去了。彼时宁国、荣国两处执事，领牌交牌的，人来人往不绝。那抱愧被打之人含羞去了，这才知道凤姐利害，众人不敢偷闲，自此兢兢业业，执事保全，不在话下。

如今且说宝玉，因见今日人众，恐秦钟受了委曲，因私与他商议，要同他往凤姐处来坐。秦钟道：“他的事多，况且不喜人去，咱们去了，他岂不烦腻。”宝玉道：“他怎好腻我们，不相干，只管跟我来。”说着，便拉了秦钟，直至抱厦。凤姐才吃饭，见他们来了，便笑道：“好长腿子，快上来罢。”宝玉道：“我们偏了。”凤姐道：“在这边外头吃的，还是那边吃的?”宝玉道：“这边同那些浑人吃什么!原是那边，我们两个同老太太吃了来的。”一面归坐。

凤姐吃毕饭，就有宁国府中的一个媳妇来领牌，为支取香灯事。凤姐笑道：“我算着你们今儿该来支取，总不见来，想是忘了。这会子到底来取，要忘了，自然是你们包出来，都便宜了我。”那媳妇笑道：“何尝不是忘了，方才想起来，再迟一步，也领不成了。”说罢，领牌而去。

一时登记交牌。秦钟因笑道：“你们两府里都是这牌，倘或别人私弄一个，支了银子跑了怎样?”凤姐笑道：“依你



Xifeng warned the servants, "Anyone late again tomorrow will get forty strokes, and sixty the day after that. So those who want a beating, just come late." With that she dismissed them.

The people outside the window, hearing this, went off to attend to their tasks. Then a steady stream of domestics from both mansions kept coming to hand in or apply for indents, while the woman who had been beaten also left shamefacedly. After this demonstration of Xifeng's severity, the servants of the Ning Mansion worked hard and, to be on the safe side, dared not neglect their duties. But no more of this.

Let us return to Baoyu. There were so many visitors about that day that, fearing Qin Zhong might be slighted, he urged him to go with him to see Xifeng.

Qin Zhong objected that she would be too busy to welcome visitors and might think them a nuisance.

"Us, a nuisance?" retorted Baoyu. "Not a bit of it. Come on."

He took Qin Zhong to the annex where Xifeng was having a meal. At sight of them she smiled. "You do have long legs, don't you? Come and join me."

"We've eaten already," Baoyu told her.

"Here? Or over in the other house?"

"Why should we eat here with these dolts? We had a meal over there with the old lady." He and Qin Zhong sat down.

As soon as the meal was finished, a woman from the Ning Mansion arrived with an indent for incense and lamps.

"I knew it was time for you to come today but thought you'd forgotten," observed Xifeng, smiling. "If you had, you'd have had to pay for them yourself. And so much the better for me."

"It quite slipped my mind," replied the maid cheerfully. "I only remembered a moment ago and hurried here just in time."

She took the tally and went off. Soon the tally was returned and the amount entered.

"You use the same tallies in both your mansions," remarked Qin Zhong with a smile. "What if someone faked one and ran off with your money?"

"Do you think us such a lawless lot?" Xifeng asked, laughing.



说，都没王法了。”宝玉因道：“怎么咱们家没人领牌子做东西？”凤姐道：“人家来领的时候，你还做梦呢。我且问你，你们这夜书多早晚才念呢？”宝玉道：“巴不得这如今就念才好，他们只是不快收拾出书房来，这也无法。”凤姐笑道：“你请我一请，包管就快了。”宝玉道：“你要快也不中用，他们该作到那里的，自然就有了。”凤姐笑道：“便是他们作，也得要东西，拦不住我不给对牌，是难的。”宝玉听说，便猴向凤姐身上立刻要牌，说：“好姐姐，给出牌子来，叫他们要东西去。”凤姐道：“我乏的身子上生疼，还搁的住揉搓。你放心罢，今儿才领了纸，裱糊去了，他们该要的，还等叫去呢，可不傻了？”宝玉不信，凤姐便叫彩明查册子与宝玉看了。

正闹着，人回：“苏州去的人昭儿来了。”凤姐急命唤进来。昭儿打千儿请安，凤姐便问：“回来做什么的？”昭儿道：“二爷打发回来的。林姑老爷是九月初三巳时没的。二爷带了林姑娘，送林姑老爷灵到苏州，大约赶年底就回来。二爷打发小的来报个信请安，讨老太太示下，还瞧瞧奶奶家里好，叫把大毛衣服带几件去。”凤姐道：“你见过别人了没有？”昭儿道：“都见过了。”说毕，连忙退去。凤姐向宝玉笑道：“你林妹妹可在咱们家住长了。”宝玉道：“了不得，想来这几日，他不知哭的怎样呢。”说着，蹙眉长叹。

凤姐见昭儿回来，因当着人，未及细问贾琏，心中自是记挂，待要回去，争奈事情繁杂，一时去了，恐有些失误，惹人笑话。少不得耐到晚上回来，复令昭儿进来，细问一路



“How is it that no one has come from our house to ask for things?” put in Baoyu.

“When they came you were still fast asleep. But tell me, when are you two going to start your evening lessons?”

“We’d like to start right away. Only we can’t because they’re so slow getting the study ready.”

“If you’ll treat me, I’ll speed things up.”

“How can you? They’re doing it in their own good time.”

“They need materials for the job. They can’t do a thing if I withhold the tally.”

Baoyu cuddled up to her at that and coaxed, “Dear cousin, do give them the tally so that they can get what they need.”

“I’m so tired, my bones are aching,” protested Xifeng. “Must you jostle me like that? Don’t worry, they’ve just taken the wall-paper for your study. You must be crazy if you think they need telling when to ask.”

When Baoyu refused to believe this she made Caiming show him the record. Just then someone announced that Zhaoer was back from Suzhou and Xifeng promptly ordered him to be brought in. Zhaoer fell on one knee to greet her.

“Why have you come back?” she asked.

“The master sent me, madam. Lord Lin died on the third of the ninth month, at nine in the morning. The master and Miss Lin are escorting his coffin to Suzhou and should be home about the end of the year. He sent me to bring the news with his greetings and to ask for the old lady’s instructions. I was to see, too, if you were well at home, madam, and to take back some of his fur-lined gowns.”

“Have you reported to the other ladies?”

“Yes, madam. Everyone.” With that he withdrew.

Xifeng turned to Baoyu with a smile. “Now your cousin Daiyu can stay with us a good long time.”

“Poor thing!” exclaimed Baoyu. “Think how much she must have been crying the last few days.” He knit his brows and sighed.

Xifeng was anxious for news of her husband but had not liked to question Zhaoer too closely in the presence of others. Tempted to go home but kept by unfinished business and afraid of making herself look

平安信息。连夜打点大毛衣服，和平儿亲自检点包裹，再细细追想所需何物，一并包藏交付昭儿。又细细吩咐昭儿：“好生在外小心伏侍，不要惹你二爷生气；时时劝他少吃酒，别勾引他认得混帐老婆，回来打折你的腿。”等语。赶乱完了，天已四更将尽，总睡下又要走了困，不觉又是天明鸡唱，便梳洗过宁府中来。

那贾珍因见发引日近，亲自坐车，带了阴阳司吏，往铁槛寺来踏看寄灵所在。又一一嘱咐住持色空，好生预备新鲜陈设，多请名僧，以备接灵使用。色空忙看晚斋，贾珍也无心茶饭，因天晚不得进城，就在净室胡乱歇了一夜。次日早，便进城来，料理出殡之事，一面又派人先往铁槛寺，连夜另外修饰停灵之处，并厨茶等项，接灵人口。

里面凤姐见日期有限，也预先逐细分派料理，一面又派荣府中车轿人从，跟王夫人送殡，又顾自己送殡去占下处。目今正值缮国公诰命亡故，王、邢二夫人又去打祭送殡；西安郡王妃华诞，送寿礼；镇国公诰命生了长男，预备贺礼；又有胞兄王仁连家眷回南，一面写家信禀叩父母，并带往之物；又有迎春染病，每日请医服药，看医生启帖、症源、药案等事，亦难尽述。又兼发引在途，因此忙的凤姐茶饭也没工夫吃得，坐卧不能清净。刚到了宁府，荣府的人又跟到宁





ridiculous, she had to restrain her impatience until the evening, when she summoned Zhaoer to give her all the particulars of their journey. That same night she got Pinger to help her select some fur-lined clothes and carefully thought out what else her husband might need. Having packed these things together she handed them to Zhaoer and cautioned him:

“Mind you look after your master properly outside and don’t make him angry. Try to keep him from drinking too much, and don’t pander to him by finding him loose women — if you do, I’ll break your legs when you get back.”

By then it was well after the fourth watch and though she went to bed she had lost all desire to sleep. Soon it was dawn. She made a hasty toilet and went over to the Ning Mansion.

Now that the day for the funeral was approaching, Jia Zhen drove in person with a geomancer to Iron Threshold Temple to inspect the repository for the coffin and enjoin on Abbot Sekong, who was in charge, the need for the finest furnishings and the help of the most noted monks for the coffin’s reception.

Sekong hastily prepared supper, but Jia Zhen had no interest in food. Since it was too late to return to town, however, he put up that night in the guest room, starting back first thing in the morning to arrange for the funeral procession. He sent men ahead to the temple to spend that night in redecorating the repository and in seeing to refreshments and the reception of the funeral party.

Meanwhile Xifeng too had made careful preparations, choosing the servants, carriages and sedan-chairs of the Rong Mansion that would accompany Lady Wang to the funeral, and a place in which to stay herself for the occasion.

As the Duke of Shanguo’s wife had just died, Lady Xing and Lady Wang had to send sacrificial gifts and attend her funeral. Then birthday presents had to be sent to the consort of the Prince of Xian. Then a first son was born to the Duke of Zhenguo and congratulatory gifts had to be sent. Then Xifeng had to write a letter home and prepare gifts for her brother Wang Ren to take when he returned south with his family. Then Yingchun fell ill and every day they had to call in doctors, study their diagnoses, discuss the cause of the illness and decide on prescriptions....



府；既回到荣府，宁府的人又找到荣府。凤姐如此，心中倒十分欢喜，并不偷安推托，恐落人褒贬，因此日夜不暇，筹画得十分的整肃。于是合族上下，无不称叹者。

这日伴宿之夕，里面两班小戏并耍百戏的，与亲朋堂客伴宿，尤氏犹卧于内室，一应张罗款待，独是凤姐一人，周全承应。合族中虽有许多妯娌，但或有羞口的，或有羞脚的，或有不惯见人的，或有惧贵怯官的，种种之类，俱不及凤姐举止舒徐，言语慷慨，珍贵宽大；因此也不把众人放在眼里，挥霍指示，任其所为，目若无人。一夜中灯明火彩，客送官迎，那百般热闹，自不用说的。至天明，吉时已到，一般六十四名青衣请灵，前面铭旌上大书：“奉天洪建兆年不易之朝诰封一等宁国公冢孙妇防护内延紫禁道御前侍卫龙禁尉享强寿贾门秦氏恭人之灵柩”。一应执事陈设，皆系现赶着新做出来的，一色光艳夺目。宝珠自行未嫁女之礼，摔丧驾灵，十分哀苦。

那时官客送殡的，有镇国公牛清之孙、现袭一等伯牛继





As the day of the funeral approached, a thousand and one affairs kept Xifeng so busy that she had no time to eat and was hardly able to have a moment's rest. When she went to the Ning Mansion, servants from the Rong Mansion followed her there; when she returned to the Rong Mansion, servants from the Ning Mansion would come after her. Yet busy as she was, her spirits were high. She shirked not a single task, determined to give no one any grounds for complaint. Indeed, she worked so hard day and night and handled everything so well that not one of the household, high or low, but was impressed.

Now the time had come for the wake. The family's two troupes of actors and some musicians, dancers and acrobats were to perform a long programme of items, and the place was thronged with relatives and friends. As Madam You was still keeping to her bed Xifeng had to look after them singlehanded; for all the other married women in the family were either tongue-tied, flighty, shy of strangers or awed by nobles and officials. None of them could compare with Xifeng with her charm, ready tongue and elegance. Having no fear of anyone, she gave whatever orders she pleased and did as she liked, regardless of anyone else.

That night was all brilliance and bustle, needless to say, with the lanterns and torches of the officials and guests coming and going.

When the auspicious hour arrived at dawn, sixty-four bearers in blue bore out the coffin. It was preceded by a great funeral banner bearing the inscription in large characters:

Spiritual Abode of Lady Qin of the Jia Family, Consort of the Imperial Guard and Defender of the Palace Roads of the Inner Court of the Forbidden City, and Eldest Great-Great-Grandson of the Duke of Ningguo Enfeoffed with the First Rank by the Heaven-Sent, Splendidly Established, Long-Enduring Dynasty.

The brand-new funeral paraphernalia was a dazzling sight. And Baozhu, observing the rites for an unmarried daughter, dashed an earthen basin to pieces when the coffin was lifted to be carried away and lamented bitterly before it.

Among the officials attending the funeral were: Niu Jizong, hereditary earl of the first rank, grandson of Niu Qing, Duke of Zhenguo; Liu Fang,

宗，理国公柳彪之孙、现袭一等子柳芳，齐国公陈翼之孙、世袭三品威镇将军陈瑞文，治国公马魁之孙、世袭三品威远将军马尚，修国公侯晓明之孙、世袭一等子侯孝康；缮国公诰命亡故，故其孙石光珠守孝，不曾来得。这六家与宁荣二家，当日所称“八公”的便是。余者更有南安郡王之孙，西宁郡王之孙，忠靖侯史鼎，平原侯之孙、世袭二等男蒋子宁，定城侯之孙、世袭二等男兼京营游击谢鲸，襄阳侯之孙、世袭二等男戚建辉，景田侯之孙、五城兵马司裘良。余者锦乡伯公子韩奇，神武将军公子冯紫英，陈也俊、卫若兰等诸王孙公子，不可枚数。堂客算来亦有十来顶大轿，三四十小轿，连家下大小轿车辆，不下百余十乘。连前面各色执事、陈设、百耍，浩浩荡荡，一带摆三四里远。

走不多时，路旁彩棚高搭，设席张筵，和音奏乐，俱是各家路祭：第一座是东平王府祭棚，第二座是南安郡王祭棚，第三座是西宁郡王，第四座是北静郡王的。原来这四王当日，惟北静王功高，及今子孙犹袭王爵。现今北静王水溶，年未弱冠，生得形容秀美，情性谦和。近闻宁国公冢孙妇告殂，因想当日彼此祖父相与之情，同难同荣，难以异姓相视，因此不以王位自居，前日已曾探丧上祭，如今又设路



hereditary viscount of the first rank, grandson of Liu Biao, Duke of Ligu; Chen Ruiwen, hereditary general of the third rank, grandson of Chen Yi, Duke of Qigu; Ma Shang, hereditary general of the third rank, grandson of Ma Kui, Duke of Zhigu; and Hou Xiaokang, hereditary viscount of the first rank, grandson of Hou Xiaoming, Duke of Xiugu. Since the Duke of Shanguo's wife had died, his grandson Shi Guangzhu was in mourning and unable to come. These six families, with those of Ning and Rong, were known as the "Eight Ducal Households."

The other mourners included: the grandson of the Prince of Nanan; the grandson of the prince of Xining; Shi Ding, Marquis of Zhongjing; Jiang Zining, hereditary baron of the second rank, grandson of the Marquis of Pingyuan; Xie Qiong, hereditary baron of the second rank, captain of the Metropolitan Garrison, grandson of the Marquis of Dingcheng; Qi Jianhui, hereditary baron of the second rank, grandson of the Marquis of Xiangyang; Qiu Liang, garrison commander of five cities, grandson of the Marquis of Jingtian.

Also present were Han Qi, son of the Earl of Jinxiang; Feng Ziyang, son of the General of Divine Valour; Chen Yejun, Wei Ruolan and countless other sons of nobles.

There were also over a dozen palanquins and thirty to forty sedan-chairs for lady guests. These together with the carriages and sedan-chairs of the Jia family numbered well over a hundred. With the elaborate equipage in front and the performances given on the way, the procession extended a good three or four *li*.

Before long they reached stands with coloured silk awnings by the roadside where music was played and sacrificial offerings had been set out by different families. The first four belonged to the houses of the Prince of Dongping, the Prince of Nanan, the Prince of Xining, and the Prince of Beijing.

The original Prince of Beijing had won the highest distinction of these four princes, and therefore his descendants had inherited his title. The present holder of the title, Shui Rong, was a charming and modest young man of less than twenty with remarkable good looks. When he heard that the eldest great-great-grandson of the Duke of Ningguo had lost his wife, the thought of their forefathers' friendship, shared dangers and glory as



奠，命麾下各官，在此伺候。自己五更入朝，公事一毕，便换了素服，坐大轿，鸣锣张伞而来，至棚前落轿。手下各官，两旁拥侍；军民人众，不得往还。

一时只见宁府大殡浩浩荡荡、压地银山一般从北而至。早有宁府开路传事人看见，连忙回去报与贾珍。贾珍急命前面驻扎，同贾赦、贾政三人连忙迎来，以国礼相见。水溶在轿内欠身含笑答礼，仍以世交称呼接待，并不妄自尊大。贾珍道：“犬妇之丧，累蒙郡驾下临，荫生辈何以克当。”水溶道：“世交之谊，何出此言。”遂回头命长府官主祭代奠。贾赦等一旁还礼毕，复身又来谢恩。

水溶十分谦逊，因问贾政道：“那一位是衔宝而诞者？几次要见一见，都为杂冗所阻，想今日是来的，何不请来一会。”贾政听说，忙回去，急命宝玉脱去孝服，领他前来。那宝玉素日就曾听得父兄亲友人等说闲话时，赞水溶是个贤王，且生得才貌双全，风流潇洒，每不以官俗国体所缚。每思相会，只是父亲拘束严密，无由得会，今见反来叫他，自是欢喜。一面走，一面早瞥见那水溶坐在轿内，好个仪表人材。不知近看时，又是怎样，且听下回分解。





if of one family had made him lay aside all considerations of rank and go in person to express his condolences. Now he had set up a funeral booth by the roadside to offer a libation. He made some of his officers wait there while he went to court at dawn. The audience over, he changed into mourning clothes and came here by palanquin, preceded by sounding gongs and ceremonial umbrellas. He halted his palanquin at the stand and his officers ranged themselves on either side, forbidding soldiers and civilians to pass.

Presently, from the north, the Ning Mansion's magnificent funeral procession bore down on them like a great silver landslide. The runners sent ahead to clear the way had reported the prince's arrival to Jia Zhen, who now ordered the procession to halt while he, Jia She and Jia Zheng went to greet the prince according to state ceremonial. The prince bowed affably in return from his palanquin, treating them as old family friends without any affectation.

Jia Zhen said, "We are overwhelmed by the favour done us by Your Highness in honouring my daughter-in-law's funeral with your presence."

"That is no way for good friends to talk," protested the prince.

Then he turned and ordered his chief steward to preside at the sacrifice for him and pour a libation. Jia She and the others, having bowed in return, stepped forward to express their gratitude.

The Prince of Beijing was completely unassuming. He asked Jia Zheng, "Which is the young gentleman born with a piece of jade in his mouth? I have long wanted to meet him but have never had the time. I am sure he must be here today. Won't you present him?"

Jia Zheng withdrew at once to fetch Baoyu. He made him change out of mourning, then took him to meet the prince.

Baoyu had heard from his family and friends of the Prince of Beijing's fine qualities, his talent, good looks, refinement and unconventionality. He had often wanted to meet him, but his father kept him under such strict control that hitherto he had never had a chance. Of course he was delighted to be sent for. Walking forward, he was struck by the dignity with which the prince was sitting in his palanquin.

To know the sequel, read the chapter which follows.

第十五回

王凤姐弄权铁槛寺 秦鲸卿得趣馒头庵

话说宝玉举目，见北静王水溶头上戴着洁白簪缨银翅王帽，穿着江牙海水五爪坐龙白蟒袍，系着碧玉红鞦带，面如美玉，目似明星，真好秀丽人物。宝玉忙抢上来参见，水溶连忙从轿内伸出手来挽住。见宝玉戴着束发银冠，勒着双龙出海抹额，穿着白蟒箭袖，围着攒珠银带，面若春花，目如点漆。水溶笑道：“名不虚传，果然如‘宝’似‘玉’。”因问：“衔的那宝贝在那里？”宝玉见问，连忙从衣内取了，递与过去。水溶细细的看了，又念了那上头的字，因问：“果灵验否？”贾政忙道：“虽如此说，只是未曾试过。”水溶一面极口称奇道异，一面理好彩绦，亲自与宝玉带上，又携手问宝玉几岁，读何书。宝玉一一答应。

水溶见他语言清楚，谈吐有致，一面又向贾政笑道：“令郎真乃龙驹凤雏，非小王在世翁前唐突，将来‘雏凤清于老凤声’，未可量也。”贾政忙陪笑道：“犬子岂敢谬承金奖。赖藩郡提携，果如是言，亦荫生辈之幸矣。”水溶又道：“只是一件，令郎如是资质，想老太夫人、夫人辈自然钟



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Chapter 15

Xifeng Abuses Her Power at Iron Threshold Temple Qin Zhong Amuses Himself in Steamed-Bread Convent

Looking up, Baoyu saw that the Prince of Beijing had on a princely silver-winged cap with white tassels, a white robe embroidered with zig-zag wave patterns and five-clawed dragons, and a red leather belt studded with green jade. With his face fair as jade, his eyes bright as stars, he was truly a handsome figure.

Baoyu started forward to make his obeisance. As the prince from his palanquin raised him up, he noticed that Baoyu was wearing a silver chaplet in the form of two dragons rising from the sea, an archer's coat embroidered with white serpents, and a silver belt set with pearls. His face seemed a flower in spring, his eyes black as lacquer.

"You live up to your name," remarked the prince. "You are really like precious jade. But where is that gem with which you came into the world?"

Baoyu hastily took the jade from inside his garments and handed it to the prince, who examined it carefully and read the inscription.

"Does it actually have magic powers?" he asked.

"So they say," answered Jia Zheng. "But it has never yet been put to the test."

The prince was very struck by the jade and, smoothing its silken cord, with his own hands he put it round Baoyu's neck. Then taking the boy's hand he asked him his age and what he was studying.

The clarity and fluency of Baoyu's answers made the prince turn to observe to Jia Zheng, "Your son is truly a dragon's colt or young phoenix. May I venture to predict that in time to come this young phoenix may even surpass the old one?"

"My worthless son does not deserve such high praise," rejoined Jia Zheng hurriedly with a courteous smile. "If thanks to the grace of Your Highness such proves the case, that will be our good fortune."

爱极矣；但吾辈后生，甚不宜钟溺；钟溺，则未免荒失学业。昔小王曾蹈此辙，想令郎亦未必不如是也。若令郎在家，难以用功，不妨常到寒第。小王虽不才，却多蒙海上众名士凡至都者，未有不另垂青目，是以寒第高人颇聚。令郎常去谈会谈会，则学问可以日进矣。”贾政忙鞠躬答应。

水溶又将腕上一串念珠卸了下来，递与宝玉道：“今日初会仓猝，竟无敬贺之物，此即前日圣上亲赐鹤鹑香念珠一串，权为敬贺之礼。”宝玉连忙接了，回身奉与贾政。贾政与宝玉一齐谢过。于是贾赦、贾珍等一齐上来请回舆，水溶道：“逝者已登仙界，非碌碌你我尘寰中之人也。小王虽上叨天恩，虚邀郡袭，岂可越仙輶而进也？”贾赦等见执意不从，只得告辞谢恩回来，命手下掩乐停音，滔滔然将殡过完，方让水溶回舆去了，不在话下。

且说宁府送殡，一路热闹非常。刚至城门前，又有贾赦、贾政、贾珍等诸同僚属下各家祭棚接祭，一一的谢过，然后出城，竟奔铁槛寺大路行来。彼时贾珍带贾蓉来到诸长辈前，让坐轿上马，因而贾赦一辈的，各自上了车轿；贾珍一辈的，也将要上马。凤姐儿因记挂着宝玉，怕他在郊外纵性逞强，不服家人的话，贾政管不着这些小事，惟恐有个失闪，难见贾母，因此使命小厮来唤他。宝玉只得来到他车





“There is one thing, however,” cautioned the prince. “Because your son is so talented his grandmother and mother must have doted on him; but over-indulgence is very bad for young people like ourselves as it makes us neglect our studies. I went astray in this way myself and suspect your honourable son may do the same. If he finds it difficult to study at home, he is very welcome to come as often as he likes to my humble house. For although untalented myself, I am honoured by visits from scholars of note from all parts of the empire when they come to the capital. Hence my poor abode is frequented by eminent men, and conversation with them should improve his knowledge.”

Jia Zheng bowed and assented to this without hesitation.

The prince now took a string of beads from his wrist and gave it to Baoyu saying, “This first meeting of ours is so hurried that I have brought no gift to show my respect, but please accept this string of beads made of the aromatic seeds of some plant which His Majesty gave me the other day.”

Baoyu took it and turned to present it to his father, who together with his son offered formal thanks.

Then Jia She and Jia Zhen stepped forward and begged the prince to return, but he demurred: “The deceased has become an immortal and left our dusty world. Although by the favour of the Son of Heaven I have succeeded to this title, how can I precede the carriage of an immortal?”

Seeing that he was adamant, Jia She and the others thanked him and withdrew to stop the music, so as to let the long procession pass on. And thereupon the prince went back. But no more of this.

The whole road hummed with excitement as the great procession passed. By the city gate friends and colleagues of Jia She, Jia Zheng and Jia Zhen had set up sacrificial tents and not until each had been thanked in turn did the cortège leave the city and proceed along the highway towards Iron Threshold Temple.

Now Jia Zhen and Jia Rong urged their elders to mount their chairs or horses. All of Jia She’s generation mounted carriages or chairs while Jia Zhen’s contemporaries rode on horseback.

Xifeng was afraid that Baoyu, unchecked by his father, might come to some harm through reckless riding in the open country, for he would not



前。凤姐笑道：“好兄弟，你是个尊贵人，女孩儿一样的人品，别学他们猴在马上。下来，咱们姐儿两个坐车，岂不好？”宝玉听说，忙下了马，爬入凤姐车上，二人说笑前来。

不一时，只见从那边两骑马压地飞来，离凤姐车不远，一齐蹿下来，扶车回说：“这里有下处，奶奶请歇更衣。”凤姐急命请邢夫人、王夫人的示下，那人回来说：“太太们说不用歇了，叫奶奶自便罢。”凤姐听了，便命歇了再走。众小厮听了，一带辕马，岔出人群，往北飞走。宝玉在车内，急命请秦相公。那时秦钟正骑马随着他父亲的轿，忽见宝玉的小厮跑来，请他去打尖。秦钟看时，只见凤姐儿的车往北而去，后面拉着宝玉的马，搭着鞍笼。便知宝玉同凤姐坐车，自己即便带马赶上来，同入一庄门内。早有家人将众庄汉撵尽。那庄农人家无多房舍，婆娘们无处回避，只得由他们去了。那些村姑庄妇见了凤姐、宝玉、秦钟的人品衣服，礼数款段，岂有不爱看的？

一时凤姐进入茅堂，因命宝玉等先出去玩玩。宝玉等会意，因同秦钟出来，带着小厮们各处游玩。凡庄农动用之物，皆不曾见过。宝玉一见了锹、镢、锄、犁等物，皆以为奇，不知何项所使，其名为何。小厮从旁一一的告诉了名色，说明原委。宝玉听了，因点头叹道：“怪道古人诗上说，‘谁知盘中餐，粒粒皆辛苦’，正为此也。”一面说，一面





listen to anyone else in the household. And if there were any mishap it would be hard to account for it to the old lady. Accordingly she ordered a page to summon him to her carriage, and when perforce he came she told him with a smile:

“Dear cousin, you have your dignity and are as delicate as any girl. Don’t copy those apes on horseback. Wouldn’t it be better to come and share my carriage?”

Baoyu hurriedly dismounted to join her. They drove on laughing and chatting until two horsemen galloped up and alighted by the carriage to report, “We have reached a halting place, madam. Will you stop for a rest?”

Having asked to know the wishes of Lady Xing and Lady Wang, Xifeng was told, “Their Ladyships are not stopping, but they want you to suit your convenience.”

Thereupon Xifeng ordered a halt. Attendants led their carriage northwards away from the cortège and at Baoyu’s orders went to invite Qin Zhong, who was riding behind his father’s chair, to join them. When Baoyu’s page brought him this invitation and he saw his friend’s riderless horse following Xifeng’s carriage north, Qin Zhong knew that Baoyu must be with her. He promptly overtook them and together they entered the gateway of a farm.

The menfolk here had long since been packed off, but the farmhouse had so few rooms that the womenfolk had nowhere to go to keep out of the way. The sudden appearance in their midst of Xifeng, Baoyu and Qin Zhong with their gorgeous clothes and refined looks and manners made these village women stare with admiration.

Once in the thatched house Xifeng suggested to Baoyu that he should amuse himself outside. Taking the hint, he led Qin Zhong and the pages off to look around. He had never seen farm implements before and was thoroughly intrigued by the spades, picks, hoes and ploughs, although quite ignorant of their names and uses. When a page who knew informed him he nodded and remarked with a sigh:

“Now I understand the words of the old poet:

Who knows that each grain of rice we eat



又至一间房前，只见炕上有个纺车，宝玉又问小厮们：“这又是什么？”小厮们又告诉他原委。宝玉听说，便上来拧转作耍，自为有趣。只见一个约有十七八岁的村庄丫头跑了来乱嚷：“别动坏了！”众小厮忙断喝拦阻。宝玉忙丢开手，陪笑说道：“我因为没见过这个，所以试他一试。”那丫头道：“你们那里会弄这个，站开了，我纺与你瞧。”秦钟暗拉宝玉笑道：“此卿大有意趣。”宝玉一把推开，笑道：“该死的！再胡说，我就打了。”说着，只见那丫头纺起线来。宝玉正要说话时，只听那边老婆子叫道：“二丫头，快过来！”那丫头听见，丢下纺车，一径去了。

宝玉怅然无趣。只见凤姐儿打发人来，叫他两个进去。凤姐洗了手，换衣服抖灰，问他们换不换。宝玉不换，只得罢了。家下仆妇们将带着行路的茶壶茶杯、十锦屉盒、各样小食端来，凤姐等吃过茶，待他们收拾完备，便起身上车。外面来旺预备下赏封，赏了本村主人。庄妇等来叩赏。凤姐并不在意，宝玉却留心看时，内中并无二丫头。一时上了车，出来走不多远，只见迎头二丫头怀里抱着他小兄弟，同着几个小女孩子，说笑而来。宝玉恨不得下车跟了他去，料是众人不依的，少不得以目相送，争奈车轻马快，一时展眼无踪。

走不多时，仍又跟上大殡了。早有前面法鼓金铙，幢幡宝盖：铁槛寺接灵众僧齐至。少时到入寺中，另演佛事，重设香坛。安灵于内殿旁室之中，宝珠安于里寝室相伴。外面



Is the fruit of intensive toil?"

Strolling into an outhouse, he was still more intrigued by a spinning-wheel on the *kang*. His pages told him this was used to weave yarn. He had just climbed up on the *kang* to turn the wheel for fun when in came a peasant girl of seventeen or eighteen. She ran over crying:

"Don't! You'll break it!"

She was shouted at by his pages, but Baoyu had already let go of the wheel.

"I've never seen one before," he explained with a smile. "I just wanted to have a try."

"How could you people know how?" said the girl. "Get out of my way and I'll show you."

Qin Zhong plucked at Baoyu's sleeve and whispered, "Isn't she fun?"

Baoyu gave him a shove. "You rascal. If you talk any more nonsense I'll clout you."

Meanwhile the girl had started spinning. Baoyu was just about to speak to her when an old woman called, "Come here, quick, Second Daughter!"

At that she went off, much to his disappointment.

Then a messenger summoned them back to Xifeng, who had washed and changed to remove the dust of the journey. She urged the two boys to change, but Baoyu declined. Their attendants now produced the tea-service and hamper which they had brought for the journey, and after some refreshments they smartened up and mounted their carriage again.

Once outside, Lai Wang presented a packaged gratuity to the peasant family, whose womenfolk came to thank them. Xifeng, however, took no notice of them, while Baoyu looked eagerly for the spinning-girl. But she was not in the group. They had not gone far, though, when he saw her, her little brother in her arms, approaching laughing and chatting with some smaller girls. Baoyu longed to alight and go with her, but knowing that the others would not agree he could only follow her with his eyes as their carriage drove swiftly off. Soon she was out of sight.

Before very long, they overtook the procession. Ahead of them were temple drums and cymbals, pennants and umbrellas, while monks from Iron Threshold Temple lined the road. Soon they entered the temple, where



贾珍款待一应亲友，也有扰饭的，也有不吃饭而辞的，一应谢过乏，从公侯伯子男一起一起的散去，至未末时分方才散尽了。里面的堂客，皆是凤姐张罗接待，先从显官诰命散起，也到晌午大错时方散尽了。只有几个亲戚是至近的，等做过三日安灵道场方去。那时邢、王二夫人知凤姐必不能来家，也便就要进城。王夫人要带宝玉去，宝玉乍到郊外，那里肯回去，只要跟凤姐住着。王夫人无法，只得交与凤姐，便回来了。

原来这铁槛寺原是宁、荣二公当日修造，现今还是有香火地亩布施，以备京中老了人口，在此便宜寄放。其中阴阳两宅，俱已预备妥贴，好为送灵人口寄居。不想如今后辈人口繁盛，其中贫富不一，或性情参商：有那家业艰难安分的，便住在这里了；有那尚排场有钱势的，只说这里不方便，一定另外或村庄或尼庵寻个下处，为事毕宴退之所。即今秦氏之丧，族中诸人皆权在铁槛寺下榻，独有凤姐嫌不方便，因而早遣人来，和馒头庵的尼姑净虚说了，腾出两间房子来作下处。

原来这馒头庵就是水月庵，因他庙里做的馒头好，就起了这个浑号，离铁槛寺不远。当下和尚工课已完，奠过晚茶，贾珍便命贾蓉请凤姐歇息。凤姐见还有几个妯娌陪着女亲，自己便辞了众人，带了宝玉、秦钟，往水月庵来。秦业年迈多病，不能在此，只命秦钟等待安灵罢了。那秦钟便只跟着凤姐、宝玉，一时到了水月庵，净虚带领智善、智能两



again Buddhist rites were performed and incense burned, after which the coffin was installed in one of the side-chambers of the inner hall and Baozhu prepared to keep vigil there that night.

In the outer apartments Jia Zhen entertained their male friends and relatives, some of whom stayed for a meal while others took their leave immediately. He tendered them thanks one by one for coming. Then the guests began to take their leave from dukes, marquises, earls, viscounts and barons downwards, and by three o'clock all had dispersed.

The ladies were entertained in the inner apartments by Xifeng. They, too, left in order of precedence, and by about two o'clock all had gone except a few close relatives who would remain for the three day's requiems for the dead.

Knowing that Xifeng could not return with them, Lady Xing and Lady Wang proposed to take Baoyu back with them to the city. But as this was his first visit to the country and he insisted on staying behind with Xifeng, his mother had to leave him in her charge.

Now this Iron Threshold Temple had been built in the days of the Dukes of Rongguo and Ningguo and still had enough land of its own to provide for incense and lamps and repositories for the coffins of clansmen. Since there was accommodation for both the dead and the living, the mourners escorting coffins had somewhere to stay. However, now that the family had grown the views of the rich members differed from those of the poor. Whereas the latter were content to stay here, those who were wealthy and fond of display maintained that the place was inconvenient and preferred to find accommodation in some nearby village or convent to retire to at the end of the ceremonies.

On this occasion of Qin Keqing's funeral most members of the clan stayed at Iron Threshold Temple. Only Xifeng, deciding that it would not suit her, had sent a servant to ask Abbess Jingxu of Steamed-Bread Convent to clear a few rooms for her. Steamed-Bread Convent was the popular name for Water Moon Convent because of the good steamed bread made here. It stood not far from Iron Threshold Temple.

As soon as the monks had completed their devotions and the evening offering of tea had been made, Jia Zhen sent Jia Rong to urge Xifeng to rest. Then leaving her sisters-in-law to look after the women guests she

个徒弟出来迎接，大家见过。凤姐另至净室，更衣净手毕，见智能儿越发长高了，模样儿越发出息了，因说道：“你们师徒怎么这些日子也不往我们那里去？”净虚道：“可是这几天都没工夫，因胡老爷府里产了公子，太太送了十两银子来这里，叫请几位师父念三日《血盆经》，忙的没个空儿，就没来请奶奶的安。”

不言老尼陪着凤姐。且说秦钟、宝玉二人正在殿上玩耍，因见智能过来，宝玉笑道：“能儿来了。”秦钟道：“理那东西作什么？”宝玉笑道：“你别弄鬼，那一日在老太太屋里，一个人没有，你搂着他作什么？这会子还哄我。”秦钟笑道：“这可是没有的话。”宝玉笑道：“有没有也不管你，你只叫住他，倒碗茶来我吃，就丢开手。”秦钟笑道：“这又奇了，你叫他倒去，还怕他不倒？何必要我说呢。”宝玉道：“我叫他倒，是无情意的；不及你叫他倒的，是有情意的。”秦钟只得说道：“能儿，倒碗茶来给我。”那智能儿自幼在荣府走动，无人不识，因常与宝玉、秦钟玩笑。他如今大了，渐知风月，便看上了秦钟人物风流，那秦钟也极爱他妍媚，二人虽未上手，却已情投意合了。今智能见了秦钟，心眼俱开，走去倒了茶来。秦钟笑说：“给我。”宝玉叫：“给我！”智能儿抿嘴笑道：“一碗茶也争，我难道手里有蜜！”宝玉先





took Baoyu and Qin Zhong off to Steamed-Bread Convent. Qin Zhong's father, too old and frail to remain himself, had told his son to attend the requiems, and so the boy stayed with Xifeng and Baoyu.

They were met at the convent gate by Abbess Jingxu and two novices, Zhishan and Zhineng. After an exchange of greetings Xifeng retired to a rest room. While she was changing she noticed how tall and pretty Zhineng had grown.

"Why haven't you and your abbess been to see us lately?" she asked.

"A few days ago a son was born to Mr. Hu," explained the abbess. "His good lady sent us ten taels of silver to get some of our sisters to chant the *Nativity* sutra for three days, so we've been too busy to come and pay our respects."

But let us return to Baoyu and Qin Zhong, who were fooling about in the hall when Zhineng came in.

"Look who's here," said Baoyu with a smile.

"What about it?" retorted Qin Zhong.

"It's no use play-acting. What were you doing with her on your lap that day in my grandmother's room, when no one else was about? Stop trying to fool me."

"You're just making that up!" protested Qin Zhong.

"Well, never mind. Tell her to pour me some tea and I'll let you off."

"Don't be ridiculous. Could she refuse if you ask her yourself? Why should I ask for you?"

"For you she would do it for love, but not for me."

Then Qin Zhong said, "Bring me some tea, Zhineng, will you?"

This young novice had been in and out of the Rong Mansion since childhood. She knew everyone there and had often romped with Baoyu and Qin Zhong; and now that she was old enough to know the meaning of love she had taken a fancy to handsome young Qin Zhong, who was attracted in turn by her pretty looks. Although nothing had passed between them, they already had a secret understanding. So now with a radiant glance at him she complied. Soon she was back again with a cup of tea.

"Give it to me!" urged Qin Zhong with a smile.

"No, to me!" cried Baoyu.



抢得了，吃着，方要问话，只见智善来叫智能去摆茶碟子，一时来请他两个去吃茶果点心。他两个那里吃这些东西，坐一坐仍出来玩耍。

凤姐也略坐片时，便回至净室歇息，老尼相送。此时众婆娘、媳妇见无事，都陆续散了，自去歇息，跟前不过几个心腹常侍小婢，老尼便趁机说道：“我正有一事，要到府里求太太，先请奶奶一个示下。”凤姐因问何事。老尼道：“阿弥陀佛！只因当日我先在长安县内善才庵内出家的时节，那时有个施主姓张，是大财主。他有个女儿，小名金哥，那年都来我庙里进香，不想遇见了长安府府太爷的小舅子李衙内。那李衙内一心看上，要娶金哥，打发人来求亲，不想金哥已受了原任长安守备的公子的聘定。张家若退亲，又怕守备不依，因此说已有了人家。谁知李公子执意不依，定要娶他女儿，张家正无计策，两处为难。不想守备家听了此信，也不管青红皂白，便来作践辱骂‘一个女儿许几家’，偏不许退定礼，就打官司告状起来。那张家急了，只得着人上京来寻门路，赌气偏要退定礼。我想如今长安节度云老爷与府上最契，可以求太太与老爷说声，打发一封书去，求云老爷和那守备说声，不怕那守备不依。若是肯行，张家连倾家孝顺也都情愿。”

凤姐听了笑道：“这事倒不大，只是太太再不管这样的事。”老尼道：“太太不管，奶奶可以主张了。”凤姐听说，

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Zhineng laughed mockingly. "Do I have honey on my hands that you squabble even over a cup of tea?"

Baoyu grabbed hold of the cup and started drinking, and before he could speak again Zhishan came to fetch Zhineng to lay the table. Presently she returned to invite them to have some refreshments, but the tea and cakes served in the convent did not tempt them. They sat a while, then escaped as soon as they could to amuse themselves elsewhere.

Xifeng retired presently, too, to the rest room accompanied by the abbess. When the older maid-servants saw there was nothing to do they went off to bed themselves, leaving only a few trusted younger maids in attendance.

The abbess seized this chance to say, "There's something I've been meaning to go and ask Her Ladyship, but I'd like to have your advice on it first, madam."

"What is it?" asked Xifeng.

"Amida Buddha!" sighed the abbess. "When I became a nun in Shancai Convent in the county of Changan, one of our benefactors was a very wealthy man called Zhang, whose daughter Jinge often came to our temple to offer incense. A young Mr. Li, who is brother-in-law to the prefect of Changan, met her there. He fell in love at first sight and sent to ask for her hand; but she was already engaged to the son of the former inspector of Changan. The Zhangs would have liked to cancel the engagement but were afraid the inspector might object, so they explained to the Lis that she was betrothed. Still young Mr. Li insisted on having her, making things very difficult for the Zhangs.

"When word of this reached the inspector's family, without even finding out the truth of the matter they came and stormed, 'How many more men will you engage your daughter to?' They refused to take back the betrothal gifts and took the matter to court.

"The girl's family are desperate. They've sent to the capital to enlist help and are quite determined to return the gifts.

"Well, I understand that General Yun the Military Governor of Changan is on friendly terms with your family. If Lady Wang would get His Lordship to write to General Yun, asking him to have a word with the inspector, I'm sure he'd drop the suit. And the Zhangs would gladly give any-



笑道：“我也不等银子使，也不做这样的事。”净虚听了，打去妄想，半晌叹道：“虽如此说，张家已知我来求府里，如今不管这事，张家不知道没工夫管这事，不希罕他的谢礼，倒像府里连这点子手段也没有的一般。”

凤姐听了这话，便发了兴头，说道：“你是素日知道我的，从来不信什么是阴司地狱报应的，凭是什么事，我说要行就行。你叫他拿三千银子来，我就替他出这口气。”老尼听说，喜不自禁，忙说：“有，有！这个不难。”凤姐又道：“我比不得他们扯蓬拉牵的图银子。这三千银子，不过是给打发说去的小厮做盘缠，使他赚几个辛苦钱，我一个钱也不要他的。便是三万两，我此刻也拿的出来。”老尼连忙答应，又说道：“既如此，奶奶明日就开恩，也罢了。”凤姐道：“你瞧瞧我忙的，那一处少了我？既应了你，自然快快的了结。”老尼道：“这点子事，在别人的跟前，就忙的不知怎么样，若是奶奶的跟前，再添上些也不够奶奶一发挥的。只是俗语说的‘能者多劳’，太太因大小事见奶奶妥贴，率性都推给奶奶了，奶奶也要保重金体才是。”一路话，奉承的凤姐越发受用，也不顾劳乏，更攀谈起来。

谁想秦钟趁黑无人，来寻智能。刚至后面房中，只见智能独在房中洗茶碗，秦钟跑来，便搂着亲嘴。智能急的跺脚，说着：“这算什么！再这么，我就叫唤。”秦钟求道：“好人，我已急死了。你今儿再不依，我就死在这里。”智能道：“你想怎样？除非等我出了这牢坑，离了这些人，才依



thing— even their whole fortune — in return for this favour.”

“There shouldn’t be any great difficulty about this,” rejoined Xifeng. “But Her Ladyship doesn’t trouble herself with such matters.”

“In that case, madam, could you attend to it?”

“I’m neither short of money nor do I meddle with affairs of this sort.”

The abbess’ face fell. After a short pause she observed with a sigh, “Well, the Zhangs know that I’m appealing to your family. If you do nothing, they won’t realize that you can’t be troubled and don’t want the money — it would look as if you can’t even handle such a trifling business.”

This put Xifeng on her mettle. “You know me,” she replied. “I’ve never believed all that talk about Hell and retribution. I do what I please and am always as good as my word. Let them bring me three thousand taels and I’ll see to this for them.”

“Very good!” cried the abbess, overjoyed. “That’s easy.”

“I’m not one of your go-betweens just out for money,” said Xifeng. “These three thousand taels will just cover the expenses of the servants I send out and reward them for their trouble. I myself don’t want a cent. I could lay my hands any moment on *thirty* thousand.”

“Of course, madam. Will you do us this favour, then, tomorrow?”

“Can’t you see how busy I am, needed right and left? But since I’ve told you I’ll do it, of course I’ll settle it for you speedily.”

“A little thing like this might throw other people into a fearful flurry, but I know you’d have no trouble handling bigger things than this, madam. As the proverb says, ‘The abler a man, the busier he gets.’ It’s because you’re so capable that Her Ladyship leaves everything to you. But you mustn’t wear yourself out.”

This flattery made Xifeng forget her exhaustion and start chatting more cheerfully.

Meanwhile Qin Zhong had taken advantage of the darkness and the fact that nobody was about to go in search of Zhineng. Having found her alone in a back room washing up the tea things, he threw his arms around her and kissed her.

“What are you doing?” The novice stamped her foot in desperation and threatened to call out.



你。”秦钟道：“这也容易，只是远水救不得近渴。”说着，一口吹了灯，满屋漆黑，将智能抱到炕上，就云雨起来。那智能百般的挣挫不起，又不好叫的，少不得依他了。正在得趣，只见一人进来，将他二人按住，也不则声。二人不知是谁，唬的不敢动一动。只听那人“嗤”的一声，掌不住笑了，二人听声方知是宝玉。秦钟连忙起来，抱怨道：“这算什么？”宝玉笑道：“你倒不依，咱们就叫喊起来。”羞的智能趁黑地跑了。宝玉拉了秦钟出来道：“你可还和我强？”秦钟笑道：“好人，你只别嚷的众人知道，你要怎样，我都依你。”宝玉笑道：“这会子也不用说，等一会睡下，再细细的算帐。”一时宽衣安歇的时节，凤姐在里间，秦钟、宝玉在外间，满地下皆是家下婆子，打铺坐更。凤姐因怕通灵玉失落，便等宝玉睡下，命人拿来撻在自己枕边。宝玉不知与秦钟算何帐目，未见真切，未曾记得，此系疑案，不敢纂创。

一宿无话。至次日一早，便有贾母、王夫人打发了人来看宝玉，又命多穿两件衣服，无事宁可回去。宝玉那里肯回去，又有秦钟恋着智能，调唆宝玉求凤姐再住一天。凤姐想了一想：凡丧仪大事虽妥，还有一半点小事未曾安插，可以指此再住一日，岂不又在贾珍跟前送了满情；二则又可以完净虚那事；三则顺了宝玉的心，贾母听见，岂不欢喜？因有





“Darling,” he pleaded, “I’m dying of longing for you. If you refuse me again this evening, I’ll die here on the spot.”

“What are you thinking of? At least wait till I’m clear of this prison and these people?”

“That’s easy to manage, but ‘distant water can’t quench a present thirst.’”

With that he blew out the lamp, plunging the room into pitch darkness, and carried her to the *kang*. Zhineng struggled in vain to free herself but did not like to scream, so she had to let him have his way with her.

He was just getting down to work when someone slipped in and pinned the pair of them down. Since no word was said, they did not know who it was. The two of them were frightened out of their wits until a chuckle revealed that it was Baoyu.

Qin Zhong sprang up swearing, “What are you playing at?”

“Will you do as I say or shall I raise the alarm?”

Zhineng fled, blushing, under cover of the dark and Baoyu pulled his friend out.

“Well, do you still deny it?” he demanded.

“Be a good fellow! I’ll do whatever you say as long as you don’t shout.”

“We’ll say no more about it just now. I’ll settle with you after we go to bed.”

Soon it was time to sleep. Xifeng had the inner room, the two boys the outer, while the maids slept on the floor or sat up to keep watch. For fear lest the precious jade might disappear while Baoyu was asleep, Xifeng had it fetched and put it under her own pillow.

As for how Baoyu settled scores with Qin Zhong, what the eye does not see can only be surmised, and far be it from us to speculate.

The next morning the Lady Dowager and Lady Wang sent to urge Baoyu to dress more warmly and to go home if there was nothing to keep him. This was the last thing he wanted. And Qin Zhong, infatuated as he was with Zhineng, made him beg Xifeng to stay a little longer.

Though the obsequies were over there remained certain trifles to attend to, so Xifeng decided she could spare one more day. In the first place, this would satisfy Jia Zhen; in the second, she could attend to the



此三益，便向宝玉道：“我事都完了，你要在这里逛，少不得越性辛苦一日罢了，明儿可是定要走的了。”宝玉听说，千姐姐万姐姐的央求：“只住一日，明儿必回去的。”于是又住了一夜。

凤姐便命悄悄将昨日老尼之事，说与来旺。来旺心中俱已明白，急忙进城，找着主文的相公，假托贾琏所嘱，修书一封，连夜往长安县来，不过百里路程，两日工夫俱已妥协。那节度使名唤云光，久见贾府之情，这一点小事，岂有不允之理，给了回书，来旺回来。且不在话下。

却说凤姐等又过一日，次日方别了老尼，着他三日后往府里去讨信。那秦钟与智能百般不忍分离，背地里多少幽期密约，俱不用细述，只得含情而别。凤姐又到铁槛寺中照望一番。宝珠执意不肯回家，贾珍只得派妇女相伴。后回再见。





abbess' business; in the third, the Lady Dowager would be pleased to know that Baoyu was enjoying himself.

"My own business here is finished," she told him with these considerations in mind. "If you want to amuse yourself here a little longer, I suppose I'll have to put up with it. But we must leave tomorrow at the latest."

"Just one day, dear, kind cousin. We'll leave tomorrow."

So they arranged to spend another night there.

Xifeng sent someone secretly to explain the abbess' business to Lai Wang. He grasped at once what was wanted and hurried into town to get the chief secretary to write a letter in Jia Lian's name, and set off with it that same night for Changan County. Since Changan was only a hundred *li* away, within two days the matter was settled. Military Governor Yun Guang had long wanted to please the Jia family and was only too glad to agree to this trifling request. Lai Wang brought back a letter from him to this effect.

Meanwhile Xifeng, after one more day in the convent, had said goodbye to the abbess, telling her to come for news in three day's time.

Qin Zhong and Zhineng could hardly bear to part and bid each other a sad farewell after arranging to meet again in secret.

Xifeng went to take a last look at Iron Threshold Temple, where Baozhu insisted on remaining. Jia Zhen later was obliged to send maids there to keep her company.

To know the sequel, read the next chapter.





賈元春選才鳳藻官



第十六回

贾元春才选凤藻宫 秦鲸卿夭逝黄泉路

话说宝玉见收拾了外书房，约定与秦钟读夜书。偏那秦钟秉赋最弱，因在郊外受了些风霜，又与智能儿偷期缱绻，未免失于调养，回来时便咳嗽伤风，懒进饮食，大有不胜之态，遂不敢出门，只在家中养息。宝玉便扫了兴头，只得付于无可奈何，且自静候大愈时再约。

那凤姐儿已是得了云光的回信，俱已妥协。老尼达知张家，果然那守备忍气吞声的受了前聘之物。谁知那张家父母如此畏势贪财，却养了一个知义多情的女儿，闻得父母退了前夫，他便一条麻绳悄悄的自缢了。那守备之子闻得金哥自缢，他也是个极多情的，遂也投河而死，不负妻义。张李两家没趣，真是人财两空。这里凤姐却坐享了三千两，王夫人等连一点消息也不知道。自此凤姐胆识愈壮，以后有了这样的事，便恣意的作为起来，也不消多记。

一日正是贾政生辰，宁、荣二处人丁都齐集庆贺，闹热非常。忽有门吏忙忙进来，至席前报说：“有六宫都太监夏老爷来降旨。”唬的贾赦、贾政等一千人不知是何消息，忙止了戏文，撤去酒席，摆了香案，启中门跪接。早见六宫都太





Chapter 16

Yuanchun Is Selected as Imperial Consort in Phoenix Palace Qin Zhong Dying Before His Time Sets Off for the Nether Regions

Before long Baoyu's outer study was ready. He had agreed with Qin Zhong to start evening lessons together; but Qin Zhong had a weak constitution, and a cold he had caught in the country following his secret affair with Zhineng had upset him; thus on his return to town he developed a cough and lost his appetite completely. Too weak to go out, he had to rest at home. Although Baoyu was very disappointed, he could do nothing but wait for his friend's recovery.

Meanwhile Xifeng had received Yun Guang's reply, and the abbess had informed the Zhangs that their problem was solved. So the inspector had to swallow his anger and take back the betrothal gifts.

But though Zhang and his wife were snobbish and mercenary, they had a principled and feeling daughter. When Jinge learned that her engagement had been broken she found a rope and quietly hanged herself; and the inspector's son was so much in love that he drowned himself when he heard of her suicide, showing that he was worthy of his good fiancée.

Thus the Zhang and Li families were unlucky enough to lose both girl and money. Only Xifeng was the gainer by three thousand taels, quite unknown to Lady Wang and the rest of the household. This emboldened her from that time on to undertake countless similar transactions but we need not recount these here.

Now it was Jia Zheng's birthday and both households had gathered to congratulate him. At the height of the festivities the gateman suddenly rushed in to announce:

"His Excellency Xia, Chief Eunuch of the Six Palaces, has come with a Decree from the Emperor!"



监夏守忠乘马而至，前后左右又有许多内监跟从。那夏守忠也并不曾负诏捧敕，至檐前下马，满面笑容，走至厅上，南面而立，口内说：“特旨：立刻宣贾政入朝，在临敬殿陛见。”说毕，也不及吃茶，便乘马去了。贾赦等不知是何兆头。只得急忙忙去更衣入朝。

贾母等合家人等心中皆惶惶不定，不住的使人飞马来往报信。有两个时辰工夫，忽见赖大等三四个管家喘吁吁跑进仪门报喜，又说“奉老爷命，速请老太太带领太太等进朝谢恩”等语。那时贾母正心神不定，在大堂廊下伫立，那邢夫人、王夫人、尤氏、李纨、凤姐、迎春姊妹以及薛姨妈等皆在一处，听如此信至，贾母便唤进赖大来细问端的。赖大禀道：“小的们只在临敬门外伺候，里头的信息一概不能得知。后来还是夏太监出来道喜，说咱们家大小姐晋封为凤藻宫尚书，加封贤德妃。后来老爷出来亦如此吩咐小的。如今老爷又往东宫去了，速请老太太领着太太们去谢恩。”贾母等听了方心神安定，不免又都洋洋喜气盈腮。于是都按品大妆起来。贾母带领邢夫人、王夫人、尤氏，一共四乘大轿入朝。贾赦、贾珍亦换了朝服，带领贾蓉、贾蔷奉侍贾母大轿前往。于是宁、荣两处上下里外，莫不欣然踊跃，个个面上皆





This startled Jia She, Jia Zheng and the rest, who did not know what it could mean. They at once called a halt to the theatricals and had the feast cleared away. A table was set out with incense. Then, throwing open the central gate they knelt down to receive the Decree.

Soon Xia Shouzhong the Chief Eunuch arrived on horseback, followed by a considerable retinue of eunuchs. He was not carrying an Imperial Edict, however. Having alighted in front of the main hall, he mounted the steps with a beaming smile and, facing south, announced:

“By special order of the Emperor, Jia Zheng is to present himself at once for an audience in the Hall of Respectful Approach.” This said, without even taking a sip of tea, he remounted his horse and rode off.

Jia She and the others could not guess what this portended. Jia Zheng lost no time in putting on his court robes and going to the Palace, leaving the whole family in dire suspense. The Lady Dowager sent one mounted messenger after another in search of news; but it was four hours before Lai Da and a few other stewards came panting through the inner gate, crying:

“Good news! His Lordship asks the old lady to go at once to the Palace with the other ladies to thank His Majesty.”

The Lady Dowager had been waiting anxiously in the corridor outside the great hall with Lady Xing, Lady Wang, Madam You, Li Wan, Xifeng and the Jia girls, as well as Aunt Xue. On hearing this, they called Lai Da over and demanded more details.

“We had to wait in the outer court,” Lai Da told them. “So we had no idea what was going on inside. But then Chief Eunuch Xia came out. He congratulated us on the promotion of our eldest young lady. She’s to be Chief Secretary of the Phoenix Palace with the title of Worthy and Virtuous Consort. And then His Lordship came out and confirmed this. Now he has gone to the East Palace and he begs Your Ladyship and the other ladies to go at once to offer thanks.”

They were all so relieved that their faces shone with delight as each dressed in the ceremonial robes appropriate to her rank. And presently four large sedan-chairs, with the Lady Dowager’s at the head, followed by Lady Xing’s, Lady Wang’s and Madam You’s, were making their way to the Palace. They were escorted by Jia She and Jia Zhen, also in court robes, as well as Jia Rong and Jia Qiang.



有得意之状，言笑鼎沸不绝。

谁知近日水月庵的智能私逃进城，找至秦钟家下，看视秦钟，不意被秦业知觉，将智能逐出，将秦钟打了一顿，自己气的老病发了，三五日光景呜呼死了。秦钟本自怯弱，又带病未愈，受了笞杖，今见老父气死了，此时痛悔无及，更又添了许多症候。因此宝玉心中，怅然如有所失。虽闻得元春晋封之事，亦未解得愁闷。贾母等如何谢恩，如何回家，亲朋如何来庆贺，宁、荣两处近日如何热闹，众人如何得意，独他一个皆视有如无，毫不曾介意。因此众人嘲他越发呆了。

且喜贾琏与黛玉回来，先遣人来报信，明日就可到家。宝玉听了，方略有些喜意。细问原由，方知贾雨村亦进京陛见，皆由王子腾屡上保本，此来候补京缺，与贾琏是同宗弟兄，又与黛玉有师徒之谊，故同路作伴而来。林如海已葬入祖坟了，诸事停妥，贾琏方进京的。本该出月到家，因闻得元春喜信，遂昼夜兼程而进，一路俱各平安。宝玉只问得黛玉“平安”二字，余者也就不在意了。

好容易盼至明日午错，果报：“琏二爷和林姑娘进府了。”见面时彼此悲喜交接，未免又大哭一阵，后又致喜庆之词。宝玉心中品度黛玉，越发出落的超逸了。黛玉又带了





Then high and low alike in both mansions were filled with joy. Their faces radiant with pride, they broke into a tumult of talk and laughter.

Now, a few days previously, Zhineng had stolen away from Water Moon Convent and come to town to look for Qin Zhong in his home. She had been caught by his father, who drove her away and gave his son a beating. The old man's rage had brought on an attack of his chronic disorder, and within a few days he was dead. Qin Zhong had never been strong nor had he fully recovered from his illness when he received this beating. His father's death filled him with such remorse that his condition was now serious.

All this was preying so much on Baoyu's mind that the honour conferred on Yuanchun failed to raise his spirits. He alone remained utterly indifferent to the trip made by the Lady Dowager and the rest to offer thanks for the Imperial favour, the visits of congratulations paid by relatives and friends, the excitement which filled both mansions. The general delight left him completely unmoved, just as if these things had never happened. His apathy made everyone declare that he was growing more and more eccentric.

Luckily a messenger arrived at this time from Jia Lian to announce that he and Daiyu were on their way back and would be home the following day. A little cheered, Baoyu questioned the man and learned that Jia Yucun was also coming to the capital to pay homage. For thanks to Wang Ziteng's recommendations he had been summoned to wait for a metropolitan appointment; and being a distant cousin of Jia Lian's and Daiyu's former tutor, he was travelling with them. Lin Ruhai had been buried in the ancestral graveyard and, his obsequies completed, Jia Lian was able to start back for the capital. Normally, the trip would have taken them till the beginning of the next month; however, the good news about Yuanchun had made Jia Lian decide to hurry back posthaste. The journey had been smooth and uneventful.

Baoyu was only eager to know that Daiyu was all right, taking no interest in the rest of this news. He could hardly contain himself until their arrival was announced just after noon the next day. But the joy of their reunion was tempered by grief. After a storm of weeping they exchanged condolences and congratulations.

Baoyu observed that Daiyu was looking even more ethereal. She had

许多书籍来，忙着打扫卧室，安插器具，又将些纸笔等物分送宝钗、迎春、宝玉等人。宝玉又将北静王所赠鹞鸽香串珍重取出来，转赠黛玉。黛玉说：“什么臭男人拿过的！我不要他。”遂掷而不取。宝玉只得收回，暂且无话。

且说贾琏自回家参见过众人，回至房中。正值凤姐近日多事之时，无片刻闲暇之工，见贾琏远路归来，少不得拨冗接待，房内并无外人，便笑道：“国舅老爷大喜！国舅老爷一路风尘辛苦。小的听见昨日的头起报马来报，说今日大驾归府，略预备了一杯水酒掸尘，不知赐光谬领否？”贾琏笑道：“岂敢岂敢，多承多承。”一面平儿与众丫鬟参拜毕，献茶。贾琏遂问别后家中的诸事，又谢凤姐的操持劳碌。凤姐道：

“我那里照管得这些事！见识又浅，口角又笨，心肠又直率，人家给个棒槌，我就认作‘针’。脸又软，搁不住人给两句好话，心里就慈悲了。况且又没经历过大事，胆子又小，太太略有些不自在，就吓的我连觉也睡不着了。我苦辞了几回，太太又不容辞，倒反说我图受用，不肯习学了。殊不知我是捻着一把汗儿呢。一句也不敢多说，一步也不敢多走。你是知道的，咱们家所有的这些管家奶奶们，那一位是好缠的？错一点儿他们就笑话打趣，偏一点儿他们就指桑说槐的报怨。‘坐山观虎斗’，‘借剑杀人’，‘引风吹火’，‘站干岸儿’，‘推倒油瓶不扶’，都是全挂子的武艺。况



brought back a whole library of books, and lost no time in tidying her bedroom and setting out her things. She presented some brushes and stationery to Baochai, Yingchun, Baoyu and others. But when he produced the precious scented beads given him by the Prince of Beijing and offered them to her. Daiyu protested:

“I don’t want them. They’ve been handled by some stinking man.”

She tossed the beads back and Baoyu had to take them.

But let us return to Jia Lian. After he had greeted the rest of the family he went to his own quarters; and busy as Xifeng was, with not a moment to herself, she set everything aside to welcome her husband back from his long journey.

Once they were alone she said jokingly, “Congratulations, Your Excellency, kinsman of the Imperial House! Your Excellency must have had a tiring journey. Your handmaid, hearing yesterday that your exalted carriage would return today, prepared some watery wine by way of welcome. Will the Imperial Kinsman deign to accept it?”

“You honour me too much,” Jia Lian replied with a chuckle. “I am quite overwhelmed.”

When Pinger and the other maids had paid their respects and served tea, Jia Lian asked his wife what had happened during his absence and thanked her for looking after things so well.

“I’m incapable of running things,” she sighed. “I’m too ignorant, blunt and tactless, always getting hold of the wrong end of the stick. And I’m so soft-hearted, anyone can get round me. Besides, lack of experience makes me nervous. When Her Ladyship is the least displeased I’m too frightened to sleep a wink. Time and again I’ve begged to be relieved of such a responsibility, but instead of agreeing she accuses me of being lazy and unwilling to learn. She doesn’t realize what a cold sweat I’m in, terrified of saying one word out of turn or taking one false step.

“And you know how difficult our old stewardesses are, laughing at the least mistake and ‘accusing the elm while pointing at the mulberry tree’ if one shows the least bias. Talk about ‘sitting on a hill to watch tigers fight,’ ‘murdering with a borrowed sword,’ ‘borrowing wind to fan the fire,’ ‘watching people drown from a dry bank’ and ‘not troubling to right an oil bottle that’s been knocked over’ — they’re all old



且我年轻，头等不压众，怨不得不放我在眼里。更可笑那府里忽然蓉儿媳妇死了，珍大哥又再三再四的在太太跟前跪着讨情，只要请我帮他几日，我是再四推辞，太太断不依，只得从命。依旧被我闹了个马仰人翻，更不成个体统，至今珍大哥哥还抱怨后悔呢。你这一来了，明儿你见了他，好歹描补描补，就说我年纪小，原没见过世面，谁叫大爷错委他的。”

正说着，只听外间有人说话，凤姐便问：“是谁？”平儿进来回道：“姨太太打发香菱妹子来，问我一句话，我已经说了，打发他回去了。”贾琏笑道：“正是呢，方才我见姨妈去，不防和一个年轻的小媳妇子撞了个对面，生的好齐整模样。我疑惑咱家并无此人，说话时因问姨妈，谁知就是上京来买的那小丫头，名叫香菱的，竟与薛大傻子作了房里人，开了脸，越发出挑的标致了。那薛大傻子真玷辱了他。”凤姐道：“噯！往苏杭走了一趟回来，也该见些世面了，还是这么眼馋肚饱的。你若爱他，不值什么，我去拿平儿换了他来如何？那薛老大也是‘吃着碗里看着锅里’，这一年来的光景，他为要香菱不能到手，和姨妈打了多少饥荒。也因姨妈看着香菱模样儿好还是末则，其为人行事，却又比别的女孩子不同，温柔安静，差不多的主子姑娘也跟他不上呢，故此摆酒请客的费事，明堂正道的与他作了妾。过了没半月，也看得马棚风一般了，我倒心里可惜了的。”一语未了，二门小厮传报：“老爷在大书房等二爷呢。”贾琏听了，忙忙整衣出去。

这里凤姐乃问平儿：“方才姨妈有什么事，巴巴的打发了



hands at such tricks. On top of that, I'm too young to carry much weight; so naturally they pay no attention to me.

"As if that weren't bad enough, when Rong's wife suddenly died Cousin Zhen repeatedly begged Her Ladyship on his knees to let me help them out for a few days. I declined over and over again, but as she insisted I had to have a try. As usual I made a shocking mess of things — even worse than here. I'm sure Cousin Zhen is still regretting his rashness. When you see him tomorrow, do apologize for me. Tell him he should never have entrusted such a task to someone so young and inexperienced."

Just then they heard voices outside and Xifeng asked who was there. Pinger came in and said, "Madam Xue sent Xiangling over to ask me something. I've given her an answer and sent her back."

"That reminds me," said Jia Lian. "When I called on Aunt Xue just now, I ran into a very handsome young woman whom I didn't think belonged to our household and wondered who she could be. In the course of conversation I learned she's the girl they bought just before coming to the capital. Her name's Xiangling. She belongs to that imbecile Xue now, and since he made her his concubine and her face has been slicked she's grown even lovelier. She's too good for that silly fool."

"Well!" exclaimed Xifeng. "I should have thought you'd have seen enough of the world now that you're back from a trip to Suzhou and Hangzhou, but you're never satisfied. If you love her, that's simple: I'll exchange our Pinger for her — how about that? Xue Pan is another of those greedy-guts who keep 'one eye on the bowl and the other on the pan.' Look how he plagued his mother for a whole year just to get hold of Xiangling. It's because Aunt Xue saw she's not only pretty but really well-behaved, being even gentler and quieter than most young ladies, that she went to all the trouble of inviting guests to a feast to make her his concubine in proper style. Yet in less than a fortnight he's treating her like dirt. It's really too bad...."

At this point a page from the inner gate reported that Jia Zheng was waiting for Jia Lian in the big library. The young man hastily straightened his clothes and went out.

Then Xifeng asked Pinger, "What on earth did Aunt Xue send Xiangling



香菱来？”平儿笑道：“那里来的香菱，是我借他暂撒个谎。奶奶说说，来旺嫂子越发连个承算也没了。”说着，又走至凤姐身边，悄悄的说道：“奶奶的那利钱银子，迟不送来，早不送来，这会子二爷在家，他且送这个来了。幸亏我在堂屋里撞见，不然时走了来回奶奶，二爷倘或问奶奶是什么利钱，奶奶自然不肯瞒二爷的，少不得照实告诉二爷。我们二爷那脾气，油锅里的钱还要找出来花呢，听见奶奶有了这个梯己，他还不放心的花了呢。所以我赶着接了过来，叫我说了他两句，谁知奶奶偏听见了问，我就撒谎说香菱来了。”凤姐听了笑道：“我说呢，姨妈知道你二爷来了，忽喇巴的反打发个房里人来了？原来你这蹄子调鬼。”

说话时贾琏已进来，凤姐便命摆上酒馔来，夫妻对坐。凤姐虽善饮，却不敢任兴，只陪侍着贾琏对饮。一时贾琏的乳母赵嬷嬷走来，贾琏、凤姐忙让吃酒，令其上炕去。赵嬷嬷执意不肯。平儿等早于炕沿下设下一机，又有一小脚踏，赵嬷嬷在脚踏上坐了。贾琏向桌上拣两盘肴馔与他放在机上自吃。凤姐又道：“妈妈很嚼不动那个，倒没的砸了他的牙。”因向平儿道：“早起我说那一碗火腿炖肘子很烂，正好给妈妈吃，你怎么不拿了去？赶着叫他们热来。”又道：“妈妈，你尝一尝你儿子带来的惠泉酒。”赵嬷嬷道：“我喝呢，奶奶也喝一盅，怕什么？只不要过多了就是了。我这会子跑了来，倒也不为饮酒，倒有一件正经事，奶奶好歹记在心里，疼顾我些罢。我们这爷，只是嘴里说的好，到了跟前就忘了我们。幸亏我从小儿奶了你这么大。我也老了，有的是那两个儿子，你就另眼照看他们些，别人也不敢吡牙儿



along for just now?"

"It wasn't Xiangling," said Pinger, giggling. "I made that up. Really, madam, that wife of Lai Wang's is losing all the little sense she had." She drew nearer and lowered her voice. "She wouldn't come earlier or later but had to choose this very moment, when the master's just got home, to bring you the interest on that money. It's lucky I met her in the hall or she'd have come in and blurted everything out. If our master had asked what it was, of course you'd have to tell him — you wouldn't want to deceive him. And being what he is, ready to snatch money from a pan of scalding oil, he'd start spending even more recklessly if he knew that you had private savings. So I took it from her double-quick and gave her a piece of my mind, not knowing you'd hear. That's why, in front of the master, I said it was Xiangling."

Xifeng laughed. "I was wondering why Aunt Xue should suddenly send a concubine here when she knew that your master was back. So it was just one of your tricks."

Just then Jia Lian returned. Xifeng called for wine and dishes, and husband and wife took their seats opposite each other. Although Xifeng was a good drinker she didn't venture to drink much today. She was sipping her wine to keep him company when Jia Lian's old wet-nurse Nanny Zhao came in. The young couple promptly invited her to join them on the *kang*. Nanny Zhao resolutely declined this honour. But Pinger and the others had already set a small table and stool beside the *kang*, and when the nurse had sat down Jia Lian gave her two dishes from their own table.

"Nanny can't chew those, they're too hard for her teeth," said Xifeng. She turned to Pinger. "That bowl of fresh pork stewed with ham I remarked was so tender this morning would be just the thing for her. Take it and get them to heat it up quickly, will you?" She urged the nurse, "Nanny, try this Hui Fountain wine your boy brought back."

"I will," said the nurse. "But you must take a cup too. Don't be afraid! The thing is not to drink too much. I didn't come all this way for wine or food, though, but on some serious business. I hope you'll lay it to heart, madam, and help me. Our Master Lian is good at making promises, but when the time comes he forgets all about them. Yes, I nursed and

的。我还再四的求了你几遍，你答应的倒好，到如今还是燥屎。这如今又从天上跑出这一件大喜事来，那里用不着人？所以倒是来和奶奶来说是正经，靠着我们爷，只怕我还饿死了呢。”

凤姐笑道：“妈妈你放心，两个奶哥哥都交给我。你从小儿奶的儿子，你还有什么不知他那脾气的？拿着皮肉倒往那不相干的外人身上贴。可是现放着奶哥哥，那一个不比人强？你疼顾照管他们，谁敢说个‘不’字儿，没的白便宜了外人。我这话也说错了，我们看着是‘外人’，你却是看着‘内人’一样呢。”说的满屋里的人都笑了。赵嬷嬷也笑个不住，又念佛道：“可是屋子里跑出青天来了。若说‘内人’‘外人’这些混帐原故，我们爷是没有，不过是脸软心慈，搁不住人求两句罢了。”凤姐笑道：“可不是呢，有‘内人’的他才慈软呢，他在咱们娘儿们跟前才是刚硬呢！”赵嬷嬷笑道：“奶奶说的太尽情了，我也乐了，再喝一杯好酒。从此我们奶奶作了主，我就没的愁了。”

贾琏此时没好意思，只是讪笑吃酒，说“胡说”二字，——“快盛饭来，吃碗子，还要往珍大爷那边去商议事呢。”凤姐道：“可是别误了正事。才刚老爷叫你作什么？”贾琏道：“就为省亲。”凤姐忙问道：“省亲的事竟准了不成？”贾琏笑道：“虽不十分准，也有八分准了。”凤姐笑道：“可见当今的隆恩。历来听书看戏，古时从未有的。”赵嬷嬷又接口道：“可是呢，我也老糊涂了。我听见上上下下吵嚷了这些日子，什么省亲不省亲，我也不理论他去；如今又说省亲，到底是怎么个原故？”贾琏道：“如今当今体贴万



brought you up, and now that I'm old all I have are my two sons. If you'd do them a favour no one could say a word; yet I've begged you again and again and you've always agreed, but to this very day not a thing have you done. Now this wonderful stroke of luck has come out of the blue, you'll be needing extra hands. So I've come to ask your help, madam. If I relied on our Master Lian alone, I'd probably have starved to death by now."

Xifeng laughed. "Just leave his two foster-brothers to me, nanny," she said. "You who nursed your boy from babyhood know what he's like. He goes out of his way to help complete strangers, people nowhere near as deserving as his two foster-brothers. Who could possibly object if he did something for them? But he just favours outsiders. Well, perhaps I shouldn't say that. The people we consider outsiders are 'in' with him, I suppose."

That raised a general laugh. Nanny Zhao chortled as if she would never stop. "Amida Buddha!" she cackled. "So here comes an impartial judge. Our master wouldn't be so cruel as to treat us as outsiders; but he's so kind-hearted he can't say 'no' to other people's requests."

"Oh yes, he's very soft and generous to those 'in' with him. It's only to us womenfolk that he's adamant."

"You've been so good, madam, and made me so happy that I'll have another cup of that excellent wine. Now that I've got you to look after us, I needn't worry any more."

Jia Lian, rather put out, smiled sheepishly. "Stop talking nonsense and let's start on the rice," he said. "I still have to go and see Cousin Zhen on some business."

"Yes, we mustn't delay you," said his wife. "What did your uncle want you for just now?"

"It was about this Imperial visitation."

"Has permission been granted then?" she asked eagerly.

"Not quite, but ten to one it will be."

"What a great act of Imperial kindness!" She beamed. "I never heard of such a thing in any book or opera about the old days."

"That's right," chimed in the nurse. "But I'm growing so stupid in my old age that although I've heard high and low talk of nothing else for days, I

人之心，世上至大莫如‘孝’字，想来父母儿女之性，皆是一理，不是贵贱上分别的。当今自为日夜侍奉太上皇、皇太后，尚不能略尽孝意，因见宫里嫔妃才人等皆是入宫多年，抛离父母音容，岂有不思想之理？在儿女思想父母，是分所当然。想父母在家，若只管思念儿女，竟不能见，倘因此成疾致病，甚至死亡，皆由朕躬禁锢，不能使其遂天伦之愿，亦大伤天和之事。故启奏太上皇、皇太后，每月逢二六日期，准其椒房眷属入宫请候看视。于是太上皇、皇太后大喜，深赞当今至孝纯仁，体天格物。因此二位老圣人又下旨意，说椒房眷属入宫，未免有国体仪制，母女尚不能惬意。竟大开方便之恩，特降谕旨：椒房贵戚，除二六日入宫之恩外，凡有重宇别院之家，可以驻蹕关防之处，不妨启请内廷鸾舆，入其私第，庶可略尽骨肉私情、天伦中之至性。此旨一下，谁不踊跃感戴？现今周贵人的父亲已在家里动了工了，修盖省亲别院呢。又有吴贵妃的父亲吴天祐家，也往城外踏看地方去了。这岂不有八九分了？”

赵嬷嬷道：“阿弥陀佛！原来如此。这样说，咱们家也要预备接咱们大小姐了？”贾琏道：“这何用说呢！不然，这会子忙的是什么？”凤姐笑道：“若果如此，我可也见个大世面了。可恨我小几岁年纪，若早生二三十年，如今这些老人家



can't make head or tail of it all. Just what is this Imperial visitation?"

Jia Lian explained. "Our present Emperor is concerned for all his subjects. No duty is higher than filial piety, and he knows that all, irrespective of rank, have the same family feeling. Though he himself waits day and night upon his Imperial parents, he considers this too little to express all his filial devotion; and he realizes that the secondary consorts and ladies-in-waiting in the Palace who have been away from their parents for many years must naturally be longing to see them again, for it's only right for children to miss their parents. But if the parents at home fall ill or even die of longing for their daughters, this must impair the harmony ordained by Heaven. So he requested Their Most High Majesties to allow the female relatives of the court ladies to visit them in the Palace on the days ending in two and six each month.

"His Majesty's parents were delighted by the Emperor's Piety, humanity and manifestation of Heaven's will on earth. In their infinite wisdom the two venerable sages moreover decreed that, since court etiquette might prevent the mothers of the Palace ladies from gratifying all the wishes of their hearts during such visits, they should be granted an even greater favour. Then in a special Edict it was decreed that, apart from the favour of these visits on certain days of the month, all those court ladies with adequate accommodation at home for the reception of an Imperial retinue might ask for a Palace carriage to visit their families. In this way they can show their affection and enjoy a reunion with their dear ones.

"All were so grateful for this Decree, they leapt for joy. The father of the Imperial Lady of Honour Zhou has already started building a separate court for her visit home; and Wu Tianyou, father of the Imperial Concubine Wu, is looking for a site outside the city. Doesn't this show that the thing is practically certain?"

"Amida Buddha! So that's it!" cried Nanny Zhao. "I suppose our family will be preparing, too, for a visit from our eldest young mistress?"

"Of course," said Jia Lian. "What else do you think we're all so busy about?"

"If it's really true, I shall have a chance to see some great doings," exulted Xifeng. "I've often wished that I'd been born twenty or thirty



也不薄我没见世面了。说起当年太祖皇帝仿舜巡的故事，比一部书还热闹，我偏没造化赶上。”赵嬷嬷道：“暖哟哟，那可是千载希逢的！那时候我才记事儿，咱们贾府正在姑苏、扬州一带监造海舫，修理海塘，只预备接驾一次，把银子都花的淌海水似的！说起来……”凤姐忙接道：“我们王府也预备过一次。那时我爷爷单管各国进贡朝贺的事，凡有的外国人来，都是我们家养活。粤、闽、滇、浙所有的洋船货物都是我们家的。”

赵嬷嬷道：“那是谁不知道的？如今还有个口号儿呢，说‘东海少了白玉床，龙王来请江南王’，这说的就是奶奶府上了。还有如今现在江南的甄家，暖哟哟，好势派！独他家接驾四次，若不是我们亲眼看见，告诉谁谁也不信的。别讲银子成了土泥，凭是世上所有的，没有不是堆山塞海的，‘罪过可惜’四个字竟顾不得了。”凤姐道：“常听见我们太爷们也这样说，岂有不信的。只纳罕他家怎么就这么富贵呢？”赵嬷嬷道：“告诉奶奶一句话，也不过是拿着皇帝家的银子往皇帝身上使罢了！谁家有那些钱买这个虚热闹去？”

正说的热闹，王夫人又打发人来瞧凤姐吃了饭不曾。凤姐便知有事等着，忙忙的吃了半碗饭，漱口要走，又有二门上小厮们回：“东府里蓉、蔷二位哥儿来了。”贾琏才漱了口，平儿捧着盆盥手，见他二人来了，便问：“什么话？快说。”凤





years earlier, so that the old folk wouldn't be despising me now for having seen so little of the world. Their descriptions of how our first Emperor toured the country like the sage king Shun of old are better than anything in history, but alas! I was born too late — I missed seeing it."

"Ah, such a thing only happens once in a thousand years," declared Nanny Zhao. "I was just old enough then to remember things. In those days our Jia family was in charge of making ocean-going ships and repairing the sea-wall round Suzhou and Yangzhou. To prepare for that Imperial visit, we spent money just like pouring out sea-water...."

"Our Wang family did the same," put in Xifeng. "At that time my grandfather was in sole charge of all the foreign tribute, and whenever envoys came from abroad to pay homage it was our family who entertained them. All the goods brought by foreign ships to Guangdong, Fujian, Yunnan and Zhejiang passed through our hands."

"Who doesn't know that!" said Nanny Zhao. "There's still a rhyme:

When the Dragon King wants
A white jade bed,
He asks the Wangs
Of Jinling, it's said.

That's your family, madam. And the Zhens south of the Yangtze, oh, how rich and great they were! That family alone entertained the Emperor four times. No one who was told such a thing, if he hadn't seen it with his own eyes, could believe it. Don't talk about silver treated like dirt, every precious thing you could name was heaped up like hills, no one bothering to check the wicked waste."

"So my grandfather and grand-uncles often said, and of course I believe it. What amazes me is how one family could have so much wealth."

"Why, madam, the truth is they were just spending the Emperor's money on the Emperor. Otherwise who would waste so much on empty show?"

Just then Lady Wang sent to inquire if Xifeng had finished her meal, and realizing that she was wanted she hastily ate half a bowl of rice and rinsed her mouth. She was starting out when some pages from the inner gate reported the arrival of Jia Rong and Jia Qiang, whereupon Jia Lian rinsed his mouth and Pinger brought him a basin to wash his hands. As



姐且止步稍候，听他二人回些什么。贾蓉先回说：“我父亲打发我来回叔叔：老爷们已经议定了，从东边一带，借着东府里花园起，转至北边，一共丈量准了，三里半大，可以盖造省亲别院了。已经传人画图样去了，明日就得。叔叔才回家，未免劳乏，不用过我们那边去，有话明日一早再请过去面议。”贾琏笑着忙说：“多谢大爷费心体谅，我就不过去了。正经是这个主意才省事，盖的也容易；若采置别处地方去，那更费事，且倒不成体统。你回去说这样很好，若老爷们再要改时，全仗大爷谏阻，万不可另寻地方。明日一早我给大爷去请安去，再议细话罢。”贾蓉忙应几个“是”。

贾蔷又近前回说：“下姑苏合聘教习，采买女孩子，置办乐器行头等事，大爷派了侄儿，带领着来管家儿子两个，还有单聘仁、卜固修两个清客相公，一同前往，所以命我来见叔叔。”贾琏听了，将贾蔷打量了打量，笑道：“你能在这个行么？这个事，虽不算甚大，里头大有藏掖的。”贾蔷笑道：“只好学习着办罢了。”

贾蓉在身边灯影下悄拉凤姐的衣襟，凤姐会意，因笑道：“你也太操心了，难道大爷比咱们还不会用人？偏你又怕他不在行了。谁都是在行的？孩子们已长的这么大了，‘没吃过猪肉，也看见过猪跑’。大爷派他去，原不过是个坐纛旗儿，难道认真的叫他去讲价钱会经纪去呢！依我说就很好。”贾琏道：“自然是这样。并不是我驳回，少不得替他筹算筹算。”因问：“这一项银子动那一处的？”贾蔷道：“才也



soon as the young men came in he asked what they wanted, and Xifeng stayed to hear Jia Rong's reply:

"My father sent me to tell you, uncle, that the old gentlemen have settled on a plan. We've measured the distance from the east wall through the garden of the East Mansion to the north, and it comes to three *li* and a half, enough to build a separate court for the visit. Someone has been commissioned to draw a plan which should be ready tomorrow. Since you must be tired after your journey, please don't think of coming over. If you've any proposals, you can make them first thing tomorrow."

"Kindly thank your father for his consideration," replied Jia Lian. "I shall do as he says and not call on him now. This is the best possible scheme, the easiest and the simplest to carry out. Any other site would entail more work without such good results. Tell him when you get back that I thoroughly approve, and if the old gentlemen have second thoughts I hope he will dissuade them from looking for another site. When I come tomorrow to pay my respects we can talk it over in detail."

Jia Rong agreed at once to pass on this message.

Jia Qiang now stepped forward to announce, "My uncle has given me the job of going to Suzhou with Lai Da's two sons and the two secretaries Shan Pingren and Bu Guxiu. We're to hire instructors, buy girl actresses and musical instruments and costumes there. He told me to let you know."

Jia Lian looked quizzically at the young man and asked, "Are you sure you're up to it? This may not be a big job, but there should be plenty of perks — if you know the ropes."

"I shall have to learn," was Jia Qiang's cheerful reply.

Jia Rong, standing in the shadow, quietly plucked Xifeng's lapel. Taking the hint she said to her husband, "Don't worry. Your cousin knows best whom to send. Why should you be afraid Qiang isn't up to it? Is everyone born capable? The boy's grown up now. He's old enough to have seen a pig run, even if he hasn't yet tasted pork himself. Cousin Zhen is sending him as a supervisor, not to do all the bargaining and accounting himself. I think it's an excellent choice."

"Of course I wasn't querying that," protested Jia Lian. "I only wanted to offer some advice." He asked Jia Qiang, "Where is the money for this



议到这里。赖爷爷说，不用从京里带下去，江南甄家还收着我们五万银子。明日写一封书信会票我们带去，先支三万，下剩二万存着，等置办花烛彩灯并各色帘栊帐幔的使费。”贾琏点头道：“这个主意好。”

凤姐忙向贾蔷道：“既这样，我有两个在行妥当人，你就带他们去办，这个便宜了你呢。”贾蔷忙陪笑说：“正要和婶婶讨两个人呢，这可巧了。”因问名字。凤姐便问赵嬷嬷。彼时赵嬷嬷已听呆了话，平儿忙笑推他，他才醒悟过来，忙说：“一个叫赵天梁，一个叫赵天栋。”凤姐道：“可别忘了，我可干我的去了。”说着，便出去了。贾蓉忙送出来，又悄悄的向凤姐道：“婶子要什么东西，吩咐我开个帐给蔷兄弟带了去，叫他按帐置办了来。”凤姐笑道：“别放你娘的屁！我的东西还没处撂呢，希罕你们鬼鬼祟祟的？”说着一径去了。

这里贾蔷也悄问贾琏：“要什么东西？顺便织来孝敬。”贾琏笑道：“你别兴头。才学着办事，倒先学会了这把戏。我短了什么，少不得写信来告诉你，且不要论到这里。”说毕，打发他二人去了。接着回事的人来，不止三四次，贾琏害乏，便传与二门上，一应不许传报，俱等明日料理。凤姐至三更时分方下来安歇，一宿无话。

次早贾琏起来，见过贾赦、贾政，便往宁府中来，合同老管事的人等，并几位世交门下清客相公，审察两府地方，





coming from?"

"We've just been discussing that. Old Lai sees no need to take silver with us from here. The Zhens down south have fifty thousand taels of ours. Tomorrow a draft can be written for us to take. We shall first draw thirty thousand, leaving twenty thousand to buy ornamental lanterns, candles, streamers, bamboo curtains and hangings of every kind."

Jia Lian nodded his approval. "Very good."

"Well, if that's settled," interposed Xifeng, "I have two good men you can take along to help you."

"What a coincidence!" Jia Qiang forced a smile. "I was just going to ask you to recommend a couple of people, aunt." He inquired their names.

Xifeng asked Nanny Zhao, who had been listening as if in a dream. When Pinger nudged her she woke up and answered quickly, "One of them is called Zhao Tianling, the other Zhao Tiandong."

"Don't forget," Xifeng cautioned Jia Qiang. "Now I must get back to my duties." With that she left.

Jia Rong slipped out after her and whispered, "If there's anything you want, aunt, make out a list and I'll give it to Qiang to see to."

"Don't talk rubbish!" Xifeng snorted. "I've so many things already, I've nowhere to put them. I don't care for your sneaky way of doing things." And so she went off.

Meanwhile Jia Qiang was telling Jia Lian, "If you want anything, uncle, I'll be happy to get it for you."

"Don't look so pleased," replied Jia Lian mockingly. "So this trick is the first thing you learn when you start handling business. If I need anything, of course I'll write. There's no time for it at present."

With that he saw the young men out. Then several servants came to make reports, after which Jia Lian felt so tired that he sent orders to the inner gate to admit no one else: all business must wait until the next day. Xifeng did not get to bed until the third watch, but no more need be said about that night.

The next morning, after calling on Jia She and Jia Zheng, Jia Lian went to the Ning Mansion. With some old stewards, secretaries and friends he inspected the grounds of both mansions, drew plans for the palaces for the Imperial visit and estimated the number of workmen required.

缮画省亲殿宇，一面察度办理人丁。自此后，各行匠役齐集，金、银、铜、锡以及土、木、砖瓦之物，搬运移送不歇。先令匠人拆宁府会芳园墙垣楼阁，直接入荣府东大院中。荣府东边所有下人一带群房尽已拆去。当日宁、荣两宅，虽有一小巷界断不通，然这小巷亦系私地，并非官道，故可以连属。会芳园本是从北拐角墙下引来一段活水，今亦无烦再引。其山石树木虽不敷用，贾赦住的乃是荣府旧园，其中竹树山石以及亭榭栏杆等物，皆可挪就前来。如此两处又甚近，凑来一处，省得许多财力，纵亦不敷，所添亦有限。全亏一个老明公号山子野者，一一筹画起造。

贾政不惯于俗务，只凭贾赦、贾珍、贾琏、赖大、来升、林之孝、吴新登、詹光、程日兴等些人安插摆布。凡堆山凿池，起楼竖阁，种竹栽花，一应点景等事，又有山子野制度。下朝闲暇，不过各处看望看望，最要紧处和贾赦等商议商议便罢了。贾赦只在家高卧，有芥豆之事，贾珍等或自去回明，或写略节；或有话说，便传呼贾琏、赖大等领命。贾蓉单管打造金银器皿。贾蔷已起身往姑苏去了。贾珍、赖大等又点人丁，开册籍，监工等事，一笔不能写到，不过是喧阗热闹非常而已。暂且无话。



Before long all the craftsmen and workmen were assembled, and endless loads of supplies were brought to the site: gold, silver, copper and tin, as well as earth, timber, bricks and tiles. First they pulled down the walls and pavilions of the Garden of Concentrated Fragrance in the Ning Mansion to connect it with the large eastern court of the Rong Mansion; and all the servants' quarters there were demolished.

Formerly a small alley had separated the two houses, but since this was private property and not a public thoroughfare the grounds of both could now be thrown into one.

As a stream already ran from the northern corner of the Garden of Concentrated Fragrance, there was no need to bring in another. And though there were not enough rocks or trees, the bamboos, trees and rockeries as well as the pavilions and balustrades in the original garden of the Rong Mansion where Jia She lived were brought over. The proximity of the two mansions made amalgamation easy, in addition to saving much labour and expense. On the whole, not too many new features had to be added.

The whole was designed by an old landscape gardener known as Gardener Ye.

As Jia Zheng was unaccustomed to practical business he left it to Jia She, Jia Zhen, Jia Lian, Lai Da, Lai Sheng, Lin Zhixiao, Wu Xindeng, Zhan Guang and Cheng Rixing. Artificial mountains and lakes were made, pavilions constructed, and bamboos and flowers planted, according to the plan of the gardener. All Jia Zheng did on his return from court was to make a tour of inspection and discuss the most important problems with Jia She and the rest.

As for Jia She, he took his ease at home. If any minor points had to be settled, Jia Zhen and the others would explain them to him or send him a written report, while he passed on his instructions through Jia Lian and Lai Da.

Jia Rong's task was to supervise the making of the gold and silver utensils. As for Jia Qiang, he had already left for Suzhou. Jia Zhen, Lai Da and the rest were in charge of the workmen, keeping a register and superintending operations. Impossible to describe in full all that bustle and commotion!

且说宝玉近因家中有这等大事，贾政不来问他的书，心中是件畅事；无奈秦钟之病日重一日，也着实悬心，不能乐业。这日一早起来才梳洗完毕，意欲回了贾母去望候秦钟，忽见茗烟在二门前照壁间探头缩脑，宝玉忙出来问他：“作什么？”茗烟道：“秦相公不中用了！”宝玉听说，吓了一跳，忙问道：“我昨儿才瞧了他来，还明明白白，怎么就不中用了？”茗烟道：“我也不知道，才刚是他家的老头子来，特告诉我的。”宝玉听了，忙转身回明贾母。贾母吩咐：“好生派妥当人跟去，到那里尽一尽同窗之情就回来，不许多耽搁了。”宝玉听了，忙忙的更衣出来，车犹未备，急的满厅乱转。一时催促的车到，忙上了车，李贵、茗烟等跟随。来至秦钟门首，悄无一人，遂蜂拥至他内室，唬的秦钟的两个远房婶母并几个弟兄都藏之不迭。

此时秦钟已发过两三次昏了，移床易箬多时矣。宝玉一见，便不禁失声。李贵忙劝道：“不可不可，秦相公是弱症，未免炕上挺扛的骨头不受用，所以暂且挪下来松散些。哥儿如此，岂不反添了他的病？”宝玉听了，方忍住，近前见秦钟面如白蜡，合目呼吸于枕上。宝玉忙叫道：“鲸兄！宝玉来了。”连叫两三声，秦钟不睬。宝玉又道：“宝玉来了。”



Owing to this all-engrossing business, Jia Zheng had stopped asking Baoyu about his studies and the boy was having an easy time. The only thing that worried him and spoiled his pleasure was Qin Zhong's illness, now growing daily worse.

One morning, he had just washed and dressed and was thinking to ask his grandmother's permission to pay another visit to his friend, when Mingyan peeped round the spirit screen by the inner gate. Baoyu hurried over to him.

"What is it?"

"Master Qin Zhong. He's dying!"

Baoyu was staggered.

"He was clear-headed when I saw him only yesterday," he cried. "How can he be dying?"

"I don't know. That's what an old fellow from his home just told me."

At once Baoyu went to tell the Lady Dowager, who instructed some trustworthy men to accompany him. "You may call to show your friendship for your schoolmate," she told him. "But mind you don't stay too long."

Baoyu hastily changed his clothes, then paced up and down frantically, calling for his carriage. When at last it arrived he scrambled in and drove off, escorted by Li Gui, Mingyan and others.

Finding the gate of Qin Zhong's house deserted, they swarmed into the inner apartments, to the consternation of Qin Zhong's two aunts and cousins who quickly made themselves scarce.

Qin Zhong had already lost consciousness several times and been lifted on to a trestle-bed to die. At this sight Baoyu burst out sobbing.

"Don't take on like that," urged Li Gui. "You know how delicate Master Qin is. They've moved him for the time being to somewhere more comfortable than the hard *kang*. Going on in this way, little master, will only make him worse."

At that Baoyu restrained himself and approached his friend. Qin Zhong lying back on his pillow was as pale as wax; his eyes were closed and his breath was coming in gasps.

"Dear brother!" Baoyu cried. "It's me — Baoyu!"



那秦钟早已魂魄离身，只剩得一口悠悠的余气在胸，正见许多鬼判持牌提索来捉他。那秦钟魂魄那里肯就去，又记念着家中无人掌管家务，又记挂着父亲还有留积下的三四千两银子，又记挂着智能尚无下落，因此百般求告鬼判。无奈这些鬼判都不肯徇私，反叱咤秦钟道：“亏你还是读过书的人，岂不知俗语说的：‘阎王叫你三更死，谁敢留人到五更。’我们阴间上下都是铁面无私的，不比你们阳间瞻情顾意，有许多的关碍处。”

正闹着，那秦钟魂魄忽听见“宝玉来了”四字，便忙又央求道：“列位神差，略发慈悲，让我回去，和这一个好朋友说一句话就来的。”众鬼道：“又是什么好朋友？”秦钟道：“不瞒列位，就是荣国公孙子，小名宝玉的。”都判官听了，先就唬慌起来，忙喝骂鬼使道：“我说你们放了他回去走走罢，你们断不依我的话，如今只等他请出个运旺时盛的人来才罢。”众鬼见都判如此，也都忙了手脚，一面又报怨道：

“你老人家先是那等雷霆电雹，原来见不得‘宝玉’二字。依我们愚见，他是阳，我们是阴，怕他们也无益于我们。”都判道：“放屁！俗语说的好，‘天下官管天下民’，自古人鬼之道却是一般，阴阳并无二理。别管他阴，也别管他阳，敬着点没有错了的。”众鬼听说，只得将他魂放回。“哼”了一声，微开双目，见宝玉在侧，乃勉强叹道：“怎么不早来？再迟一步，也不能见了。”宝玉忙携手垂泪道：“有什么话，



He called several times but Qin Zhong made no reply. Still Baoyu went on calling: "Baoyu's here!"

Qin Zhong was at his last gasp. His spirit, which had already left its body, saw that ghostly guards had come with a warrant and chains to drag him off. He was unwilling to leave, for there was no one to manage the household's affairs and his father had left three or four thousand taels of savings. He was longing, too, for news of Zhineng. But hard as he pleaded the ghosts were adamant.

"You're an educated young fellow," they scoffed. "Don't you know the saying, 'If the King of Hell summons you at the third watch, who dares keep you till the fifth?' We shades are strictly impartial, not like you mortals with all your soft-heartedness and favouritism."

As they were shouting at him, Qin Zhong's spirit heard Baoyu call.

"Have pity, divine messengers," he begged. "Let me go back to say one word to my good friend. Then I'll come with you."

"What good friend is this?" asked the ghosts.

"The grandson of the Duke of Rongguo. His name is Baoyu."

The ghost in command gave a howl of dismay, then swore at his followers. "I told you to let him go back for a while, but you wouldn't. Now he's produced this favourite of fortune, what are we to do?"

The ghosts, flustered by their officer's alarm, protested, "You were thundering mad yourself just now, but the name Baoyu seems to have terrified you. Why should we shades be afraid of a mortal like him? What can he do for us?"

Their officer swore, "That's rubbish! You know the proverb, 'The empire's officials control all in the empire.' That's how it is in the nether regions too — the same for spirits as for mortals. It'll do no harm to show some consideration."

Hearing this, the ghosts had to let Qin Zhong's soul return to its body.

The dying boy gave an indistinct cry and, opening his eyes, saw Baoyu by his side.

"Why didn't you come earlier?" he asked faintly. "If you'd left it any longer, I shouldn't have seen you."

Baoyu clasped his friend's hands and asked through tears, "What last message have you for me?"



留下两句。”秦钟道：“并无别话。以前你我见识，自为高过世人，我今日才知自误了。以后还该立志功名，以荣耀显达为是。”说毕，便长叹一声，萧然长逝了。下回分解。





“Just this. When you and I first met, we thought ourselves above the common herd. Now I know how wrong we were. You should set your mind on making a name through the examinations, on winning distinction, in future....”

With that he gave a long sigh and breathed his last.

For what followed, read the next chapter.





第十七回

大观园试才题对额 怡红院迷路探曲折

话说秦钟既死，宝玉痛哭不已，李贵等好不容易劝解半日方住，归时犹是凄惻哀痛。贾母帮了几十两银子，外又另备奠仪，宝玉去吊纸。七日后便送殡掩埋了，别无述记。只有宝玉日日思慕感悼，然亦无可如何了。

又不知历几何时，这日贾珍等来回贾政：“园内工程俱已告竣，大老爷已瞧过了，只等老爷瞧了，或有不妥之处，再行改造，好题匾额对联的。”贾政听了，沉思一回，说道：

“这匾额对联倒是一件难事。论理该请贵妃赐题才是，然贵妃若不亲睹其景，大约亦必不肯妄拟；若直待贵妃游幸过再请题，偌大景致，若干亭榭，无字标题，也觉寥落无趣，任有花柳山水，也断不能生色。”众清客在旁笑答道：“老世翁所见极是。如今我们有个愚见：各处匾额对联断不可少，亦断不可定名。如今且按其景致，或两字、三字、四字，虚合其意，拟了出来，暂且做灯匾联悬了。待贵妃游幸时，再请定名，岂不两全？”贾政等听了，都道：“所见不差。我们今



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Chapter 17

**Literary Talent Is Tested by Composing
Inscriptions in Grand View Garden
Those Losing Their Way at Happy Red Court
Explore a Secluded Retreat**

Baoyu wept over Qin Zhong's death as if he would never stop; and it was some time before Li Gui and the rest could prevail on him to leave off. Even after his return he could not overcome his grief. The Lady Dowager gave the Qin family several dozen taels of silver in addition to funeral gifts; Baoyu went to offer his condolences and, seven days later, the funeral and burial took place. No need to record it in detail. Baoyu mourned for his friend and missed him every day, but there was no help for it.

Some time later Jia Zhen came to report to Jia Zheng that the work on the new garden had been completed and Jia She had inspected it.

"All is ready for you to look over, sir," he announced. "If there is anything unsuitable, we can have it changed before the inscriptions for different places are chosen."

Jia Zheng reflected for a while, then said, "The inscriptions do present a problem. By rights, we should ask the Imperial Consort to do us the honour of composing them, but she can hardly do this without having seen the place. On the other hand, if we leave the chief sights and pavilions without a single name or couplet until her visit, the garden, however lovely with its flowers and willows, rocks and streams, cannot fully reveal its charm."

"You are absolutely right, sir," agreed his cultured companions.

"I have an idea," said one. "The inscriptions for different places can't be dispensed with, but neither can they be fixed in advance. Why not briefly prepare some tentative couplets and names to suit each place? We can have them painted on lanterns in the shape of plaques and scrolls for the time being. Then, when Her Highness favours us with a visit, we can ask her to decide on permanent names. Wouldn't this be a way out

日且看看去，只管题了，若妥当使用；不妥时，然后将雨村请来，令他再拟。”众人笑道：“老爷今日一拟定佳，何必又待雨村。”贾政笑道：“你们不知，我自幼于花鸟山水题咏上就平平；如今上了年纪，且案牍劳烦，于这怡情悦性文章上更生疏了。纵拟了出来，不免迂腐古板，反不能使花柳园亭生色，似不妥协，反没意思。”众清客笑道：“这也无妨。我们大家看了公拟，各举其长，优则存之，劣则删之，未为不可。”贾政道：“此论极是。且喜今日天气和暖，大家去逛逛。”说着起身，引众人前往。

贾珍先去园中知会众人。可巧近日宝玉因思念秦钟，忧戚不尽，贾母常命人带他到园中来戏耍。此时亦才进去，忽见贾珍走来，向他笑道：“你还不出去，老爷一会就来了。”宝玉听了，带着奶娘、小厮们，一溜烟就出园来。方转过弯，顶头贾政引众客来了，躲之不及，只得一边站了。贾政近因闻得塾掌称赞宝玉专能对对联，虽不喜读书，偏倒有些歪才情似的，今日偶然撞见这机会，便命他跟来。宝玉只得随往，尚不知何意。

贾政刚至园门前，只见贾政带领许多执事人来，一旁侍立。贾政道：“你且把园门都关上，我们先瞧了外面再进去。”贾珍听说，命人将门关了。贾政先秉正看门。只见正



of the dilemma?"

"A sound idea," agreed Jia Zheng. "Let us have a look round then today and think up some inscriptions. If suitable, they can be used; if unsuitable, we can ask Jia Yucun over to help."

"Your suggestions are bound to be excellent, sir," they countered. "Why need we call in Yucun?"

"Frankly, I was never a good hand even in my young days at writing verse about nature — flowers, birds and scenery. Now that I'm old and burdened with official duties I've quite lost the light touch required for belles-lettres. Any efforts of mine would undoubtedly be so clumsy and pedantic that they would fail to bring out the garden's beauty — they might even have the opposite effect."

"Have no fears about that," his secretaries assured him. "We can put our wits together. If each of us uses his ingenuity and we then choose the best suggestions, discarding the rest, we should be able to manage."

"Very well. Luckily it's a fine day for a stroll."

Jia Zheng rose to his feet and set off at the head of the party, while Jia Zhen went on in advance to let everyone in the garden know they were coming.

It so happened that Baoyu had just arrived in the garden. For he was still grieving so much over Qin Zhong's death that the Lady Dowager often told his servants to take him there to distract him.

Jia Zhen, coming upon him, warned him jokingly, "You'd better clear out! Lord Zheng is on his way here."

Baoyu rushed out like a streak of smoke, with his nurse and pages behind him. But just round the corner he ran into Jia Zheng's party. Since escape was impossible, Baoyu stepped to one side.

Now Jia Zheng had recently heard Baoyu's tutor speak highly of his skill in composing couplets, remarking that the boy, though not studious, showed considerable originality. Having happened upon him like this, Jia Zheng ordered his son to accompany them. Baoyu had to comply, not knowing what his father wanted.

At the entrance to the garden, they found Jia Zhen with a group of stewards lined up in wait.

"Close the gate," said Jia Zheng. "Let us see what it looks like from

门五间，上面桶瓦泥鳅脊；那门栏窗棂，皆是细雕新鲜花样，并无朱粉涂饰；一色水磨群墙，下面白石台矶，凿成西番草花样。左右一望，皆雪白粉墙，下面虎皮石，随势砌去，果然不落富丽俗套，自是欢喜。遂命开门，只见迎面一带翠嶂挡在前面。众清客都道：“好山，好山！”贾政道：

“非此一山，一进来园中所有之景悉入目中，则有何趣。”众人道：“极是。非胸中大有邱壑，焉想及此。”说毕，往前一望，见白石峻嶒，或如鬼怪，或如猛兽，纵横拱立，上面苔藓成斑，藤萝掩映，其中微露羊肠小径。贾政道：“我们就从此小径游去，回来由那一边出去，方可遍览。”

说毕，命贾珍在前引导，自己扶了宝玉，逶迤进入山口。抬头忽见山上有镜面白石一块，正是迎面留题处。贾政回头笑道：“诸公请看，此处题以何名方妙？”众人听说，也有说该题“叠翠”二字，也有说该题“锦嶂”的，又有说“赛香炉”的，又有说“小终南”的，种种名色，不止几十个。原来众客心中早知贾政要试宝玉的功业进益如何，只将这些俗套来敷衍。宝玉亦料定此意。贾政听了，便回头命宝玉



outside before we go in.”

Jia Zhen had the gate closed and Jia Zheng inspected the gatehouse, a building in five sections with an arched roof of semi-circular tiles. The lintels and lattices, finely carved with ingenious designs, were neither painted nor gilded; the walls were of polished bricks of a uniform colour, and the white marble steps were carved with passion-flowers. The garden's spotless whitewashed wall stretching to left and right had, at its base, a mosaic of striped “tiger-skin” stones. The absence of vulgar ostentation pleased him.

He had the gate opened then and they went in, only to find their view screened by a green hill. At this sight his secretaries cried out in approval.

“If not for this hill,” observed Jia Zheng, “one would see the whole garden as soon as one entered, and how tame that would be.”

“Exactly,” agreed the rest. “Only a bold landscape gardener could have conceived this.”

On the miniature mountain they saw rugged white rocks resembling monsters and beasts, some recumbent, some rampant, dappled with moss or hung about with creepers, a narrow zigzag path just discernible between them.

“We'll follow this path,” decided Jia Zheng. “Coming back we can find our way out at the other side. That should take us over the whole grounds.”

He made Jia zhen lead the way and, leaning on Baoyu's shoulder, followed him up through the boulders. Suddenly raising his head, he saw a white rock polished as smooth as a mirror, obviously intended for the first inscription.

“See, gentlemen!” he called over his shoulder, smiling. “What would be a suitable name for this spot?”

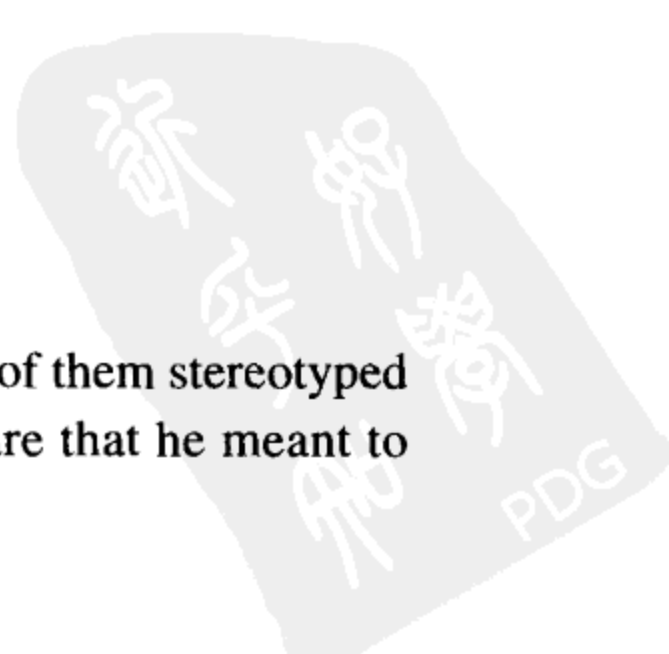
“Heaped Verdure,” said one.

“Embroidery Ridge,” said another.

“The Censer.”¹

“A Miniature Zhongnan.”²

Dozens of different suggestions were made, all of them stereotyped cliches; for Jia Zheng's secretaries were well aware that he meant to test his son's ability. Baoyu understood this too.





拟来。宝玉道：“尝闻古人有云：‘编新不如述旧，刻古终胜雕今。’况此处并非主山正景，原无可题之处，不过是探景一进步耳。莫若直书‘曲径通幽处’这句旧诗在上，倒还大方气派。”众人听了，都赞道：“是极！二世兄天分高，才情远，不似我们读腐了书的。”贾政笑道：“不可谬奖。他年小，不过以一知充十用，取笑罢了。再俟选拟。”

说着，进入石洞来。只见佳木茏葱，奇花闪灼，一带清流，从花木深处曲折泻于石隙之下。再进数步，渐向北边，平坦宽豁，两边飞楼插空，雕甍绣槛，皆隐于山坳树杪之间。俯而视之，则清溪泻雪，石磴穿云，白石为栏，环抱池沿，石桥三港，兽面衔吐。桥上有亭。贾政与诸人上了亭子，倚栏坐了，因问：“诸公以何题此？”诸人都道：“当日欧阳公《醉翁亭记》有云：‘有亭翼然’，就名‘翼然’。”贾政笑道：“‘翼然’虽佳，但此亭压水而成，还须偏于水题方称。依我拙裁，欧阳公之‘泻出于两峰之间’，竟用他这一个‘泻’字。”有一客道：“是极，是极。竟是‘泻玉’二字妙。”贾政拈髯寻思，因抬头见宝玉侍侧，便笑命他也拟一





Now his father called on him to propose a name.

Baoyu replied, "I've heard that the ancients said, 'An old quotation beats an original saying; to recut an old text is better than to engrave a new one.' As this is not the main prominence or one of the chief sights, it only needs an inscription because it is the first step leading to the rest. so why not use that line from an old poem:

A winding path leads to a secluded retreat.

A name like that would be more dignified."

"Excellent!" cried the secretaries.

"Our young master is far more brilliant and talented than dull pedants like ourselves."

"You mustn't flatter the boy," protested Jia Zheng with a smile. "He's simply making a ridiculous parade of his very limited knowledge. We can think of a better name later."

They walked on through a tunnel into a ravine green with magnificent trees and ablaze with rare flowers. A clear stream welling up where the trees were thickest wound its way through clefts in the rocks.

Some paces further north, on both sides of a level clearing, rose towering pavilions whose carved rafters and splendid balustrades were half hidden by the trees on the slopes. Looking downwards, they saw a crystal stream cascading as white as snow and stone steps going down through the mist to a pool. This was enclosed by marble balustrades and spanned by a stone bridge ornamented with the heads of beasts with gaping jaws. On the bridge was a little pavilion in which the whole party sat down.

"What would you call this, gentlemen?" asked Jia Zheng.

One volunteered, "Ouyang Xiu's³ *Pavilion of the Old Drunkard* has the line, 'A winged pavilion hovers above.' Why not call this Winged Pavilion?"

"A delightful name," rejoined Jia Zheng. "But as this pavilion is built over the pool there should be some allusion to the water. Ouyang Xiu also speaks of a fountain 'spilling between two peaks.' Could we not use that word 'spilling'?"

"Capital!" cried one gentleman. "'Spilling Jade' would be an excellent name."

Jia Zheng tugging thoughtfully at his beard turned with a smile to ask

个来。宝玉听说，连忙回道：“老爷方才所议已是。但是如今追究了去，似乎当日欧阳公题酿泉用一‘泻’字则妥，今日此泉若亦用‘泻’字，则觉不妥。况此处虽省亲驻蹕别墅，亦当入于应制之例，用此等字眼，亦觉粗陋不雅。求再拟较些蕴藉含蓄者。”贾政笑道：“诸公听此论若何？方才众人编新，你又说不如述古；如今我们述古，你又说粗陋不妥。你且说你的来我听。”宝玉道：“有用‘泻玉’二字，则莫若‘沁芳’二字，岂不新雅？”贾政拈髯点头不语。众人都忙迎合，赞宝玉才情不凡。贾政道：“匾上二字容易。再作一副七言对联来。”宝玉听说，立于亭上，四顾一望，便机上心来，乃念道：

绕堤柳借三篙翠，隔岸花分一脉香。

贾政听了，点头微笑。众人先称赞不已。

于是出亭过池，一山一石，一花一木，莫不着意观览。忽抬头看见前面一带粉垣，里面数楹精舍，有千百竿翠竹遮映。众人都道：“好个所在！”于是大家进入，只见入门便是曲折游廊，阶下石子漫成甬路。上面小小两三房舍，一明两暗，里面都是合着地步打就的床几椅案。从里间房内又得一小门，出去则是后院，有大株梨花兼着芭蕉。又有两间小



Baoyu for his suggestion.

"I agree with what you just said, sir," replied his son. "But if we go into this a little deeper, although 'spilling' was an apt epithet for Ouyang Xiu's fountain, which was called the Brewer's Spring, it would be unsuitable here. Then again, as this is designed as a residence for the Imperial Consort we should use more courtly language instead of coarse, inelegant expressions like this. Could you not think of something more subtle?"

"Do you hear that, gentlemen?" Jia Zheng chuckled. "When we suggest something original he is all in favour of an old quotation; but now that we are using an old quotation he finds it too coarse. Well, what do you propose?"

"Wouldn't 'Seeping Fragrance' be more original and tasteful than 'Spilling Jade'?"

Jia Zheng stroked his beard again and nodded in silence while the others, eager to please him, hastened to commend Baoyu's remarkable talent.

"The selection of two words for the tablet is easy," said his father. "Go on and make a seven-character couplet."

Baoyu rose to his feet and glanced round for inspiration. Then he declaimed:

"Willows on the dyke lend their verdancy to three punts;
Flowers on the further shore spare a breath of fragrance."

His father nodded with a faint smile amid another chorus of approval.

They left the pavilion then, crossed the bridge and strolled on, admiring each rock, each height, each flower and each tree on the way, until they found themselves before the whitewashed enclosing walls of a fine lodge nestling in a dense glade of fresh green bamboos. With cries of admiration they walked in.

From the gate porch a zigzag covered walk with a cobbled path below and parallel to it wound up to a little cottage of three rooms, with the cottage door in the middle one and furniture made to fit the measurements of the rooms. Another small door in the inner room opened on to the back garden with its large pear-tree, broad-leafed plantain and two

小退步。后院墙下忽开一隙，得泉一派，开沟仅尺许，灌入墙内，绕阶缘屋至前院，盘旋竹下而出。

贾政笑道：“这一处还罢了。若能月夜坐此窗下读书，不枉虚生一世。”说毕，看着宝玉，唬的宝玉忙垂了头。众客忙用话开释，又说道：“此处的匾该题四个字。”贾政笑问：

“那四字？”一个道是“淇水遗风”。贾政道：“俗。”又一个道是“睢园雅迹”。贾政道：“也俗。”贾珍笑道：“还是宝兄弟拟一个来。”贾政道：“他未曾作，先就要议论人家的好歹，可见就是个轻薄人。”众客道：“议论的极是，其奈他何。”

贾政忙道：“休如此纵了他。”因命他道：“今日任你狂为乱道，先设议论来，然后方许你作。方才众人说的，可有使得的？”

宝玉见问，答道：“都似不妥。”贾政冷笑道：“怎么不妥？”宝玉道：“这是第一处行幸之处，必须颂圣方可。若用四字的匾，又有古人现成的，何必再作。”贾政道：“难道

‘淇水’‘睢园’不是古人的？”宝玉道：“这太板腐了。莫若‘有凤来仪’四字。”众人都哄然叫妙。贾政点头道：“畜生，畜生，可谓‘管窥蠡测’矣。”因命：“再题一联来。”

宝玉便念道：



tiny side courts. Through a foot-wide opening below the back wall flowed a brook which wound past the steps and the lodge to the front court before meandering out through the bamboos.

"This is pleasant. If one could study at this window on a moonlit night one would not have lived in vain," observed Jia Zheng. He glanced at Baoyu, who hung his head in confusion while the others quickly changed the subject, one of them suggesting:

"We need a four-character inscription here."

"What four characters?" asked Jia Zheng.

"Shades of the River Qi?"⁴

"Too commonplace."

"Traces of the Sui Garden?"⁵

"That is equally hackneyed."

Jia Zhen proposed, "Let Cousin Bao make a suggestion."

"Before he makes any suggestion," objected Jia Zheng, "the impudent fellow criticizes other people's."

"But his comments are correct. How can you blame him?"

"Don't pander to him like that." He turned to his son. "We're putting up with your wild talk today, so let's have your criticisms first before we hear your own proposals. Were either of these gentlemen's suggestions appropriate?"

"I didn't think so, sir."

His father smiled sardonically, "Why not?"

"Since this will be the first place where our Imperial visitor stops, we should pay some tribute to Her Highness here. If we want a four-character inscription there are plenty of old ones ready at hand, why need we compose anything new?"

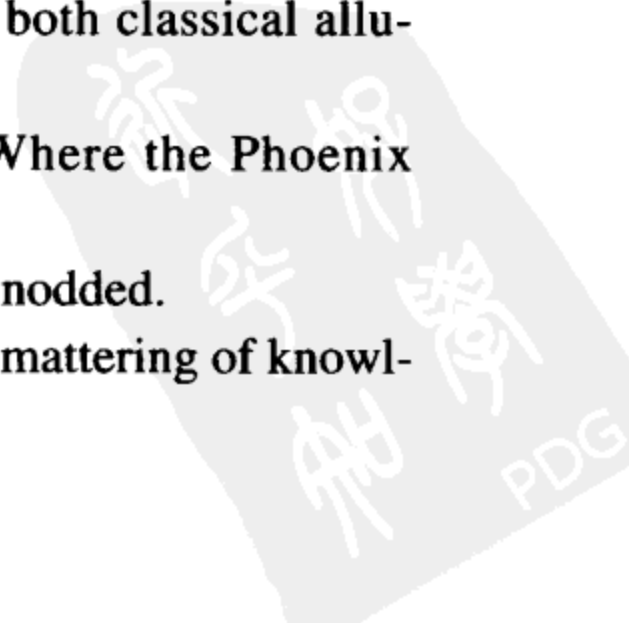
"Aren't 'The River Qi' and 'The Sui Garden' both classical allusions?"

"Yes, but they sound too stiff. I propose 'Where the Phoenix Alights.'"

The rest were loud in their praise and Jia Zheng nodded.

"You young rascal," he said, "with your pitiful smattering of knowledge. All right, now let's hear your couplet."

Baoyu declaimed:





宝鼎茶闲烟尚绿，幽窗棋罢指犹凉。

贾政摇头说道：“也未见长。”说毕，引人出来。

方欲走时，忽又想起一事来，因问贾珍道：“这些院落房宇并几案桌椅都算有了，还有那些帐幔帘子并陈设玩器古董，可也都是一处一处合式配就的？”贾珍回道：“那陈设的东西早已添了许多，自然临期合式陈设。帐幔帘子，昨日听见琏兄弟说，还不全。那原是一起工程之时就画了各处的图样，量准尺寸，就打人办去的。想必昨日得了一半。”贾政听了，便知此事不是贾珍的首尾，便命人去唤贾琏来。

一时，贾琏赶来，贾政问他共有几种，现今得了几种，尚欠几钟。贾琏见问，忙向靴桶取靴掖内装的一个纸折略节来，看了一眼，回道：“妆蟒绣堆、刻丝弹墨。并各色绸绫大小幔子一百二十架，昨日得了八十架，下欠四十架。帘子二百挂，昨日俱得了。外有猩猩毡帘二百挂，金丝藤红漆竹帘二百挂，墨漆竹帘二百挂，五彩线络盘花帘二百挂，每样得了一半，也不过秋天都全了。椅搭、桌围、床裙、桌套，每分一千二百件，也有了。”

一面走，一面说，倏尔青山斜阻。转过山怀中，隐隐露出一带黄泥筑就矮墙，墙头皆用稻茎掩护。有几百株杏花，如喷火蒸霞一般。里面数楹茅屋，外面却是桑、榆、槿、柘，各色树稚新条，随其曲折，编就两溜青篱。篱外山坡之





“Still green the smoke from tea brewed in a rare tripod;
Yet cold the fingers from chess played by quiet window.”

Jia Zheng shook his head. “No better either!”

He was leading the party on when a thought struck him and turning to Jia Zhen he said, “All these compounds and lodges are furnished with tables and chairs, but what about curtains, blinds, knick-knacks, curios and so forth? Have appropriate ones for each place been prepared?”

“We have got in a large stock of ornaments which will be properly set out in due course,” replied Jia Zhen. “As for the curtains and blinds, Cousin Lian told me yesterday that they are not all ready yet. We took exact measurements from the building plans for each place when the work started, and sent out our designs to be made up. By yesterday about half of them were finished.”

Since he was clearly ignorant of the details, Jia Zheng sent for Jia Lian and asked him, “What are the different items? How many are ready and how many are not?”

Jia Lian promptly pulled out a list from the leg of one boot. After referring to it he replied, “Of the one hundred and twenty satin curtains embroidered with dragons and brocade hangings large and small with different designs and colours, eighty were ready yesterday and forty are still to come. Two hundred blinds were delivered yesterday. Beside these, there are two hundred portières of crimson felt, two hundred of red lacquered bamboo with gold flecks, two hundred of black lacquered bamboo, and two hundred woven with coloured silks. Half of each kind is ready, the rest will be finished by the end of autumn. Then there are chair-covers, table-drapes, valances and stool-covers — one thousand two hundred of each — which we already have.”

As they walked on talking, their eyes fell on some green hills barring their way. Skirting these they caught sight of brown adobe walls with paddy-stalk copings and hundreds of apricot-trees, their blossoms bright as spurting flames or sunlit clouds. Inside this enclosure stood several thatched cottages. Outside grew saplings of mulberry, elm, hibiscus and silkwormthorn trees, whose branches had been intertwined to form a double green hedge. Beyond this hedge, at the



下，有一土井，旁有桔槔辘轳之属，下面分畦列亩，佳蔬菜花，漫然无际。

贾政笑道：“倒是此处有些道理。固然系人力穿凿，此时一见，未免勾引起我归农之意。我们且进去歇息歇息。”说毕，方欲进篱门去，忽见路旁有一石碣，亦为留题之备。众人笑道：“更妙，更妙！此处若悬匾待题，则田舍家风一洗尽矣。立此一碣，又觉生色许多，非范石湖田家之咏不足以尽其妙。”贾政道：“诸公请题。”众人道：“方才世兄有云：‘编新不如述旧’，此处古人已道尽矣，莫若直书‘杏花村’妙极。”贾政听了，笑向贾珍道：“正亏提醒了我。此处都妙极，只是还少一个酒幌。明日竟作一个，不必华丽，就依外面村庄的式样作来，用竹竿挑在树梢。”贾珍答应了，又回道：“此处竟还不可养别的雀鸟，只是买些鹅鸭鸡类，才都相称了。”贾政与众人都道：“更妙。”贾政又向众人道：“‘杏花村’固佳，只是犯了正名村名，直待请名方可。”众客都道：“是呀。如今虚的，便是什么字样？”

大家想着，宝玉却等不得了，也不等贾政的命，便说道：“旧诗有云：‘红杏梢头挂酒旗’。如今莫若‘杏帘在望’四字。”众人都道：“好个‘在望’！又暗合‘杏花村’意。”宝玉冷笑道：“村名若用‘杏花’二字，则俗陋不堪





foot of the slope, was a rustic well complete with windlass and well-sweep. Below, neat plots of fine vegetables and rape-flowers stretched as far as eye could see.

“I see the point of this place,” declared Jia Zheng. “Although artificially made, the sight of it tempts one to retire to the country. Let us go in and rest a while.”

Just as they were on the point of entering the wicker gate they saw a stone by the pathway which was obviously intended for an inscription.

“That’s the finishing touch,” they cried, chuckling. “A plaque over the gate would have spoiled the rustic flavour, but this stone here adds to the charm. It would take one of Fan Chengda’s poems⁶ on country life to do justice to this place.”

“What shall we call it then, gentlemen?”

“As your worthy son just remarked. ‘An old quotation beats an original saying.’ The ancients have already supplied the most fitting name — Apricot Village.”

Jia Zheng turned with a smile to Jia Zhen, saying, “That reminds me. This place is perfect in every other respect, but it still lacks a tavern-sign. You must have one made tomorrow. Nothing too grand. Just a tavern-sign of the sort used in country places. Let it be hung on a bamboo pole from a tree-top.”

Jia Zhen readily agreed to this, then suggested, “Other birds would be out of place here, but we ought to have some geese, ducks, hens and so on.”

When this proposal had met with general approval, Jia Zheng observed, “‘Apricot Village’ is first-rate, but since it is the name of a real place we should have to get official permission to use it.”

“True,” agreed the other. “We shall have to think of something else. What shall it be?”

Without giving them time to think or waiting to be asked by his father, Baoyu blurted out, “An old poem has the line, ‘Above flowering apricot hangs a tavern-sign.’ Why not call this ‘Approach to Apricot Tavern’?”

“‘Approach’ is superb,” they cried. “It suggests the idea of Apricot Village too.”

“‘Apricot Village’ would be too vulgar a name.” Baoyu smiled scorn-

了。又有古人诗云：‘柴门临水稻花香’，何不就用‘稻香村’的妙？”众人听了，益发哄声拍手道：“妙！”贾政一声断喝：“无知的孽障！你这孩子能知道几个古人，能记得几首熟诗，也敢在老先生前卖弄！你方才那些胡说，不过是试你的清浊，取笑而已，你就认真了！”

说着，引人步入茆堂，里面纸窗木榻，富贵气象一洗皆尽。贾政心中自是欢喜，却瞅宝玉道：“此处如何？”众人见问，都忙悄悄的推宝玉，教他说好。宝玉不听人言，便应声道：“不及‘有凤来仪’多矣。”贾政听了道：“无知的蠢物！你只知朱楼画栋、恶赖富丽为佳，那里知道这清幽气象。终是不读书之过！”宝玉忙答道：“老爷教训的固是，但古人常云‘天然’二字，不知何意？”

众人见宝玉牛心，都怪他呆痴不改。今见问“天然”二字，众人忙道：“别的都明白，为何连‘天然’不知？‘天然’者，天之自然而有，非人力之所成也。”宝玉道：“却又来！此处置一田庄，分明见得人力穿凿扭捏而成。远无邻村，近不负郭，背山山无脉，临水水无源，高无隐寺之塔，下无通市之桥，峭然孤出，似非大观。争似先处有自然之理，得自然之气，虽种竹引泉，亦不伤于穿凿。古人云‘天然图画’四字，正畏非其地而强为地，非其山而强为山，虽百般精而终不相宜……”未及说完，贾政气的喝命：“叉出去！”刚出去，又喝命：“回来！”命再题一联：“若不通，一并打嘴！”宝玉只得念道：



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fully. "But an old poet wrote 'A wicker gate by a stream sweet with paddy.' How about 'Paddy-Sweet Cottage'?"

Again the secretaries clapped in approbation but his father sternly silenced him. "Ignorant cub! How many ancient writers have you read and how many old poems have you memorized that you dare show off in front of your elders? I put up with your nonsense just now to test you in fun — don't take it seriously."

With that he led the party into one of the cottages. It was quite free of ostentation, having papered windows and a wooden couch. Secretly pleased, he glanced at his son and asked, "Well, what do you think of this place?"

The secretaries nudged the boy to induce him to express approval. But ignoring them he answered, "It can't compare with 'Where the Phoenix Alights.'"

"Ignorant dolt!" Jia Zheng sighed. "All you care for are red pavilions and painted beams. With your perverse taste for luxury, how can you appreciate the natural beauty of such a quiet retreat? This comes of neglecting your studies."

"Yes sir," replied Baoyu promptly. "But the ancients were always using the term 'natural.' I wonder what they really meant by it?"

Afraid his pig-headedness would lead to trouble, the others hastily put in, "You understand everything else so well, why ask about the term 'natural'? It means coming from nature, not due to human effort."

"There you are! A farm here is obviously artificial and out of place with no villages in the distance, no fields near by, no mountain ranges behind, no source for the stream at hand, above, no pagoda from any half hidden temple, below, no bridge leading to a market. Perched here in isolation, it is nothing like as fine a sight as those other places which were less far-fetched. The bamboos and streams there didn't look so artificial. What the ancients called 'a natural picture' means precisely that when you insist on an unsuitable site and hills where no hills should be, however skilfully you go about it the result is bound to jar...."

"Clear off!" thundered Jia Zheng. "Stop. Come back. Make up another couplet. If it's no good I'll slap your face on both accounts."

Baoyu had to comply. He declaimed:



新涨绿添浣葛处，好云香护采芹人。

贾政听了，摇头说：“更不好。”一面引人出来，转过山坡，穿花度柳，抚石依泉，过了茶藤架，再入木香棚，越牡丹亭，度芍药圃，入蔷薇院，出芭蕉坞，盘旋曲折。忽闻水声潺湲，泻出石洞，上则萝薜倒垂，下则落花浮荡。众人都道：“好景，好景！”贾政道：“诸公题以何名？”众人道：“再不必拟了，恰恰乎是‘武陵源’三个字。”贾政笑道：“又落实了，而且陈旧。”众人笑道：“不然就用‘秦人旧舍’四字也罢了。”宝玉道：“这越发过露了。‘秦人旧舍’说避乱之意，如何使得？莫若‘蓼汀花溆’四字。”贾政听了，更批胡说。

于是进港洞时，又想起有船无船。贾珍道：“采莲船共四只，座船一只，如今尚未造成。”贾政笑道：“可惜不得入了。”贾珍道：“从山上盘道亦可以进去。”说毕，在前导引，大家攀藤抚树过去。只见水上落花愈多，其水愈清，溶溶荡荡，曲折萦纡。池边两行垂柳，杂着桃杏，遮天蔽日，真无一些尘土。忽见柳阴中又露出一个折带朱栏板桥来，度过桥去，诸路可通。便见一所清凉瓦舍，一色水磨砖墙，清





“The green tide fills the creek where clothes are washed;
Clouds of fragrance surround the girls plucking water-cress.”

“Worse and worse,” growled Jia Zheng, shaking his head as he led the company out.

The path now curved around a slope, past flowers and willows, rocks and springs, a trellis of yellow roses, an arbour of white ones, a tree-peony pavilion, a white peony plot, a court of rambler roses and a bank of plantains. Suddenly they heard the splash of a spring gushing from a cave overhung by vines, and saw fallen blossoms floating on the water below. As they cried out in delight, Jia Zheng asked them to suggest another inscription.

“What more apt than ‘The Spring of Wuling’?” said one.

“Too hackneyed. Besides, it’s also the name of a real place,” objected Jia Zheng with a smile.

“Then how about ‘The Refuge of a Man of Qin’?”

“Even more impossible,” cried Baoyu. “How can we use something that implies taking refuge in time of trouble? I suggest ‘Smartweed Bank and Flowery Harbour.’”

“That makes even less sense,” scoffed his father. He strolled to the water’s edge and asked Jia Zhen, “Do you have any boats here?”

“There will be four punts for lotus-gathering and one pleasure boat, but they aren’t ready yet.”

“What a pity we can’t cross.”

“We can make a detour by the path over the hills,” said Jia Zhen, and proceeded to lead the way.

The others followed, clinging to creepers and trees as they clambered up. There were more fallen blossoms now on the stream, which appeared more translucent than ever as it swirled down its circuitous course. It was flanked by weeping willows and peach and apricot trees which screened the sun, and there was not a mote of dust in the air.

Presently, in the shade of the willows, they glimpsed an arched wooden bridge with scarlet railings. Once over this a choice of paths lay before them; but their attention was caught by an airy house of smooth brick with spotless tiles and an ornamental wall on one of the lesser slopes of

瓦花堵。那大主山所分之脉，皆穿墙而过。

贾政道：“此处这所房子，无味的很。”因而步入门时，忽迎面突出插天的大玲珑山石来，四面群绕各式石块，竟把里面所有房屋悉皆遮住，而且一株花木皆无。只见许多异草：或有牵藤的，或有引蔓的，或垂山巅，或穿石隙，甚至垂檐绕柱，萦砌盘阶，或如翠带飘飘，或如金绳盘屈，或实若丹砂，或花如金桂，味芬气馥，非花香之可比。贾政不禁笑道：“有趣！只是不大认识。”有的说：“是薜荔藤萝。”贾政道：“薜荔藤萝不得如此异香。”宝玉道：“果然不是。这些之中也有薜荔藤萝。那香的是杜若、蘅芜，那一种大约是菖兰，这一种大约是清葛，那一种是金荃草，这一种是玉簪藤，红的自然是紫芸，绿的定是青芷。想来《离骚》、《文选》等书上所有的那些异草，也有叫作什么藿药、薑蓀的，也有叫作什么纶组紫绛的，还有石帆、水松、扶留等样，又有叫什么绿萼的，还有什么丹椒、蘼芜、风连。如今年深岁久，人不能识，故皆像形夺名，渐渐的唤差了，也是有的。”未及说完，贾政喝道：“谁问你来！”唬的宝玉倒退，不敢再说。

贾政因见两边俱是超手游廊，便顺着游廊步入。只见上面五间清厦连着，卷棚四面出廊，绿窗油壁，更比前几处清雅不同。贾政叹道：“此轩中煮茶操琴，亦不必再焚名香矣。此造已出意外，诸公必有佳作新题以颜其额，方不负此。”众人笑道：“再莫若‘兰风蕙露’贴切了。”贾政道：“也只好



the main hill.

“That building seems very out of place here,” remarked Jia Zheng.

But stepping over the threshold he was confronted by tall weathered rocks of every description which hid the house from sight. In place of trees and flowers there was a profusion of rare creepers, vines and trailers, which festooned the artificial mountains, grew through the rocks, hung from the eaves, twined round the pillars and carpeted the steps. Some seemed like floating green belts or golden bands; others had berries red as cinnabar and flowers like golden osmanthus which gave off a penetrating scent, unlike the scent of ordinary flowers.

“This is charming!” Jia Zheng could not help exclaiming. “But what are all these plants?”

“Climbing fig and wistaria?” someone suggested.

“But they don’t have such a strange fragrance, do they?”

“They certainly don’t,” interposed Baoyu. “There are climbing fig and wistaria here, but the fragrance comes from alpinia and snakeroot. That one over there is iris, I fancy, and here we have dolichos, dwarf-mallow and glycyrrhia. That crimson plant is purple rue, of course; the green, angelica. A lot of these rare plants are mentioned in the *Li Sao* and *Wen Xuan*,⁸ plants with names like *huona*, *Jiangtan*, *lunzu* and *zjiang*; *shifan*, *shuisong* and *fuliu*; *luyi*, *danjiao*, *miwu* and *fenglian*. But after all these centuries scholars can no longer identify these plants, for which new names have been found....”

“Who asked your opinion?” roared his father.

Baoyu stepped back nervously and said no more.

Covered corridors ran along both sides of this court and Jia Zheng led his party down one of these to a cool five-section gallery with roofed verandahs on four sides, green windows and painted walls, more elegant than any they had yet seen.

“One could brew tea here and play the lyre without having to burn rare incense.” He sighed appreciatively, “This is certainly unexpected. We need a good inscription, gentlemen, to do it justice.”

“What could be apter than ‘Wind in the Orchids and Dew on Angelicas’?” one ventured.

“I suppose we have no other choice. Now what about a couplet?”

用这四字。其联若何？”一人道：“我倒想了一对，大家批削改正。”念道是：

麝兰芳霭斜阳院，杜若香飘明月洲。

众人道：“妙则妙矣，只是‘斜阳’二字不妥。”那人道：

“古人诗云‘靡芜满院泣斜晖’。”众人道：“颓丧，颓丧。”

又一人道：“我也有一联，诸公评阅评阅。”因念道：

三径香风飘玉蕙，一庭明月照金兰。

贾政拈髯沉吟，意欲也题一联。忽抬头见宝玉在旁不敢则声，因喝道：“怎么你应说话时又不说了？还要等人请教你不成！”宝玉听说，便回道：“此处并没有什么‘兰麝’、‘明月’、‘洲渚’之类，若要这样着迹说起来，就题二百联也不能完。”贾政道：“谁按着你的头，叫你必定说这些字样呢？”宝玉道：“如此说，匾上则莫若‘蘅芷清芬’四字。对联则是：

吟成苧蔻才犹艳，睡足酴醾梦也香。”

贾政笑道：“这是套的‘书成蕉叶文犹绿’，不足为奇。”众客道：“李太白‘凤凰台’之作，全套‘黄鹤楼’，只要套得妙。如今细评起来，方才这一联，竟比‘书成蕉叶’犹觉幽娴活泼。视‘书成’之句，竟似套此而来。”贾政笑说：“岂有此理！”

说着，大家出来。行不多远，则见崇阁巍峨，层楼高



“I have thought of one,” said another. “The rest of you must correct it.”

Fragrance of musk-orchids fills the court at dusk,
Scent of alpinia floats to the moonlit island.”

“Very good,” they commented. “Only the reference to ‘dusk’ seems inappropriate.”

He quoted the old poem then with the line, “The alpinia in the court weeps in the dusk.”

“Too sad, too sad,” they protested.

“Here’s one for your consideration,” said another.

“Along three paths white angelica scents the breeze,
In the court a bright moon shines on golden orchids.”

Jia Zheng thoughtfully tugged at his beard and seemed about to propose a couplet himself when, raising his head, he caught sight of Baoyu, now afraid to open his mouth.

“Well?” he said sternly. “When it’s time to speak you say nothing. Are you waiting to be begged for the favour of your instruction?”

“We have no musk, moon or islands here,” said Baoyu. “If you want allusive couplets of that kind, we can easily compose hundreds.”

“Who is putting pressure on you to use those words?”

“Well then, I suggest ‘Pure Scent of Alpinia and Iris.’ And for the couplet:

Singing on cardamons makes lovely poetry;
Sleeping beneath roses induces sweet dreams.”

Jia Zheng laughed. “You got that from the line ‘Write on plantain leaves and green is the writing.’ This is mere plagiarism.”

“There’s nothing wrong with plagiarism provided it’s well done,” countered the others. “Even Li Bai copied from *Yellow Crane Pavilion*⁹ when he wrote his *Phoenix Tower*. If you consider this couplet carefully, sir, it is livelier and more poetical than the original. It even looks as if the other line plagiarizes this by our young master.”

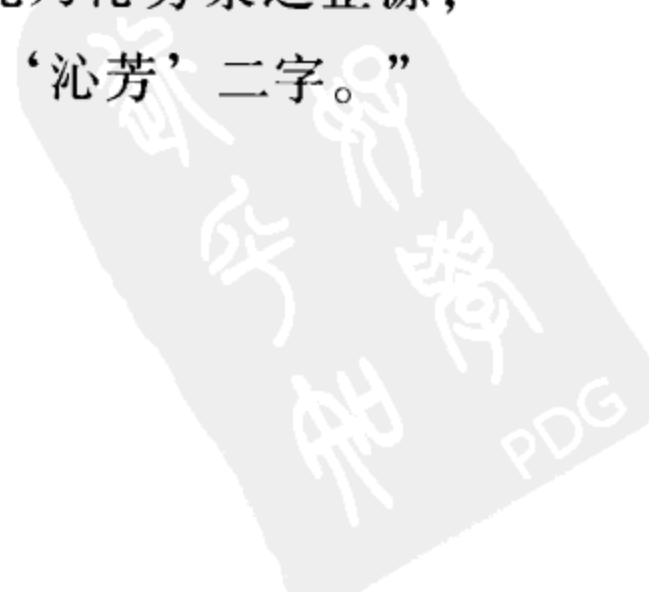
“Preposterous!” Jia Zheng smiled.

From there they went on some way until ahead of them loomed towering pavilions enclosed by magnificent buildings, all of them connected



起，面面琳宫合抱，迢迢复道萦纡，青松拂檐，玉栏绕砌，金辉兽面，彩焕螭头。贾政道：“这是正殿了。只是太富丽了些。”众人都道：“要如此方是。虽然贵妃崇节尚俭，天性恶繁悦朴，然今日之尊，礼仪如此，不为过也。”一面说，一面走，只见正面现出一座玉石牌坊来，上面龙蟠螭护，玲珑凿就。贾政道：“此处书以何文？”众人道：“必是‘蓬莱仙境’方妙。”贾政摇头不语。宝玉见这个所在，心中忽有所动，寻思起来，倒像那里曾见过的一般，却一时想不起那年月日的事了。贾政又命他作题，宝玉只顾细思前景，全无心于此了。众人不知其意，只当他受了这半日的折磨，精神耗散，才尽词穷了；再要考难逼迫，着了急，或生出事来，倒不便。遂忙都劝贾政：“罢，罢，明日再题罢了。”贾政心中也怕贾母不放心，遂冷笑道：“你这畜生，也竟有不能之时了。也罢，限你一日，明日若再不能，我定不饶。这是要紧一处，更要好生作来！”

说着，引人出来，再一观望，原来自进门起，所行至此，才游了十之五六。又值人来回，有雨村处遣人回话。贾政笑道：“此数处不能游也。虽如此，到底从那一边出去，纵不能细观，也可稍览。”说着，引客行来，至一大桥前，见水如晶帘一般奔入。原来这桥便是通外河之闸，引泉而入者。贾政因问：“此闸何名？”宝玉道：“此乃沁芳泉之正源，就名‘沁芳闸’。”贾政道：“胡说，偏不用‘沁芳’二字。”





by winding passageways. Green pines brushed the eaves, white balustrades skirted the steps, the animal designs glittered like gold and the dragon-heads blazed with colour.

“This must be the main reception palace,” observed Jia Zheng. “Its one fault is that it is too luxurious.”

“Unavoidably so,” they reasoned. “Although Her Royal Highness prizes frugality, this is no more than is due to her present exalted rank.”

They were now at the foot of a marble arch finely carved with rampant dragons and coiling serpents.

“What should be inscribed here?” asked Jia Zheng.

“‘The Fairy Land of Penglai’?”

He shook his head and said nothing.

As for Baoyu, he felt strangely stirred by this sight, as if he had seen a place of this kind before — though just when he could not remember. Called upon to compose an inscription, he was too preoccupied to think of anything else. The others, not knowing this, imagined that his wits were wandering and he was exhausted after his long ordeal. Fearing that if he were pressed too hard the consequences might be serious, they urged his father to give him a day’s grace.

Jia Zheng, aware that his mother might well be anxious, said with an ironic smile, “So sometimes you are at a loss too, you young rascal. Very well, I’ll give you until tomorrow. But if no inscription is ready then, so much the worse for you. This is the most important place, so mind you do your best.”

They continued with the tour of inspection and had covered little more than half the grounds when a servant reported that someone had arrived with a message from Yucun.

“We can’t see the rest of the places,” said Jia Zheng. “But by going out the other way we can at least get a general idea, even if we don’t see them all.”

He led the way to a large bridge above a crystal curtain of cascading water. This was the sluice admitting water from outside. Jia Zheng asked for a name for it.

“Since this is the source of the River of Seeping Fragrance it could be

于是一路行来，或清堂茅舍，或堆石为垣，或编花为牖，或山下得幽尼佛寺，或林中藏女道丹房，或长廊曲洞，或方厦圆亭，贾政皆不及进去。因说半日腿酸，未尝歇息，忽又见前面又露出一所院落来，贾政笑道：“到此可要进去歇息歇息了。”说着，一径引人绕着碧桃花，穿过一层竹篱花障编就的月洞门，俄见粉墙环护，绿柳周垂。贾政与众人进去，一入门，两边都是游廊相接。院中点缀几块山石，一边种着几本芭蕉；那一边乃是一颗西府海棠，其势若伞，丝垂翠缕，葩吐丹砂。众人赞道：“好花，好花！从来也见过许多海棠，那里有这样妙的。”贾政道：“这叫作‘女儿棠’，乃是外国之种。俗传系出‘女儿国’中，云彼国此种最盛，亦荒唐不经之说罢了。”众人笑道：“然虽不经，如何此名传久了？”宝玉道：“大约骚人咏士，以此花之色红晕若施脂，轻弱似扶病，大近乎闺阁风度，所以以‘女儿’命名。想因被世间俗恶听了，他便以野史纂人为证，以俗传俗，以讹传讹，都认真了。”众人都摇身赞妙。

一面说话，一面都在廊外抱厦下打就的榻上坐了。贾政因问：“想几个什么新鲜字来题此？”一客道：“‘蕉鹤’二字最妙。”又一个道：“‘崇光泛彩’方妙。”贾政与众人都道：“好个‘崇光泛彩’！”宝玉也道：“妙极。”又叹：“只是可惜了。”众人问：“如何可惜？”宝玉道：“此处蕉、棠两植，其意暗蓄‘红’‘绿’二字在内。若只说蕉，则棠无着落；若只说棠，蕉亦无着落。固有蕉无棠不可，有棠无蕉更不



called 'Seeping Fragrance Lock,'" Baoyu suggested.

"Rubbish," said his father. "We just won't have 'Seeping Fragrance. '"

On they went past quiet lodges and thatched huts, stone walls and pergolas of flowers, a temple secluded in the hills and a convent half hidden among the trees, long covered walks, meandering grottoes, square mansions and round kiosks, none of which they had time to enter. However, it was so long since their last rest that all were footsore and weary by the time they saw another lodge in front, and Jia Zheng said, "Here we must rest a little."

He led the way in past some double-flowering peach in blossom and through a moon-gate made of bamboo over which climbed flowering plants. Whitewashed walls and green willows confronted them then. Along the walls ran covered corridors, and the rockery in the centre of the courtyard was flanked on one side by plantains, on the other by a red multi-petalled crab-apple tree, its branches trained in the shape of an umbrella, with green trailing tendrils and petals red as cinnabar.

"What superb blossoms!" they exclaimed. "We have never seen such a splendid one before."

"This is a foreign variety called 'Maiden Apple, '" Jia Zheng told them. "Tradition has it that it comes from the Land of Maidens, and that it blossoms profusely in that country; but that is nothing but an old wives' tale."

"If so, how did the name come to be handed down?" they wondered.

"Quite likely the name 'Maiden' was given by some poet," said Baoyu, "because this flower is as red as rouged cheeks and as frail as a delicate girl. Then some vulgar character made up that story and ignorant people believed it."

"A most plausible explanation," said the others.


They sat down on some benches in the corridor and Jia Zheng at once asked for another inscription.

"Plantains and Storks'?" one proposed.

"Or 'Towering Splendour and Shimmering Radiance.'"

Jia Zheng and the rest approved, as indeed did Baoyu, adding, "It's a pity, though...." Asked to explain himself, he said, "Plantain and crab-apple blossom suggest both red and green. It's a pity to refer to one and

可。”贾政道：“依你如何？”宝玉道：“依我，题‘红香绿玉’四字，两全其妙。”贾政摇头道：“不好，不好！”

说着，引人进入房内。只见这几间房内收拾的与别处不同，竟分不出间隔来的。原来四面皆是雕空玲珑木板，或“流云百蝠”，或“岁寒三友”，或山水人物，或翎毛花卉，或集锦，或博古，或 ，各种花样，皆是名手雕镂，五彩销金嵌宝的。一榻一榻，或有贮书处，或有设鼎处，或安置笔砚处，或供花设瓶、安放盆景处。其榻各式各样，或天圆地方，或葵花蕉叶，或连环半壁。真是花团锦簇，剔透玲珑。倏尔五色纱糊就，竟系小窗；倏尔彩绫轻覆，竟系幽户。且满墙满壁，皆系随依古董玩器之形抠成的槽子。诸如琴、剑、悬瓶、桌屏之类，虽悬于壁，却都是与壁相平的。众人都赞：“好精致想头！难为怎么想来！”

原来贾政等走了进来，未进两层，便都迷了旧路，左瞧也有门可通，右瞧又有窗暂隔，及到了跟前，又被一架书挡住。回头再走，又有窗纱明透，门径可行；及至门前，忽见迎面也进来一群人，都与自己形相一样，却是玻璃大镜相照。及转过镜去，益发见门子多了。贾珍笑道：“老爷随我来。从这门出去，便是后院，从后院出去，倒比先近了。”说着，又转了两层纱厨锦榻，果得一门出去，院中满架蔷薇、宝相。转过花障，则见青溪前阻。众人诧异：“这股水又是从何而来？”贾珍遥指道：“原从那闸起流至那洞口，从东北山坳里引到那村庄里，又开一道岔口，引到西南上，共总流到这里，仍旧合在一处，从那墙下出去。”众人听了，都



not the other.”

“What do you suggest then?” demanded his father.

“Something like ‘Red Fragrance and Green Jade’ would bring out the charm of both, I think.”

“Too feeble!” Jia Zheng shook his head.

He led the way into the building. It was unusually set out with no clear-cut divisions between the different rooms. There were only partitions formed of shelves for books, bronze tripods, stationery, flower vases and miniature gardens, some round, some square, some shaped like sunflowers, plantain leaves or intersecting arcs. They were beautifully carved with the motifs “clouds and a hundred bats” of the “three companions of winter” — pine, plum and bamboo — as well as landscapes and figures, birds and flowers, scrollwork, imitation curios and symbols of good fortune or long life. All executed by the finest craftsmen, they were brilliantly coloured and inlaid with gold or precious stones. The effect was splendid, the workmanship exquisite. Here a strip of coloured gauze concealed a small window, there a gorgeous curtain hid a door. There were also niches on the walls to fit antiques, lyres, swords, vases or other ornaments, which hung level with the surface of the wall. Their amazement and admiration for the craftsmen’s ingenuity knew no bounds.

After passing two partitions Jia Zheng and his party lost their way. To their left they saw a door, to their right a window; but when they went forward their passage was blocked by a bookshelf. Turning back they glimpsed the way through another window; but on reaching the door they suddenly saw a party just like their own confronting them — they were looking at a big mirror. Passing round this they came to more doorways.

“Follow me, sir,” urged Jia Zhen with a smile. “Let me take you to the back courtyard and show you a short cut.”

He conducted them past two gauze screens out into a courtyard filled with rose trellises. Skirting round the fence, Baoyu saw a clear stream in front.

All exclaimed in astonishment, “Where does this water come from?”

Jia Zhen pointed to a spot in the distance.

“It flows from that lock we saw through the ravine, then from the northeast valley to the little farm, where some is diverted southwest.

道：“神妙之极！”说着，忽见大山阻路。众人都道：“迷了路了。”贾珍笑道：“随我来。”仍在前导引，众人随他，直由山脚边忽一转，便是平坦宽阔大路，豁然大门前见。众人都道：“有趣，有趣，真搜神夺巧之至！”于是大家出来。

那宝玉一心只记挂着里边，又不见贾政吩咐，少不得跟到书房。贾政忽想起他来，方喝道：“你还不去？难道还逛不足！也不想逛了这半日，老太太必悬挂着。快进去，疼你也白疼了。”宝玉听说，方退了出来。下回分解。



Here both streams converge to flow out underneath the wall.”

“Miraculous!” they marvelled.

Now another hill barred their way and they no longer had any sense of direction; but Jia Zhen laughingly made them follow him, and as soon as they rounded the foot of the hill they found themselves on a smooth highway not far from the main entrance.

“How diverting,” they said. “Really most ingenious.”

And so they left the garden.

Baoyu was longing to get back to the girls, but receiving no dismissal from his father he had to follow him to the library. Now Jia Zheng suddenly remembered his presence.

“Why are you still here?” he demanded. “Haven’t you had enough of wandering around? The old lady will be worrying about you. She’s wasting her love on you. Off you go, quick.”

Then at last Baoyu could withdraw. What followed is recorded in the next chapter.







第十八回

庆元宵贾元春归省 助情人林黛玉传诗

却说宝玉来至院外，就有跟贾政的几个小厮上来拦腰抱住，都说：“今儿亏我们，老爷才喜欢，老太太打发人出来问了几遍，都亏我们回说喜欢；不然，若老太太叫你进去，就不得展才了。人人都说，你才那些诗比世人的都强。今儿得了这样的彩头，该赏我们了。”宝玉笑道：“每人一吊钱。”众人道：“谁没见那一吊钱！把这荷包赏了罢。”说着，一个上来解荷包，那一个解扇囊，不容分说，将宝玉所佩之物尽行解去。又道：“好生送上去罢。”一个抱了起来，几个围绕，送至贾母二门前。那时贾母已命人看了几次，众奶娘丫鬟跟上来，见过贾母。知不曾难为着他，心中自是欢喜。

少时袭人倒了茶来，见身边佩物一件无存，因笑道：“带的东西又是那起没脸的东西们解了去了。”林黛玉听说，走来瞧瞧，果然一件无存，因向宝玉道：“我给的那个荷包也给他们了？你明儿再想我的东西，可不能够了！”说毕，赌气回房，将前日宝玉所烦他作的那个香袋儿——才做了一半——赌气拿过来就铰。宝玉见他生气，便知不妥，忙赶过



Chapter 18

Yuanchun Visits Her Parents on the Feast of Lanterns Daiyu Helps Her True Love by Passing Him a Poem

As soon as Baoyu was out of the courtyard, the pages who attended Jia Zheng stepped forward to throw their arms around his waist.

They said, "It's lucky for you that the master was in such a good mood today. The old lady sent several times to ask how things were, and you should thank us for telling her he looked pleased. Otherwise she'd have sent for you and you wouldn't have had this chance to shine. Everybody said your poems were the best. "Today's your lucky day, so give us a tip."

"You shall each have a string of cash," he promised them.

"Who hasn't seen a string of cash?" cried one. "Give me your pouch."

Swarming round without so much as a "by your leave," they stripped him of his scented pouch, fan-sheath and other pendants.

"Now let's see him back!" they cried.

With one of them carrying him, the others in a troop escorted him along to the outer courtyard of the Lady Dowager's apartments.

Since she had sent several times to see how her grandson was faring, she was naturally pleased when her nannies and maids brought him in, none the worse for his experience.

When presently Xiren handed him tea she noticed that not one of his pendants was left. "So those shameless wretches have taken all your things again," she remarked with a smile.

Daiyu came over to see if this was true. Sure enough, all his trinkets had gone.

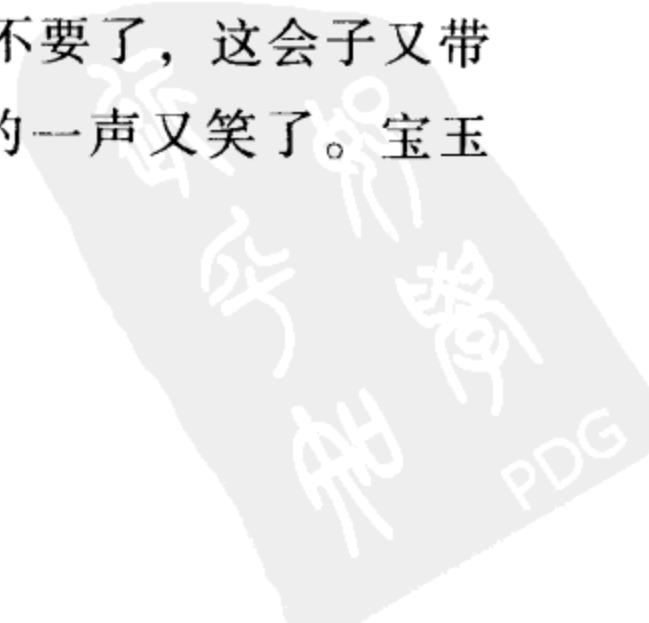
"So you've given them that pouch I made you too!" she remarked. "All right, that's the last thing you'll ever get from me."

Going crossly back to her own room, she took her scissors and started cutting up the sachet she had been making for him at Baoyu's own re-



来，早剪破了。宝玉已见过这香囊，虽尚未完，却十分精巧，费了许多工夫。今见无故剪了，却也可气。因忙把衣领解了，从里面红袄襟上将黛玉所给的那荷包解了下来，递与黛玉瞧道：“你瞧瞧，这是什么！我那一回把你的东西给人了？”林黛玉见他如此珍重，带在里面，可知是怕人拿去之意，因此又自悔莽撞，未见皂白，就剪了香袋。因此又愧又气，低头一言不发。宝玉道：“你也不用剪，我知道你是懒待给我东西。我连这荷包奉还，何如？”说着，掷向他怀中便走。黛玉见如此，越发气起来，声咽气堵，又汪汪的滚下泪来，拿起荷包来又剪。宝玉见他如此，忙回身抢住，笑道：“好妹妹，饶了他罢！”黛玉将剪子一摔，拭泪说道：“你不用同我好一阵歹一阵的，要恼，就撂开手。这当了什么！”说着，赌气上床，面向里倒下拭泪。禁不住宝玉上来“妹妹”长“妹妹”短赔不是。

前面贾母一片声找宝玉。众奶娘丫鬟们忙回说：“在林姑娘房里呢。”贾母听说道：“好，好，好！让他姊妹们一处顽顽罢。才他老子拘了他这半天，让他开心一会子罢。只别叫他们拌嘴，不许扭了他。”众人答应着。黛玉被宝玉缠不过，只得起来道：“你的意思不叫我安生，我就离了你。”说着往外就走。宝玉笑道：“你到那里，我跟到那里。”一面仍拿起荷包来带上。黛玉伸手抢道：“你说不要了，这会子又带上，我也替你怪臊的！”说着，“嗤”的一声又笑了。宝玉





quest.

Baoyu, seeing that she was angry, knew that something was up and hurried after her. Too late. Although the sachet had not been finished, the embroidery on it was very fine and she had put a lot of work into it, so he was annoyed to see it spoilt for no reason. Quickly undoing his collar, he pulled out the pouch he was wearing over his red tunic.

“Look, what’s this?” he asked, showing it to her. “When have I ever given anything of yours to someone else?”

Realizing that he treasured her gift so much that he had kept it safely hidden away, Daiyu repented of her hastiness and hung her head in silence.

“You didn’t have to cut it up,” went on Baoyu reproachfully. “I know you don’t like giving me anything, so I’ll let you have this one back too, how about that?” Tossing it into her lap, he turned to go.

Choking with anger Daiyu burst into tears. She picked up the pouch meaning to cut it to pieces as well. But he rushed back to stop her, begging, “Dear cousin, spare it!”

She threw down the scissors to brush away her tears.

“You don’t have to treat me like that, kind one moment and cruel the next. If it’s a quarrel you want, we’d better have nothing more to do with each other. Why carry on like this?”

She flung herself tearfully down on her bed with her face towards the wall, wiping her streaming eyes. In desperation, Baoyu leant over her begging, “Dear cousin, dear kind cousin, do forgive me!”

Meanwhile the Lady Dowager had been asking where Baoyu was. Hearing that he was with Daiyu she said, “That’s good. Let them amuse themselves together for a while. He deserves a little relaxation after being kept so long under check by his father. Just see that they don’t quarrel. You mustn’t upset him.” And to this the servants agreed.

Unable to shake Baoyu off, Daiyu got up. “Since you won’t give me any peace, I’m going to leave you,” she declared.

As she started out he said with a smile, “Wherever you go, I’ll go with you.” He was fastening on the pouch again as he spoke.

Daiyu snatched at it, scolding, “First you say you don’t want it, and now you’re putting it on again. I really blush for you.” She started to

道：“好妹妹，明儿另替我作个香袋儿罢。”黛玉道：“那也只瞧我高兴罢了。”一面说，一面二人出房，到王夫人上房中去了，可巧宝钗亦在那里。

此时王夫人那边热闹非常。原来贾蔷已从姑苏采买了十二个女孩子——并聘了教习——以及行头等事来了。那时薛姨妈另迁于东北上一所幽静房舍居住，将梨香院早已腾挪出来，另行修理了，就令教习在此教演女戏。又另派家中旧有曾演学过歌唱的女人们——如今皆已皤然老妪了，着他们带领管理。就令贾蔷总理其日用出入银钱等事，以及诸凡大小所需之物料帐目。又有林之孝家的来回：“采访聘买得十个小尼姑、小道姑都有了，连新作的二十分道袍也有了。外有一个带发修行的，本是苏州人氏，祖上也是读书仕宦之家。因生了这位姑娘自小多病，买了许多替身儿皆不中用，促的这位姑娘亲自入了空门，方才好了，所以带发修行，今年才十八岁，法名妙玉。如今父母俱已亡故，身边只有两个老嬷嬷、一个小丫头伏侍。文墨也极通，经文也不用学了，模样儿又极好。因听见‘长安’都中有观音遗迹并贝叶遗文，去岁随了师父上来，现在西门外牟尼庵住着。他师父极精演先天神数，于去冬圆寂了。妙玉本欲扶灵回乡的，他师父临寂遗言，说他‘衣食起居不宜回乡，在此静居，后来自然有你的结果’。所以他竟未回乡。”王夫人不等回完，便说：“既这样，我们何不接了他来。”林之孝家的回道：“请他，他说‘侯门公府，必以贵势压人，我再不去的。’”王夫人笑道：



giggle.

“Dear cousin, do make me another sachet tomorrow.”

“We’ll have to see how I feel.”

They went together then to Lady Wang’s quarters where they happened to find Baochai. Everyone was in a state of great excitement, as the twelve young actresses bought by Jia Qiang in Suzhou had just arrived, together with the instructors he had hired and the costumes for the operas they would perform.

Aunt Xue had moved to quiet, secluded quarters in the northeast part of the grounds, and Pear Fragrance Court had been made ready for the rehearsals. Some family maids who had once trained as opera-singers themselves but were now hoary dames were sent to look after the little actresses, while Jia Qiang was put in charge of their daily expenses and the provision of everything they required.

Just at this time, Lin Zhixiao’s wife came to report, “The twenty-four little nuns — twelve Buddhist and twelve Taoist — whom I selected and purchased have now arrived, and their twenty-four new habits are ready. There’s another girl, too, who had entered holy orders without shaving her head. She comes from a Suzhou family of scholars and officials. She was delicate as a child, and although they bought many substitute novices for her it was no use — her health didn’t improve until she joined the Buddhist order herself. That’s how she became a lay sister. She’s eighteen this year and her name in religion is Miaoyu. Her parents are dead now and she only has two old nurses and one maid to look after her. She’s widely read and well-versed in the sutras, besides being very good-looking. She came to the capital last year, having heard there were relics of Guanyin here and canons inscribed on pattra leaves. She’s been living in the Sakyamuni Convent outside the West Gate. Her tutor was an excellent diviner, but she passed away last winter. Miaoyu had meant to escort the coffin back to her native place; but as her tutor lay dying she told the girl not to go back home but to wait quietly where she was for something fortune had in store for her. So she didn’t accompany the coffin back.”

“In that case, why not ask her here?” put in Lady Wang.

“She’d refuse,” objected Lin Zhixiao’s wife. “She’d be afraid of

“他既是官宦小姐，自然骄傲些，就下个帖子请他何妨。”林之孝家的答应了出去，命书启相公写请帖去请妙玉。次日遣人备车轿去接迎。后话暂且搁过，此时不能表白。

当下又有人回，工程上等着糊东西的纱绫，请凤姐去开楼拣纱绫；又有人来回，请凤姐开库，收金银器皿。连王夫人并上房丫鬟等众，皆一时不得闲的。宝钗便说：“咱们别在这里碍手碍脚，找探丫头去。”说着，同宝玉、黛玉往迎春等房中来闲顽，无话。

王夫人等日日忙乱，直到十月将尽，幸皆全备：各处监管都交清帐目；各处古董文玩，皆已陈设齐备；采办鸟雀的，自仙鹤、孔雀以及鹿、兔、鸡、鹅等类，悉已买全，交于园中各处像景饲养；贾蔷那边也演出二十出杂戏来；小尼姑、道姑也都学念会了几卷经咒。贾政方略心意宽畅，又请贾母等进园，色色斟酌，点缀妥当，再无一些遗漏不当之处了。于是贾政方择日题本。本上之日，奉朱批准奏：次年正月十五上元之日，恩准贾妃省亲。贾府领了此恩旨，益发昼夜不闲，年也不曾好生过的。

展眼元宵在迩，自正月初八日，就有太监出来先看方向：何处更衣，何处燕坐，何处受礼，何处开宴，何处退息。又有巡察地方总理关防太监等，带了许多小太监出来，



being looked down on in a noble household.”

“A young lady from an official family is bound to be rather proud,” agreed Lady Wang. “Why not send her a written invitation?”

Lin Zhixiao’s wife agreed and left. One of the secretaries was instructed to make out an invitation, and the following day servants were sent with a carriage and sedan-chair to fetch Miaoyu. As to what followed, we can leave that till later.

A servant came just then to request Xifeng to open the storeroom and issue the gauze and silk needed by the workmen for screens. Another asked her to store away the gold and silver utensils. Meanwhile Lady Wang and her maids were busy too.

So Baochai suggested, “Let’s not stay here where we’re only in the way. Let’s go and find Tanchun.”

She took Baoyu and Daiyu to the rooms of Yingchun and others to while away the time.

For Lady Wang and her helpers the days passed in a flurry of preparations until, towards the end of the tenth month, all was ready. The stewards had handed in their accounts; antiques and precious objects had been set out; the pleasure grounds were well-stocked with cranes, peacocks, deer, rabbits, chicken and geese to be reared in appropriate places; Jia Qiang had twenty operas ready; and the little Buddhist and Taoist nuns had memorized various sutras and incantations.

Then Jia Zheng, able at last to breathe more freely, invited the Lady Dowager to make a final inspection of the Garden and see that all was in order with nothing overlooked. This done, he chose an auspicious date and wrote a memorial, and the very same day that it was presented the Son of Heaven acceded to his request. The Imperial Consort would be permitted to visit her parents for the Feast of Lanterns on the fifteenth of the first month the following year. This threw the whole household into such a commotion that, hard at work day and night, they scarcely had time to celebrate the New Year.

In a twinkling the Feast of Lanterns would arrive. On the eighth of the first month eunuchs came from the Palace to inspect the general layout of the Garden and the apartment where the Imperial consort would change her clothes, sit with her family, receive their homage, feast them and

各处关防，挡围幙；指示贾宅人员何处退，何处跪，何处进膳，何处启事，种种仪注不一。外面又有工部官员并五城兵备道打扫街道，撵逐闲人。贾赦等督率匠人扎花灯烟火之花，至十四日，俱已停妥。这一夜，上下通不曾睡。

至十五日五鼓，自贾母等有爵者，按品服大妆。园内各处，帐舞蟠龙，帘飞彩凤，金银焕彩，珠宝争辉，鼎焚百合之香，瓶插长春之蕊，静悄无人咳嗽。贾赦等在西街门外，贾母等在荣府大门外。街头巷口，俱系围幙挡严。正等的不耐烦，忽一太监骑大马而来，贾母忙接入，问其消息。太监道：“早多着呢！未初刻用过晚膳，未正二刻还到宝灵宫拜佛，酉初刻进大明宫领宴看灯方请旨，只怕戌初才起身呢。”凤姐听了道：“既这么着，老太太、太太且请回房，等是时候再来也不迟。”于是贾母等暂且自便，园中悉赖凤姐照理。又拿执事人带领太监们用酒饭。

一时传人，一担一担的挑进蜡烛来，各处点灯。方点完时，忽听外边马跑之声。一时，又有十来个太监都喘吁吁跑来拍手儿。这些太监会意都知道，说“来了，来了”，各按



retire to rest. The eunuch in charge of security also posted many younger eunuchs as guards by the screened and curtained entrances to the retiring rooms. Detailed instructions were given to all members of the household as to where they should withdraw, where they should kneel, serve food or make announcements — all the exact etiquette to be observed. Outside, officers from the Board of Works and the Chief of the Metropolitan Police had the streets swept and cleared of loiterers. Jia She superintended the craftsmen making ornamental lanterns and fireworks, and by the fourteenth everything was ready. But no one, high or low, slept a wink that night.

Before dawn the next day all those with official ranks from the Lady Dowager downwards put on full ceremonial dress. Everywhere in the Garden were hangings and screens brilliantly embroidered with dancing dragons and flying phoenixes; gold and silver glittered, pearls and precious stones shimmered; richly blended incense burnt in the bronze tripods, and fresh flowers filled the vases. Not a cough broke the solemn silence.

Jia She and the other men waited outside in the west street entrance, the Lady Dowager and the women outside the main gate, the ends of the street and the alleys leading to it all having been screened off.

They were growing tired of waiting when a eunuch rode up on a big horse. The Lady Dowager welcomed him in and asked for news.

“It will be a long time yet,” the eunuch told her. “Her Highness is to dine at one, pray to Buddha in the Palace of the Precious Spirit at half past two, and at five go to feast in the Palace of Great Splendour and look at the display of lanterns before asking leave from the Emperor. She can hardly set out until seven.”

This being the case, Xifeng suggested that the Lady Dowager and Lady Wang should go inside to rest and come back later.

So the Lady Dowager and others retired, leaving Xifeng in charge. She ordered the stewards to conduct the eunuchs to where refreshments were waiting. Then she had loads of candles carried in for all the lanterns.

It was not until the candles had been lit that a clatter of hooves was heard in the street. The next moment up panted ten or more eunuchs,

方向站住。贾赦领合族子侄在西街门外，贾母领合族女眷在大门外迎接。半日静悄悄的。忽见一对红衣太监骑马缓缓的走来，至西街门下了马，将马赶出围幙之外，便垂手面西站住。半日又是一对，亦是如此。少时便来了十来对，方闻得隐隐细乐之声，一对对龙旌凤翼，雉羽夔头，又有销金提炉焚着御香；然后一把曲柄七凤黄金伞过来，便是冠袍带履。又有值事太监捧着香珠、绣帕、漱盂、拂尘等类。一队队过完，后面方是八个太监抬着一顶金顶金黄绣凤版舆，缓缓行来。贾母等连忙路旁跪下。早飞跑过几个太监来，扶起贾母、并邢、王两夫人来。那版舆抬进大门，入仪门往东去，到一所院落门前，有执拂太监跪请下舆更衣。于是抬舆入门，太监等散去，只有昭容、彩嫔等引领元春下舆。只见院内各色花灯烂灼，皆系纱绫扎成，精致非常。上面有一匾灯，写着“体仁沐德”四字，元春入室更衣毕，复出。上舆进园。只见园中香烟缭绕，花彩缤纷，处处灯光相映，时时细乐声喧，说不尽这太平气象，富贵风流。——此时自己回



clapping their hands as they ran. At this signal the other eunuchs said, "Her Highness is coming!" They all rushed to their posts.

For a long time they waited in silence, Jia She and the young men of the family by the entrance of the west street, the Lady Dowager and the women in front of the main gate.

Then two eunuchs wearing scarlet uniforms rode slowly up to the entrance of the west street. Dismounting, they led their horses behind the screens, then stood to attention, their faces turned towards the west. After some time another pair appeared, then another, until there were ten pairs lined up and soft music could be heard in the distance.

And now a long procession approached: several pairs of eunuchs carrying dragon banners, others with phoenix fans, pheasant plumes and ceremonial insignia, as well as gold censers burning Imperial incense. Next came a curved-handled yellow umbrella on which were embroidered seven phoenixes, and under this a head-dress, robe, girdle and slippers. After this came attendant eunuchs bearing a rosary, embroidered handkerchiefs, a rinse-bowl, fly-whisks and the like.

Last of all, borne slowly forward by eight eunuchs, came a gold-topped palanquin embroidered with phoenixes.

All present, including the Lady Dowager, hastily fell to their knees by the side of the road. Eunuchs rushed over to help up the old lady as well as Lady Xing and Lady Wang.

The palanquin was carried through the main gate to the entrance of the courtyard on the east, where a eunuch holding a whisk knelt down and invited the Imperial Consort to dismount and change her clothes. Then the palanquin was borne inside and the eunuchs withdrew, leaving Yuanchun's ladies-in-waiting to help her alight.

She observed that the courtyard was brightly lit with ornamental lanterns of every kind, all exquisitely made of finest gauze. The highest, a rectangular lantern, bore the inscription: Fraught with Favour, Basking in Kindness.

Yuanchun entered the robing room and changed, then remounted her palanquin which was carried into the Garden. She found it wreathed with the perfumed smoke of incense, splendid with flowers, brilliant with countless lanterns, melodious with strains of soft music. Words fail to describe



想当初在大荒山中，青埂峰下，那等凄凉寂寞；若不亏癞僧、跛道二人携来到此，又安得能见这段世面。本欲作一篇《灯月赋》、《省亲颂》，以志今日之事，但又恐入了别书的俗套。按此时之景，即作一赋一赞，也不能形容得尽其妙；即不作赋赞，其豪华富丽，观者诸公亦可想而知矣。所以倒是省了这工夫纸墨，且说正经为是。

且说贾妃在轿内，看此园内外如此豪华，因默默叹息奢华过费。忽又见执拂太监跪请登舟，贾妃乃下舆。只见清流一带，势如游龙，两边石栏上，皆系水晶玻璃各色风灯，点的如银花雪浪；上面柳杏诸树虽无花叶，然皆用通草绸绫纸绢依势作成，粘于枝上的，每一株悬灯数盏；更兼池中荷荇鳧鹭之属，亦皆系螺蚌羽毛之类作就的。诸灯上下争辉，真系玻璃世界，珠宝乾坤。船上亦系各种精致盆景诸灯，珠帘绣幙，桂楫兰桡，自不必说。已而入一石港洞，洞上一面匾灯，明现着“蓼汀花溆”四字。按此四字并“有凤来仪”等处，皆系上回贾政偶然一试宝玉之课艺才情耳，何今日认真用此匾联？况贾政世代诗书，来往诸客屏侍座陪者，悉皆才技之流，岂无一名手题撰，竟用小儿一戏之辞苟且搪塞？真似暴发新荣之家，滥使银钱，一味抹油涂朱毕，则大书“前





that scene of peaceful magnificence and noble refinement.

Here, Readers, recalling the scene of desolation at the foot of Blue Ridge Peak in the Great Waste Mountain, I cannot but thank the scabby Buddhist and lame Taoist for bringing me to this place. For how otherwise could I have seen such a sight? I was tempted to write a lantern-poem or a eulogy on family reunion to pay tribute to it, but feared slipping into the vulgar vein of other books. Besides, even writing an ode or eulogy could not do justice to the scene's enchantment. If, on the other hand, I omit to write one my worthy readers can imagine its magnificence for themselves. So I had better save both time and paper and return from this digression to our story.

Now, as she gazed from her palanquin at the dazzling display both within and without the Garden, the Imperial Consort sighed softly:

“This is too extravagant!”

Then a eunuch with a whisk knelt down by the palanquin and invited her to proceed by boat. As she alighted she saw before her a clear waterway winding like a dragon. From the marble balustrades on either bank lanterns of crystal and glass of every description shed a silvery light, clear as snow. The wintry boughs of the willows and apricot trees above them were festooned with artificial flowers and leaves made of rice-paper and silk, and from every tree hung lanterns. Lovely too on the water were the lotus flowers, duckweed and water-fowl made out of shells and feathers. Lanterns high and low seemed trying to outshine each other. It was truly a world of crystal and precious stones! The boats were magnificent too, with lanterns, rare miniature gardens, pearl portieres, embroidered curtains, rudders of cassia and oars of aromatic wood, which we need not describe in detail.

By now they had reached a marble landing-stage. The lantern-sign above it bore the words, “Smartweed Bank and Flowery Harbour.”

Regarding this name, Reader, and others such as “Where the Phoenix Alights” from the last chapter in which Jia Zheng tested Baoyu's literary talent, you may wonder to find them actually used as inscriptions. For the Jias, after all, were a scholarly family all of whose friends and protégés were men of parts. Moreover they could easily find well-known writers to compose inscriptions. Why then make shift with phrases tossed



门绿柳垂金锁，后户青山列锦屏”之类，则以为大雅可观，岂《石头记》中通部所表之宁、荣贾府所为哉！据此论之，竟大相矛盾了。诸公不知，待蠢物将原委说明，大家方知。

当日这贾妃未入宫时，自幼亦系贾母教养。后来添了宝玉，贾妃乃长姊，宝玉为弱弟，贾妃每上念母年将迈，始得此弟，是以怜爱宝玉，与诸弟待之不同。且同随祖母，刻未暂离。那宝玉未入学堂之先，三四岁时，已得贾妃手引口传，教授了几本书、数千字在腹内了。其名分虽系姊弟，其情形有如母子。自入宫后，时时带信出来与父母说：“千万好生扶养，不严不能成器，过严恐生不虞，且致父母之忧。”眷念切爱之心，刻未能忘。前日贾政闻塾师背后赞宝玉偏才尽有，贾政未信，适巧遇园已落成，令其题撰，聊一试其情思之清浊。其所拟之匾联虽非妙句，在幼童为之，亦或可取。即另使名公大笔为之，固不费难，然想来倒不如这本家风味有趣。更使贾妃见之，知系其爱弟所为，亦或不负其素日切望之意。因有这段原委，故此竟用了宝玉所题之联额。那日虽未曾题完，后来亦曾补拟。

闲文少述，且说贾妃看了四字，笑道：“‘花溲’二字便妥，何必‘蓼汀’？”侍座太监听了，忙下小舟登岸，飞传





off by a boy? Were they like newly rich upstarts who throw money about like dirt and, having painted their mansion crimson, put up huge inscriptions such as "Green willows with golden locks before the gate, Blue hills like embroidered screens behind the house," fancying these the height of elegance? Could that be the way of the Jia family described in this *Tale of the Stone*? This is surely a contradiction? Let me, stupid as I am, explain this to you.

The Imperial Consort, before she entered the Palace, had been brought up from childhood by the Lady Dowager. And after Baoyu was born, as Yuanchun was his elder sister and Baoyu her younger brother, bearing in mind that their mother had given birth to him late in life, she loved him more than her other brothers and lavished all her care on him. They both stayed with their grandmother and were inseparable. Even before Baoyu started school, when he was hardly four years old, she taught him to recite several texts and to recognize several thousand characters. She was more like a mother to him than an elder sister. After she entered the Palace she often wrote letters home reminding her parents to educate him well, for unless strictly disciplined he would not amount to much, but if treated too sternly he might also give them cause for anxiety. Her loving concern for him had never ceased.

Jia Zheng, earlier on, had scarcely believed the tutor's report that Baoyu had a flair for literary composition. As the Garden happened then to be ready for inspection, he had called on his son for inscriptions in order to test him. And although Baoyu's childish efforts were far from inspired, at least they were passable. The family could easily enough have enlisted the help of famous scholars; but it seemed to them that a special interest attached to names chosen by a member of the house. Besides, when the Imperial Consort learned that these were the work of her beloved younger brother, she would feel that he had not fallen short of her hopes. For these reasons Baoyu's inscriptions were adopted. Not all had been chosen that day; some he supplied later. But enough of this.

When the Imperial Consort saw this name, she commented with a smile: "Just 'Flowery Harbour' would do. Why 'Smart-weed Bank' too?"

As soon as the eunuch in attendance heard this, he hastily disem-

与贾政。贾政听了，即忙移换。一时，舟临内岸，复弃舟上舆，便见琳宫绰约，桂殿巍峨。石牌坊上明显“天仙宝镜”四字，贾妃忙命换“省亲别墅”四字。于是进入行宫。但见庭燎烧空，香屑布地，火树琪花，金窗玉槛。说不尽帘卷虾须，毯铺鱼獭，鼎飘麝脑之香，屏列雉尾之扇。真是：

金门玉户神仙府，桂殿兰宫妃子家。

贾妃看罢乃问：“此殿何无匾额？”随侍太监跪启曰：“此系正殿，外臣未敢擅拟。”贾妃点头不语。礼仪太监跪请升座受礼，两陛乐起。礼仪太监二人引贾赦、贾政等于月台下排班，殿上昭容传谕曰：“免。”太监引贾赦等退出。又有太监引荣国太君及女眷等自东阶升月台上排班，昭容再传谕曰：“免。”于是引退。

茶已三献，贾妃降座，乐止。退入侧殿更衣，方备省亲车驾出园。至贾母正室，欲行家礼，贾母等俱跪止不迭。贾妃满眼垂泪，方彼此上前厮见，一手搀贾母，一手搀王夫人，三个人满心里皆有许多话，只是俱说不出，只管呜咽对



barked and went ashore to report to Jia Zheng, who immediately had the alteration made.

Meanwhile the boat had reached the further shore and again Yuanchun mounted her palanquin. Before her now there towered the beautiful hall of an imposing palace. The marble archway in front of it bore the inscription: "Precious Realm for the Immortal." At once she ordered this to be changed to "House of Reunion."

As she entered this temporary palace, she saw torches in the courtyard flaring to the sky, powdered incense strewing the ground, flaming trees, jasper flowers, gilded windows and jade balustrades, to say nothing of screens as fine as the shrimp's antennae, carpets of otter-skin, musk burning in tripods, and fans made from pheasant plumage. Truly this was:

An abode with golden gates and jade doors fit for immortals,
Its cassia and orchid chambers a worthy setting for the Imperial Consort.

After glancing around she asked, "Why has this place no name?"

The eunuch attendant fell on his knees. "Because this is the main palace," he replied, "no subject outside the Court dared suggest a name."

The Imperial Consort nodded and said nothing.

Another eunuch, the Master of Ceremonies, knelt and begged her to sit in a chair of state to receive the obeisances of her family. On both sides of the steps music was played as two eunuchs ushered in Jia She and the men of the family to range themselves below the dais; but when a lady-in-waiting relayed the Imperial Consort's command to dispense with this ceremony they withdrew. Then the Lady Dowager of the Rong Mansion and the female relatives were led up the east flight of steps to the dais, but they too were exempted from the ceremony and shown out.

After tea had been served three times, Yuanchun descended from the throne and the music ceased while she went into a side chamber to change her clothes. Meanwhile a carriage had been prepared to drive her out of the Garden to visit her parents.

First she went to the Lady Dowager's reception room to pay her respects as a grand-daughter of the house; but before she could do so her grandmother and the others knelt to prevent her. The Imperial Consort's

泣。邢夫人、李纨、王熙凤、迎、探、惜三姊妹等，俱在旁围绕，垂泪无言。半日，贾妃方忍悲强笑，安慰贾母、王夫人道：“当日既送我到那不得见人的去处，好容易今日回家，娘儿们一会，不说说笑笑，反倒哭起来。一会子我去了，又不知多早晚才来！”说到这句，不禁又哽咽起来。邢夫人等忙上来解劝。贾母等让贾妃归座，又逐次一一见过，又不免哭泣一番。然后东西两府掌家执事人丁在厅外行礼，及两府掌家执事媳妇领丫鬟等行礼毕。贾妃因问：“薛姨妈、宝钗、黛玉因何不见？”王夫人启曰：“外眷无职，未敢擅入。”贾妃听了，忙命快请。一时，薛姨妈等进来，欲行国礼，亦命免过，上前各叙阔别寒温。又有贾妃原带进宫去的丫鬟抱琴等上来叩见，贾母等连忙扶起，命人别室款待。执事太监及彩嫔、昭容各侍从人等，宁国府及贾赦宅两处自有人款待，只留三四个小太监答应。母女姊妹深叙些离别情景，及家务私情。

又有贾政至帘外问安，贾妃垂帘行参等事。又隔帘含泪谓其父曰：“田舍之家，虽齑盐布帛，终能聚天伦之乐；今虽富贵已极，骨肉各方，然终无意趣！”贾政亦含泪启道：





eyes were full of tears as her family drew near to greet her. As she clasped the hands of her grandmother and mother, the hearts of all three were too full to speak — they could do nothing but sob. Lady Xing, Li Wan, Xifeng, Yuanchun's half sister Tanchun and her cousins Yingchun and Xichun also stood beside them weeping silently. But at last the Imperial Consort mastered her grief and forced a smile as she tried to comfort them.

“Since you sent me away to that forbidden place, it hasn't been easy getting this chance today to come home and see you all again,” she said. “But instead of chatting and laughing, here we are crying! Soon I shall have to leave you, and there is no knowing when I can come back again.” At this she broke down afresh.

Lady Xing and the others did their best to console her and the Lady Dowager asked her to take a seat, after which she exchanged courtesies with each in turn and more tears were shed. Next the stewards and attendants of both mansions paid their respects outside the door, and so did their wives and the maids.

This ceremony at an end, Yuanchun asked why Aunt Xue, Baochai and Daiyu were missing.

Lady Wang explained that they were afraid to presume, not being members of the Jia family and having no official status.

The Imperial Consort asked them to be invited in at once, and they were about to pay homage according to Palace etiquette when she exempted them too and chatted with them.

Next Baoqin and the other maids whom Yuanchun had taken with her to the Palace kowtowed to the Lady Dowager, who hastily stopped them and sent them off to have some refreshments in another room. The senior eunuchs and ladies-in-waiting were also entertained by members of the staff of both mansions, leaving only three or four young eunuchs in attendance.

When the ladies of the family had spoken with feeling about their separation and all that had happened since, Jia Zheng from outside the door-curtain asked after the health of his daughter, and she in turn paid her respects.

With tears she told him, “Simple farmers who live on pickles and



“臣，草莽寒门，鸠群鸦属之中，岂意得征凤鸾之瑞。今贵人上锡天恩，下昭祖德，此皆山川日月之精奇、祖宗之遗德钟于一人，幸及政夫妇。且今上启天地生物之大德，垂古今未有之旷恩，虽肝脑涂地，臣子岂能得报于万一！惟朝乾夕惕，忠于厥职外，愿我君万寿千秋，乃天下苍生之同幸也。贵妃切勿以政夫妇残年为念，懣愤金怀，更祈自加珍爱。惟业业兢兢，勤慎恭肃以侍上殿，不负上体贴眷爱如此之隆恩也。”贾妃亦嘱“只以国事为重，暇时保养，切勿记念”等语。贾政又启：“园中所有亭台轩馆，皆系宝玉所题；如果有一二稍可寓目者，请别赐名为幸。”元妃听了宝玉能题，便含笑说：“果进益了。”贾政退出。贾妃见宝、林二人益发比别姊妹不同，真是姣花软玉一般。因问：“宝玉为何不进见？”贾母乃启：“无谕，外男不敢擅入。”元妃命快引进来。小太监出去引宝玉进来，先行国礼毕，元妃命他进前，携手拦于怀内，又抚其头颈笑道：“比先竟长了好些……”一语未终，泪如雨下。





dress in homespun at least know the joys of family life together. What pleasure can I take in high rank and luxury when we are separated like this?"

With tears too he replied, "Your subject, poor and obscure, little dreamed that our flock of common pigeons and crows would ever be blessed with a phoenix. Thanks to the Imperial favour and the virtue of our ancestors, your Noble Highness embodies the finest essences of nature and the accumulated merit of our forbears — such fortune has attended my wife and myself.

"His Majesty, who manifests the great virtue of all creation, has shown us such extraordinary and hitherto unknown favour that even if we dashed out our brains we could not repay one-thousandth part of our debt of gratitude. All I can do is to exert myself day and night, loyally carry out my official duties, and pray that our sovereign may live ten thousand years as desired by all under heaven.

"Your Noble Highness must not grieve your precious heart in concern for your ageing parents. We beg you to take better care of your own health. Be cautious, circumspect, diligent and respectful. Honour the Emperor and serve him well, so as to prove yourself not ungrateful for His Majesty's bountiful goodness and great kindness."

Then it was Yuanchun's turn to urge her father to devote himself to affairs of state, look after his health and dismiss all anxiety regarding her.

After this Jia Zheng informed her, "All the inscriptions on the pavilions and lodges in the Garden were composed by Baoyu. If you find one or two of the buildings not too tame, please condescend to re-name them yourself, that would make us extremely happy."

The news that Baoyu was already able to compose inscriptions made her exclaim with delight, "So he's making progress!"

When Jia Zheng had withdrawn, the Imperial Consort observed that Baochai and Daiyu stood out from their girl cousins, being truly fairer than flowers or finest jade. Then she inquired why Baoyu had not come to greet her. The Lady Dowager explained that, unless specially summoned, as a young man without official rank he dared not presume.

At once the Imperial Consort sent for him and a young eunuch ushered him in to pay homage according to Palace etiquette. His sister called



尤氏、凤姐等上来启道：“筵宴齐备，请贵妃游幸。”元妃等起身，命宝玉导引，遂同诸人步至园门前。早见灯光火树之中，诸般罗列非常。进园来先从“有凤来仪”、“红香绿玉”、“杏帘在望”、“蘅芷清芬”等处，登楼步阁，涉水缘山，百般眺览徘徊。一处处铺陈不一，一桩桩点缀新奇。贾妃极加奖赞，又劝：“以后不可太奢，此奢过分之极。”已而至正殿，谕免礼归座，大开筵宴。贾母等在下相陪，尤氏、李纨、凤姐等亲捧羹把盏。

元妃乃命传笔砚伺候，亲搦湘管，择其几处最喜者赐名。按其书云：

“顾恩思义” 匾额

天地启宏慈，赤子苍头同感戴；

古今垂旷典，九州万国被恩荣。此一匾一联书于正殿

“大观园” 园之名

“有凤来仪” 赐名曰“潇湘馆”

“红香绿玉” 改“怡红快绿” 即名曰“怡红院”

“蘅芷清芬” 赐名曰“蘅芜院”

“杏帘在望” 赐名曰“浣葛山庄”

正楼曰“大观楼”，东面飞楼曰“缀锦阁”，西面斜楼曰“含芳阁”。更有“蓼风轩”、“藕香榭”、“紫菱洲”、“荇叶渚”等名；又有四字的匾额十数个，诸如“梨花春雨”、“桐剪秋风”、“荻芦夜雪”等名，此时悉难全记。又命旧有

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him to her and took his hand. Drawing him close to her bosom, she stroked his neck and commented with a smile, "How you have grown!" But even as she spoke her tears fell like rain.

Madam You and Xifeng stepped forward then to announce, "The banquet is ready. We beg Your Highness to favour us with your presence." Then she rose and told Baoyu to lead the way.

Accompanied by all the rest she walked into the Garden, where the magnificent sights were lit up by lanterns. Past "Where the Phoenix Alights," "Crimson Fragrance and Green Jade," "Approach to Apricot Tavern" and "Pure Scent of Alpinia and Iris" they strolled, mounting pavilions, crossing streams, climbing miniature hills and enjoying the view from various different points. All the buildings were distinctively furnished, and each corner had such fresh, unusual features that Yuanchun was lavish with her praise and approval. But she cautioned them:

"You mustn't be so extravagant in future. This is far too much!"

When they reached the main reception palace she desired them to dispense with ceremony and take their seats. It was a sumptuous banquet. The Lady Dowager and the rest sat at tables on either side, while Madam You, Li Wan and Xifeng passed round dishes and poured the wine. Meanwhile Yuanchun asked for writing-brush and inkstone and with her own hand wrote names for the spots she liked best. For the main reception palace she wrote the inscription: *Recalling Imperial Favour, Mindful of Duty*. And the couplet:

Compassion vast as the universe extends to old and young,
Grace unknown before honours every state and land.

The pleasure grounds were named the Grand View Garden.

"Where the Phoenix Alights" was renamed "Bamboo Lodge," "Crimson Fragrance and Green Jade" was changed to "Happy Red and Delightful Green" and also called Happy Red Court. The name "Pure Scent of Alpinia and Iris" was altered to "Alpinia Park," the "Approach to Apricot Tavern" became "Hemp Washing Cottage." The main pavilion became "Grand View Pavilion," its eastern wing "Variegated Splendour Tower," that on the west "Fragrant Tower." Other names given were "Smartweed Breeze Cot," "Lotus Fragrance Anchorage," "Purple Caltrop Isle" and "Watercress Isle." She composed a dozen or



匾联俱不必摘去。于是先题一绝云：

衔山抱水建来精，多少工夫筑始成。

天上人间诸景备，芳园应锡大观名。

写毕，向诸姊妹笑道：“我素乏捷才，且不长于吟咏，妹辈素所深知。今夜聊以塞责，不负斯景而已。异日少暇，必补撰《大观园记》并《省亲颂》等文，以记今日之事。妹辈亦各题一匾一诗，随才之长短，亦暂吟成，不可因我微才所缚。且喜宝玉竟知题咏，是我意外之想。此中‘潇湘馆’、‘蘅芜院’二处，我所极爱，次之‘怡红院’、‘浣葛山庄’，此四大处，必得别有章句题咏方妙。前所题之联虽佳，如今再各赋五言律一首，使我当面试过，方不负我自幼教授之苦心。”宝玉只得答应了，下来自去构思。

迎、探、惜三人之中，要算探春又出于姊妹之上，然自忖亦难与薛、林争衡，只得勉强随众塞责而已。李纨也勉强凑成一律。贾妃先挨次看姊妹们的，写道是：

旷性怡情 匾额 迎春

园成景备特精奇，奉命羞题额旷怡。

谁信世间有此境，游来宁不畅神思？





so other inscriptions too such as “Pear Blossom in Spring Rain,” “Plane Trees in Autumn Wind” and “Artemisia in Evening Snow.” The rest of the inscriptions cannot all be recorded here. The other former inscriptions at her order remained unaltered.

Then the Imperial Consort wrote this verse:

Enfolding hills and streams laid out with skill —
What labour went to build this pleasure ground!
For these, the finest sights of earth and heaven,
Not fitter name than “Grand View” can be found.

With a simile she showed this to the girls and said, “I have never had a ready wit or any skill in versifying, as all of you know, but tonight I had to try my hand at a verse in honour of these pleasure grounds. Some day when I have more time, I promise to write a *Description of Grand View Garden* and a panegyric called *The Family Reunion* to commemorate this occasion.

“Now I want each of you to write an inscription and a poem to go with it. Do your best, and don’t feel restricted by my lame attempt. It was such a delightful surprise to me to find that Baoyu can compose inscriptions and poems. The Bamboo Lodge and Alpinia Park are the places I like best, and after them Happy Red Court and Hemp Washing Cottage. We must have four poems specially written for these. Although Baoyu’s couplets composed earlier are charming, I want him now in my presence to write four *lu-shi*¹ in five-character lines on each of these places. That will repay the efforts I made to teach him when he was a little boy.”

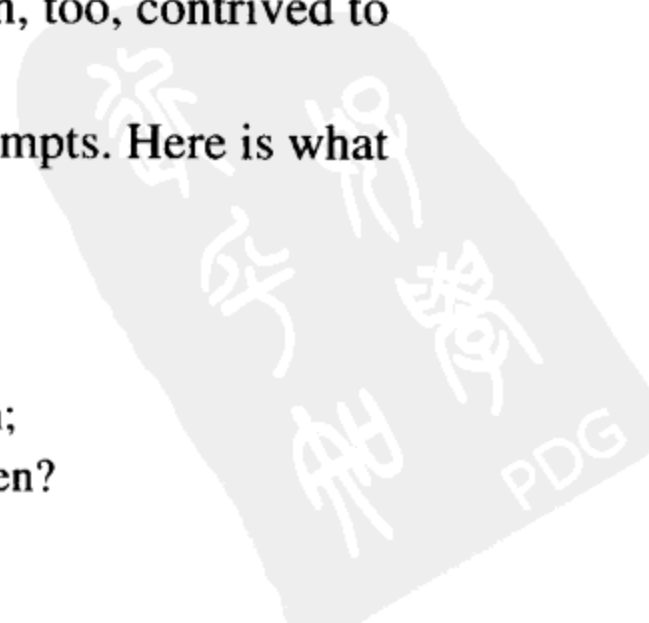
Baoyu had to agree and went off to rack his brains.

Of Yingchun, Tanchun and Xichun, Tanchun was the cleverest, but she realized that she was no match for Baochai and Daiyu. Still she had to write something, as the others were doing. Li Wan, too, contrived to compose a verse of sorts.

The Imperial Consort looked first at the girls’ attempts. Here is what they had written:

REFRESHING THE HEART

Landscapes strange and rare here we find:
Basfully, at the word of command, I take up my pen;
Who dreamed of such loveliness in the world of men?





万象争辉 匾额 探 春

名园筑出势巍巍，奉命何惭学浅微。
精妙一时言不出，果然万物生光辉。

文章造化 匾额 惜 春

山水横拖千里外，楼台高起五云中。
园修日月光辉里，景夺文章造化功。

文采风流 匾额 李 纨

秀水明山抱复回，风流文采胜蓬莱。
绿裁歌扇迷芳草，红衬湘裙舞落梅。
珠玉自应传盛世，神仙何幸下瑶台。
名园一自邀游赏，未许凡人到此来。

凝晖钟瑞 匾额 薛宝钗

芳园筑向帝城西，华日祥云笼罩奇。
高柳喜迁莺出谷，修篁时待凤来仪。
文风已著宸游夕，孝道应隆归省时。
睿藻仙才盈彩笔，自惭何敢再为辞。





A stroll through these grounds refreshes heart and mind.

Yingchun

ALL THINGS VIE IN SPLENDOUR

This garden laid out with consummate art —
I blush, with my poor skill, its fame to render.
Past telling are the marvels in this place
For here, indeed, all things compete in splendour.

Tanchun

REFINEMENT IN CREATION

This landscape stretches to infinity,
Its high pavilions soaring to the sky;
Laid out in radiance of the moon and sun,
Nature itself is by these scenes outdone.

Xichun

FAIR AND FINE

Bright hills and crystal water intertwine,
No fairy isle is half as fair or fine.
Green fans of singers mid sweet herbs are lost,
Plum-petals by red skirts of dancers tossed.
Rare verses should record this golden hour —
Our joy at the nymph's descent from jasper tower.
Once she has visited these lovely grounds
No mortal foot may overstep their bounds.

Li Wan

CONCENTRATED SPLENDOUR,
BESTOWED FELICITY

West of the Palace in this pleasure ground
Sunlight, auspicious clouds, rare sights abound;
High willows orioles from the vale invite,
Tall bamboos tempt the phoenix to alight.
This night's royal tour gives rise to poetry,
Her visit fosters filial piety.
Such wisdom flows from her immortal brush,
Too awed to pen more lines I can but blush.

Xue Baochai





世外仙源 匾额 林黛玉

名园筑何处，仙境别红尘。
借得山川秀，添来景物新。
香融金谷酒，花媚玉堂人。
何幸邀恩宠，宫车过往频。

贾妃看毕，称赏一番，又笑道：“终是薛、林二妹之作与众不同，非愚姊妹可同列者。”原来林黛玉安心今夜大展奇才，将众人压倒，不想贾妃只命一匾一咏，倒不好违谕多作，只胡乱作一首五言律应景罢了。

彼时宝玉尚未作完，只刚作了“潇湘馆”与“蘅芜院”二首，正作“怡红院”一首，起草内有“绿玉春犹卷”一句，宝钗转眼瞥见，便趁众人不理论，急忙回身悄推道：“他因不喜‘红香绿玉’四字，改了‘怡红快绿’；你这会子偏用‘绿玉’二字，岂不是有意和他争驰了？况且蕉叶之说也颇多，再想一个字改了罢。”宝玉见宝钗如此说，便拭汗道：“我这会子总想不起什么典故出处来。”宝钗笑道：“你只把‘绿玉’的‘玉’字改作‘蜡’字就是了。”宝玉道：“‘绿蜡’可有出处？”宝钗见问，悄悄的咂嘴点头笑道：“亏你今夜不过如此，将来金殿对策，你大约连‘赵钱孙李’都忘了





A FAIRYLAND FAR FROM THE WORLD OF MEN
Who knows where this illustrious garden lies?
Far from the dusty world this paradise.
Here streams and mountains lend their fair delight
Enhanced by many a novel scene and sight.
Scents heady as the wine from Golden Dell²
Bind all in these jade halls with flowery spell;
Blessed by Imperial favour, we would fain
Welcome the royal visitant again.

Lin Daiyu

Yuanchun praised all these verses, then remarked with a smile, "Cousin Baochai's and Cousin Daiyu's are specially good. We others are no match for them."

Now Daiyu had intended to outshine them all that night by a great display of her brilliance; but when the Imperial Consort asked them each for merely one inscription and one poem, she knew it would be presumptuous to write more and simply dashed off a verse for the occasion.

Meanwhile Baoyu was far from finished with his verses. Having written on Bamboo Lodge and Alpinia Park, he was now tackling Happy Red Court. His draft contained the line:

The green jade leaves in spring are yet furled tight.

Baochai, glancing at it while no one else was looking, nudged him surreptitiously.

"She didn't like 'Red Fragrance and Green Jade,'" she whispered. "That's why she changed it to 'Happy Red and Delightful Green.' If you use 'green jade' again, won't that look as if you're challenging her judgement? Besides, there are plenty of allusions to plantain leaves you could use. Better find another phrase."

Baoyu mopped his perspiring forehead. "I can't for the moment think of any," he said.

Baochai smiled. "Just change 'green jade' into 'green wax.'"

"Is there such an allusion?"

With a mocking smile and a smack of the lips she nodded. "If you're in such a state tonight, by the time you sit for the Palace Examination I dare say you'll even forget the first primer you ever read. Have you



呢!唐钱珣咏芭蕉诗头一句:‘冷烛无烟绿蜡干’,你都忘了不成?”宝玉听了,不觉洞开心臆,笑道:“该死、该死!现成眼前之物偏倒想不起来了,真可谓‘一字师’了。从此后我只叫你师父,再不叫姐姐了。”宝钗亦悄悄的笑道:“还不快作上去,只管姐姐妹妹的。谁是你姐姐?那上头穿黄袍的才是你姐姐,你又认我这姐姐来了。”一面说笑,因说笑却又怕他耽延工夫,遂抽身走开了。宝玉只得续成,共有了三首。

此时林黛玉未得展其抱负,自是不快。因见宝玉独作四律,大费神思,何不代他作两首,也省他些精神不到之处。想着,便也走至宝玉案旁,悄问:“可都有了?”宝玉道:“才有了三首,只少‘杏帘在望’一首了。”黛玉道:“既如此,你只抄录前三首罢。赶你写完那三首,我也替你作出这首了。”说毕,低头一想,早已吟成一律,便写在纸条上,搓成个团子,掷在他跟前。宝玉打开一看,只觉此首比自己所作的三首高过十倍,真是喜出望外,遂忙恭楷呈上。贾妃看到:

有凤来仪 臣 宝玉谨题

秀玉初成实,堪宜待凤凰。

竿竿青欲滴,个个绿生凉。

迸砌妨阶水,穿帘碍鼎香。





forgotten the opening line of that poem on the plantain by the Tang poet Qian Xu, 'Smokeless the cold candles, the green wax is dry'?"

Baoyu felt as if a veil had been lifted from his eyes. "How stupid of me!" he chuckled. "Fancy forgetting a ready-made phrase like that. You're really my 'one-word-teacher.' From now on I shall have to address you as 'master,' not as 'sister' any more."

Suppressing a smile Baochai replied, "Hurry up and finish instead of talking such nonsense. Who are you calling 'sister'? That's your sister sitting up there in the golden robes. Why call me your sister?" Afraid to delay him by chatting, she slipped away.

Baoyu persevered until three poems were done and Daiyu, depressed at having no chance to shine, came up to his desk where he was struggling alone, meaning to help him out by writing a couple of poems for him.

Asked if he had finished, Baoyu said, "I've only done three. All left now is Approach to Apricot Tavern."

"Well then, let me do that for you, while you copy out the other three."

After thinking for a moment with lowered head, she scribbled the poem out on a slip of paper, screwed it into a ball and tossed it to Baoyu. When he smoothed it out he found it ten times better than his own attempts. He was overjoyed. Having hurriedly copied it out with care he presented all four poems to Yuanchun.

This is what she read:

WHERE THE PHOENIX ALIGHTS

The fruit fresh formed on jade stalks rare
Makes for the phoenix fitting fare;
So green each stem they seem to drip
With coolness seeping from each verdant tip.
Bursting through stones, they change the water's track;
Piercing through screens, hold tripod's incense back;
Let none disturb these chequered shades,
That sweetly she may dream till daylight fades.

PURE SCENT OF ALPINIA AND IRIS

Alpinia fills the courtyard free from dust,
By climbing fig its fragrance reinforced;
Softly they heighten the fresh green of spring,





莫摇清碎影，好梦昼初长。

蘅芷清芬

蘅芜满净苑，萝薜助芬芳。
软衬三春草，柔拖一缕香。
轻烟迷曲径，冷翠滴回廊。
谁谓池塘曲，谢家幽梦长。

怡红快绿

深庭长日静，两两出婵娟。
绿蜡春犹卷，红妆夜未眠。
凭栏垂绛袖，倚石护青烟。
对立东风里，主人应解怜。

杏帘在望

杏帘招客饮，在望有山庄。
菱荇鹅儿水，桑榆燕子梁。
一畦春韭绿，十里稻花香。
盛世无饥馁，何须耕织忙。

贾妃看毕，喜之不尽，说：“果然进益了！”又指“杏帘”一首为前三首之冠，遂将“浣葛山庄”改为“稻香村”。又命探春另以彩笺誊录出方才一共十数首诗，出令太监传与外厢。贾政等看了，都称颂不已。贾政又进《归省颂》。元春又命以琼酥金脍等物，赐与宝玉并贾兰。此时贾兰极幼，未





Gently they trail their perfume, ring on ring.
A light mist hides the winding path from view,
From covered walks drips chill and verdant dew.
But who will celebrate the pool in song?
Lost in a dream, at peace, the poet sleeps long.

HAPPY RED AND DELIGHTFUL GREEN

In quiet court long days pass tranquilly;
A charming match, plantain and apple-tree;
The green wax leaves in spring are yet furled tight,
The blossom decked in red keeps watch at night;
With crimson sleeves one sweeps the balustrade,
One, misty green, is by the rocks arrayed.
Facing each other in the soft east wind
They surely bring their mistress peace of mind!

APPROACH TO APRICOT TAVERN

A grove of apricots, a tavern-sign,
And a hillside hamlet beyond;
Elms, mulberries, swallows on rafters,
And geese on the caltrop pond.
In the fields spring leeks are green;
All round, the paddy flowers scent the breeze;
None goes hungry in these good times,
Ploughman and weaver alike can take their ease.

Yuanchun, delighted with these poems, exclaimed, "He has certainly made great progress!"

Having pointed out that the last poem was the best, she changed the name "Hemp-Washing Cottage" into "Paddy-Sweet Cottage." She then made Tanchun copy out all eleven poems on ornamental paper, and a eunuch delivered them to Jia Zheng and the other men waiting outside, who praised them highly. Jia Zheng also presented a panegyric of his own composition entitled *The Visitation*.

Yuanchun had junket, ham and other delicacies presented to Baoyu and Jia Lan, who was too young to do more than pay his respects after his mother and uncles, for which reason he has not been previously mentioned.

Jia Huan had not yet recovered from an illness contracted over New

达诸事，只不过随母依叔行礼，故无别传。贾环从年内染病未痊，自有闲处调养，故亦无传。

那时贾蔷带领十二个女戏，在楼下正等的不耐烦，只见一太监飞来说：“作完了诗，快拿戏目来！”贾蔷急将锦册呈上，并十二个花名单子。少时，太监出来，只点了四出戏：

第一出，《豪宴》；第二出，《乞巧》；

第三出，《仙缘》；第四出，《离魂》。

贾蔷忙张罗扮演起来。一个个歌欺裂石之音，舞有天魔之态。虽是妆演的形容，却作尽悲欢情状。刚演完了，一太监执一金盘糕点之类，来问：“谁是龄官？”贾蔷便知是赐龄官之物，喜的忙接了，命龄官叩头。太监又道：“贵妃有谕，说‘龄官极好，再作两出戏，不拘那两出就是了’。”贾蔷忙答应了，因命龄官作《游园》、《惊梦》二出。龄官自为此二出原非本角之戏，执意不作，定要作《相约》《相骂》二出。贾蔷扭他不过，只得依他作了。贾妃甚喜，命“不可难为了这女孩子，好生教习”，额外赏了两匹宫缎、两个荷包并金银钁子、食物之类。然后撤筵，将未到之处复又游顽。忽见山环佛寺，忙另盥手进去焚香拜佛，又题一匾云：“苦海慈航”。又额外加恩与一班幽尼女道。



Year and was still convalescing in his own apartments; this is why no mention has been made of him either.

All this time Jia Qiang was waiting impatiently down below with his twelve young actresses. But now a eunuch ran down to him, exclaiming, "They have finished their poems. Give me your programme, quick!"

Jia Qiang lost no time in handing him a programme with a brocade cover and a list of the stage names of the twelve players. Presently four pieces were chosen: "The Sumptuous Banquet,"³ "The Double Seventh Festival,"⁴ "Meeting the Immortals"⁵ and "The Departure of the Soul."⁶

Jia Qiang put on the first item without delay. All his players sang bewitchingly and danced divinely; thus although this was merely a stage performance they conveyed genuine grief and joy.

No sooner had they finished than a eunuch appeared backstage with a golden tray of cakes and sweetmeats, and asked which of the actresses was Lingguan. Realizing that this was a present for her, Jia Qiang accepted it gladly and made her kowtow her thanks.

The eunuch announced, "The Imperial Consort says that Lingguan is superb. She is to play in two more pieces of her own choice."

Jia Qiang hastily agreed and suggested "A Visit to the Garden" and "The Dream."⁷ But since neither formed part of her repertoire, Lingguan insisted on "The Pledge" and "The Quarrel"⁸ instead. And Jia Qiang had to let her have her way.

The Imperial Consort was so enchanted that she gave special instructions that this girl must be well treated and carefully trained. She gave Lingguan an extra reward of two rolls of Imperial satin, two embroidered pouches, some gold and silver trinkets and various delicacies.

Then they left the banqueting hall to visit the places Yuanchun had not yet seen, among them a Buddhist convent set among hills, where she washed her hands before going in to burn incense and worship Buddha. She chose as inscription for this convent the words, "Ship of Mercy on the Sea of Suffering." And here she gave additional gifts to the Buddhist nuns and Taoist priestesses.

Soon a eunuch knelt to report that the list of gifts was ready for her approval. She read it through, found it satisfactory, and gave orders that the presents should be distributed. This was done by the eunuchs.



少时，太监跪启：“赐物俱齐，请验等例。”乃呈上略节。贾妃从头看了，俱甚妥协，即命照此遵行。太监听了，下来一一发放。原来贾母的是金、玉如意各一柄，沉香拐柱一根，伽楠念珠一串，“富贵长春”宫缎四匹，“福寿绵长”宫绸四匹，紫金“笔锭如意”钗十锭，“吉庆有鱼”银钗十锭。邢夫人、王夫人二分，只减了如意、拐、珠四样。贾敬、贾赦、贾政等，每分御制新书二部，宝墨二匣、金、银爵各二只，表礼按前。宝钗、黛玉诸姊妹等，每人新书一部，宝砚一方，新样格式金银钗二对。宝玉亦同此。贾兰则是金银项圈二个，金银钗二对。尤氏、李纨、凤姐等，皆金银钗四对，表礼四端。外表礼二十四端，清钱一百串，是赐与贾母、王夫人及诸姊妹房中奶娘、众丫鬟的。贾珍、贾琏、贾环、贾蓉等，皆是表礼一分，金钗一双。其余彩缎百端，金银千两，御酒华筵，是赐东、西两府凡园中管理工程、陈设、答应并司戏、掌灯诸人的。外有清钱五百串，是





The Lady Dowager received two *ruyi*⁹ sceptres, one of gold, the other of jade; a staff made of aloeswood; a chaplet of sandal-wood beads; four lengths of Imperial satin with designs signifying wealth, nobility and eternal youth; four lengths of silk with designs signifying good fortune and long life; ten bars of gold with designs signifying "May Your Wishes Come True," and ten silver bars with fish and other designs to symbolize felicity and abundance.

Lady Xing and Lady Wang received the same gifts with the exception of the sceptres, staff and chaplet.

Jia Jing, Jia She and Jia Zheng each received two new books of His Majesty's own composition, two cases of rare ink-sticks, four goblets, two of gold and two of silver, and lengths of satin identical with those described above.

Baochai, Daiyu and the other girls each received one new book, a rare mirror and two pairs of gold and silver trinkets of a new design.

Baoyu received the same.

Jia Lan received one gold and one silver necklet, a pair of gold and a pair of silver medallions.

To Madam You, Li Wan and Xifeng were given two gold and two silver medallions and four lengths of silk.

In addition, twenty-four lengths of satin and a hundred strings of newly minted cash were allotted to the women-servants and maids in attendance on the Lady Dowager, Lady Wang and the girls.

Jia Zhen, Jia Lian, Jia Huan and Jia Rong each received one length of satin and a pair of gold medallions.

A hundred rolls of variegated satin, a thousand taels of gold and silver, with various delicacies and wine from the Palace were given to those in both mansions responsible for the construction and maintenance of the Garden, the furnishing and upkeep of the various houses in the Garden, the theatre management and the preparation of lanterns. Five hundred strings of newly minted cash were also given as largesse to the cooks, actresses and jugglers.

It was nearly three in the morning by the time all had expressed their thanks, and the eunuch in charge announced that it was time to leave. At once Yuanchun's eyes filled with tears again, but forcing a smile she

赐厨役、优伶、百戏、杂行人丁的。

众人谢恩已毕，执事太监启道：“时已丑正三刻，请驾回銮。”贾妃听了，不由的满眼又滚下泪来。却又勉强堆笑，拉住贾母、王夫人的手，紧紧的不忍释放，再四叮咛：“不须记挂，好生自养。如今天恩浩荡，一月许进内省视一次，见面是尽有的，何必伤惨。倘明岁天恩仍许归省，万不可如此奢华靡费了！”贾母等已哭的哽噎难言了。贾妃虽不忍别，怎奈皇家规范，违错不得，只得忍心上舆去了。这里诸人好容易将贾母、王夫人安慰解劝，搀扶出园去了。下回分解。



clasped the hands of her grandmother and mother and could not bring herself to let them go.

“Don’t worry about me,” she begged them, “Just take good care of yourselves. Thanks to the Emperor’s kindness you can now come to the Palace once a month to see me, so we shall have many chances to meet again. There is no need to be upset. If next year by Imperial grace I’m allowed another visit home, you must promise not to be so extravagant.”

The Lady Dowager and other women were sobbing too bitterly to make any reply. But although Yuanchun could hardly bear to leave, she could not disobey the Imperial regulations and had no alternative but to re-enter her palanquin which carried her away. The whole household did their best to console the Lady Dowager and Lady Wang as they helped them out of the Garden. But more of this in the next chapter.





第十九回

情切切良宵花解语 意绵绵静日玉生香

话说贾妃回宫，次日见驾谢恩，并回奏归省之事，龙颜甚悦。又发内帑彩缎金银等物，以赐贾政及各椒房等员，不必细说。

且说荣、宁二府中因连日用尽心力，真是人人力倦，各各神疲，又将园中一应陈设动用之物收拾了两三天方完。第一个凤姐事多任重，别人或可偷安躲静，独他是不能脱得的；二则本性要强，不肯落人褒贬，只扎挣着与无事的人一样。第一个宝玉是极无事最闲暇的。偏这日一早，袭人的母亲又亲来回过贾母，接袭人家去吃年茶，晚间才得回来。因此，宝玉只和众丫头们掷骰子赶围棋作戏。正在房内顽的没兴头，忽见丫头们来回说：“东府珍大爷来请过去看戏、放花灯。”宝玉听了，便命换衣裳。才要去时，忽又有贾妃赐出糖蒸酥酪来；宝玉想上次袭人喜吃此物，便命留与袭人了。自己回过贾母，过去看戏。

谁想贾珍这边唱的是《丁郎认父》、《黄伯央大摆阴魂阵》，更有《孙行者大闹天宫》、《姜子牙斩将封神》等类的戏文，倏尔神鬼乱出，忽又妖魔毕露，甚至于扬幡过会，



Chapter 19

£ **An Eloquent Maid Offers Earnest Advice**
One Fine Night
A Sweet Girl Shows Deep Feeling
One Quiet Day

The day after her return to the Palace the Imperial Consort appeared before the Emperor to thank him for his kindness, and so pleased him with an account of her visit home that he sent rich gifts of satin, gold and silver from his privy store to Jia Zheng and other fathers of visiting ladies. But no more of this.

The inmates of the Rong and Ning Mansions were completely worn out after their recent exertions, and it took several days to remove and store away all the decorations and other movables from the Garden. The heaviest responsibility devolved upon Xifeng, who, unlike the others, had not a moment's respite; but she was always so eager to shine, so anxious to give no one a handle against her, that she strove to carry out her many tasks as if they were nothing. Baoyu, on the other hand, was the one with the least to do and the most leisure.

One morning Xiren's mother came and asked the Lady Dowager's permission to take her daughter home to tea and keep her until the evening. So Baoyu was left to amuse himself with the other maids at dice or draughts. He was feeling rather bored when a girl announced that a message had come from Jia Zhen inviting him over to the Ning Mansion to watch some operas and see their New Year lanterns. While Baoyu was changing his clothes before setting out, a gift of sweetened junket arrived from the Imperial Consort. Remembering how Xiren had enjoyed this delicacy the last time they had some, he asked them to keep it for her. Then, having taken his leave of the Lady Dowager, he went over to the other mansion.

He was rather taken aback to find them performing operas like *Master Ding Finds His Father*, *Huang Boyang Deploys Ghosts in a Battle*, *Monkey Plays Havoc in Heaven* and *The Patriarch Jiang Kills Gen-*

号佛行香，锣鼓喊叫之声远闻巷外。满街之人个个都赞：

“好热闹戏，别人家断不能有的。”宝玉见繁华热闹到如此不堪的田地，只略坐了一坐，便走开各处闲耍。先是进内去和尤氏和丫鬟姬妾说笑了一回，便出二门来。尤氏等仍料他出来看戏，遂也不曾照管。贾珍、贾琏、薛蟠等只顾猜枚行令，百般作乐，也不理论，纵一时不见他在座，只道在里边去了，故也不问。至于跟宝玉的小厮们，那年纪大些的，知宝玉这一来了，必是晚间才散，因此偷空也有去会赌的，也有往亲友家去吃年茶的，更有或嫖或饮的，都私散了，待晚间再来；那小些的，钻进戏房里瞧热闹去了。

宝玉见一个人没有，因想“这里素日有个小书房，内曾挂着一轴美人，极画的得神。今日这般热闹，想那里那美人自然是寂寞的，须得我去望慰他一回。”想着，便往书房里来。刚到窗前，闻得房内有呻吟之韵。宝玉倒唬了一跳：敢是美人活了不成？乃乍着胆子，舔破窗纸，向内一看：那轴美人却不曾活，却是茗烟按着一个女孩子，也干那警幻所训之事。宝玉禁不住大叫：“了不得！”一脚踹进门去，将那两个唬开了，抖衣而颤。

茗烟见是宝玉，忙跪求不迭。宝玉道：“青天白日，这是



erals and Deifies Them. In all these, especially the two last, gods, ghosts, monsters and ogres took the stage among waving pennants, temple processions, invocations to Buddha and offerings of incense, while the din of gonging, drumming and shouting carried to the street outside. The passers-by commented appreciatively that no other family but the Jias could afford to put on such a lively entertainment. Only Baoyu, disgusted by such rowdy, showy proceedings, soon slipped away to amuse himself elsewhere.

First he went to the inner rooms to chat with Madam You and tease the maids and concubines there. And when he strolled out of the inner gate they did not see him off, assuming that he was going back to watch the performance. The menfolk — Jia Zhen, Jia Lian, Xue Pan and the rest — were having such a good time gaming and drinking that they did not worry about his absence either, taking it for granted that he had gone inside. As for the servants who had come with him, the older ones, not expecting him to leave before dusk, sneaked off to gamble, drink New Year tea with relatives and friends or visit some brothel or tavern, intending to be back by dark. The younger ones, for their part, squeezed into the theatre to watch the fun.

When Baoyu found himself alone he thought, “There’s a marvellously lifelike painting of a beauty in the small study here. In all this excitement today she must be lonely. I’d better go and cheer her up.” He made his way towards the study.

As he neared the window he heard a moaning inside which pulled him up with a start. Could the beauty in the picture have come to life? Screw-ing up his courage, he made a hole in the window-paper with his tongue and peeped through. No, the painted beauty had not come to life, but his page Mingyan was holding down a girl and indulging in the game taught Baoyu by the Goddess of Disenchantment.

“Heavens above!”

As Baoyu charged into the room, the trembling lovers quickly broke apart. And when Mingyan saw who it was, he fell on his knees to beg for mercy.

“A fine way to carry on in broad daylight!” cried Baoyu. “Do you want Lord Jia Zhen to kill you?” Meanwhile he was sizing up the maid,

怎么说。珍大爷知道，你是死是活？”一面看那丫头，虽不标致，倒还白净，些微亦有动人处，羞的脸红耳赤，低首无言。宝玉跺脚道：“还不快跑！”一语提醒了那丫头，飞也似去了。宝玉又赶出去，叫道：“你别怕，我是不告诉人的。”急的茗烟在后叫：“祖宗，这是分明告诉人了！”宝玉因问：“那丫头十几岁了？”茗烟道：“大不过十六七岁了。”宝玉道：“连他的岁数也不问问，别的自然越发不知了。可见他白认得你了。可怜！可怜！”又问：“名字叫什么？”茗烟大笑道：“若说出名字来话长，真真新鲜奇文，竟是写不出来的。据他说，他母亲养他的时节做了个梦，梦见得了一匹锦，上面是五色富贵不断头卍字的花样，所以他的名字叫作卍儿。”宝玉听了笑道：“真也新奇，想必他将来有些造化。”说着，沉思一会。

茗烟因问：“二爷为何不看这样的好戏？”宝玉道：“看了半日，怪烦的，出来逛逛，就遇见你们了。这会子作什么呢？”茗烟趋近笑道：“这会子没人知道，我悄悄的引二爷往城外逛逛去，一会子再往这里来，他们就知道了。”宝玉道：“不好，仔细花子拐了去。便是他们知道了，又闹大了。不如往熟近些的地方去，还可就来。”茗烟道：“熟近地方，谁家可去？这却难了。”宝玉笑道：“依我的主意，咱们竟找你花大姐姐去，瞧他在家作什么呢。”茗烟笑道：“好，好！倒忘了他家。”又道：“若他们知道了，说我引着二爷胡走，要打我呢？”宝玉道：“有我呢。”茗烟听说，拉了马，二人



no beauty but a girl with a fair complexion and a certain charm. Red to the ears with shame, she hung her head in silence.

“Are you going to stand there all day?” he stamped his foot.

Coming to her senses, she dashed out like the wind. He rushed after her, shouting:

“Don’t be afraid! I shan’t tell anyone.”

“Holy ancestors!” swore Mingyan behind him. “Aren’t you telling everyone now?”

“How old is that girl?”

“Sixteen or seventeen, I suppose, at most.”

“If you didn’t even ask her age that shows how little you care for her. She’s wasted on you, poor thing. What’s her name?”

“That’s quite a story,” replied Mingyan with a guffaw. “It’s really a case of truth being stranger than fiction. She says that just before she was born her mother dreamed that she had a length of brocade with coloured designs of the lucky swastika. So she called her daughter Swastika.”

“That is strange,” agreed Baoyu, chuckling. “Her good fortune may be coming later on.” He looked thoughtful.

Mingyan asked, “Why aren’t you watching those grand operas, Second Master?”

“I did watch for a while, then got so bored that I came out to wander around. That’s how I discovered the two of you. Well, what shall we do now?”

“No one knows where we are.” Mingyan grinned and stepped closer. “If we slip out of town to amuse ourselves and come back later, they won’t be any the wiser.”

“That won’t do,” replied Baoyu. “We might get kidnapped. Besides, if they did find out what a row there’d be! We’d better go somewhere within easy distance so that it wouldn’t take long to come back.”

“Yes, but where? That’s the question.”

“Why not call on Xiren? Let’s see what she’s up to at home.”

“A fine idea. I’d forgotten her house.” Mingyan chuckled. “But what if they find out and give me a beating for leading you astray?”

“Leave it to me,” said Baoyu.



从后门就走了。

幸而袭人家不远，不过一半里路程，转眼已到门前。茗烟先进去叫袭人之兄花自芳。彼时袭人之母接了袭人，与几个外甥女儿、几个侄女儿来家，正吃茶果。听见外面有人叫“花大哥”，花自芳忙出去看时，见是他主仆两人，唬的惊疑不止，连忙抱下宝玉来，在院内嚷道：“宝二爷来了！”别人听见还可，袭人听了，也不知为何，忙跑出来迎着宝玉，一把拉着问：“你怎么来了？”宝玉笑道：“我怪闷的，来瞧瞧你作什么呢。”袭人听了，才放下心来，“嘻”了一声，笑道：“你也忒胡闹了，可作什么来呢！”一面又问茗烟：“还有谁跟来？”茗烟笑道：“别人都不知，就只我们两个。”袭人听了，复又惊慌，说道：“这还了得！倘或碰见了人，或是遇见了老爷，街上人挤车碰，马轿纷纷的，若有个闪失，也是玩得的！你们的胆子比斗还大。都是茗烟调唆的，回去我定告诉嬷嬷们打你。”茗烟撇了嘴便道：“二爷骂着打着，叫我带了来，这会子推到我身上。我说别来罢；不然，我们还去罢。”花自芳忙劝：“罢了，既是来了，也不用多说了。只是茅檐草舍，又窄又脏，爷怎么坐呢？”

袭人之母也早迎了出来。袭人拉了宝玉进去。宝玉见房中三五个女孩儿，见他进来，都低了头，羞惭惭的。花自芳母子两个百般怕宝玉冷，又让他上炕，又忙另摆果桌，又忙倒好茶。袭人笑道：“你们不用白忙，我自然知道。果子也不

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Then Mingyan brought round his horse, and they left by the back gate. Luckily, Xiren's home was only a few hundred yards away, so that in no time at all they reached its gate. Mingyan went in first to call her brother Hua Zifang.

Mrs. Hua, having fetched Xiren home, was enjoying tea and sweetmeats with her daughter and a few nieces when they heard shouts of "Brother Hua!" And Hua Zifang was considerably taken aback when he hurried out and found master and servant there. Helping Baoyu to alight, he called out from the yard:

"Here's the young master!"

This came as a greater surprise to Xiren than to any of the rest. Running out to meet Baoyu she caught his arm and asked, "How did you come here?"

"I was rather bored," he told her with a laugh. "I just came to see what you're doing."

Reassured, she gave a cry of exasperation. "So you're up to mischief again. Why should you come here?" She turned to Mingyan. "Who else is with you?"

"No-one." Mingyan grinned. "Nobody knows we're here."

This worried Xiren again and she protested, "You're quite impossible. What if you ran into someone? What if Lord Zheng saw you? The streets are jammed with people and carriages, and if your horse bolted you could quite easily have an accident. This is no joke. You two really have a nerve. You're the one to blame, Mingyan, and when I get back I shall tell the nurses to give you a good hiding."

Mingyan pulled a face. "Why shove the blame on to me? The young master cursed me and beat me to make me bring him. I told him not to come. Well, we'd better go back."

"Never mind," interposed Zifang quickly. "Since you're here, there's no point in complaining. It's just that our shabby place is so cramped and dirty, we don't know where to ask the young master to sit."

By now Xiren's mother had come out to greet him too, and Xiren led Baoyu in. He saw four or five girls inside, who lowered their heads and blushed at his entry. Afraid that the young gentleman might feel cold, Zifang and his mother made him sit on the *kang* and hastily set out fresh



用摆，也不敢乱给东西吃。”一面说，一面将自己的坐褥拿了铺在一个炕上，宝玉坐了；用自己的脚炉垫了脚；向荷包内取出两个梅花香饼儿来，又将自己的手炉掀开焚上，仍盖好，放与宝玉怀内；然后将自己的茶杯斟了茶，送与宝玉。彼时他母兄已是忙另齐齐整整摆上一桌子果品来。袭人见总无可吃之物，因笑道：“既来了，没有空去之礼，好歹尝一点儿，也是来我家一趟。”说着，便拈了几个松子穰，吹去细皮，用手帕托着送与宝玉。

宝玉看见袭人两眼微红，粉光融滑，因悄问袭人：“好好的哭什么？”袭人笑道：“何尝哭，才迷了眼揉的。”因此便遮掩过了。当下宝玉穿着大红金蟒狐腋箭袖，外罩石青貂裘排穗褂。袭人道：“你特为往这里来又换新服，他们就不问你往那去的？”宝玉笑道：“珍大爷那里去看戏换的。”袭人点头。又道：“坐一坐就回去罢，这个地方不是你来的。”宝玉笑道：“你就家去才好呢，我还替你留着好东西呢。”袭人悄笑道：“悄悄的，叫他们听着什么意思。”一面又伸手从宝玉项上将通灵玉摘了下来，向他姊妹们笑道：“你们见识见识。时常说起来都当希罕，恨不能一见，今儿可尽力瞧了。什么希罕物儿，也不过是这么个东西。”说毕，递与他们传看了一遍，仍与宝玉挂好。又命他哥哥去或雇一乘小轿，或雇一辆小车，送宝玉回去。花自芳道：“有我送去，骑马也不妨了。”袭人道：“不为不妨，为的是碰见人。”



sweetmeats and brewed some choice tea.

"You're just wasting your time. I know him." Xiren smiled. "It's no use putting out those sweetmeats. He can't eat just anything."

She fetched her own cushion and plumped it on the *kang* for Baoyu to sit on, then put her own foot-stove under his feet. Next she took two slabs of perfumed incense shaped like plum-blossom from her pouch, slipped them into her handstove, put its lid on again and placed it in Baoyu's lap. This done, she poured him some tea in her own cup.

Meanwhile her mother and brother had carefully set out a whole table of titbits — none of them things he could eat, as Xiren well knew.

"Since you've come, you mustn't go away without tasting something," she said gaily. "At least try something to show you've been to our house." She picked up a few pine kernels, blew off the skins, and gave them to Baoyu on a handkerchief.

He noticed that her eyes were red and there were traces of tears on her powdered cheeks. "Why have you been crying?" he whispered.

"Who's been crying?" she retorted cheerfully. "I've just been rubbing my eyes." In this way she glossed the matter over.

Xiren saw that Baoyu was wearing his red archer's tunic embroidered with golden dragons and lined with fox-fur under a fringed bluish-grey sable coat. "Surely you didn't change into these new clothes just to come here?" she said. "Did no one ask where you were going?"

"No, I changed to go to Cousin Zhen's to watch some operas."

She nodded. "Well, after a short rest you'd better go back. This is no place for you."

"I wish you'd come home now," coaxed Baoyu. "I've kept something good for you."

"Hush!" she whispered. "What will the others think if they hear?" She reached out to take the magic jade from his neck and turning to her cousins said with a smile, "Look! Here's the wonderful thing that you've heard so much about. You've always wanted to see this rarity. Now's your chance for a really good look. There's nothing so very special about it, is there?"

After passing the jade around for their inspection she fastened it on Baoyu's neck again, then asked her brother to hire a sedan-chair or a



花自芳忙去雇了一顶小轿来，众人也不敢相留，只得送宝玉出去。袭人又抓果子与茗烟，又把些钱与他买花炮放，教他“不可告诉人，连你也有不是。”一直送宝玉至门前，看着上轿，放下轿帘。花、茗二人牵马跟随。来至宁府街，茗烟命住轿，向花自芳道：“须等我同二爷还到东府里混一混，才好过去的，不然人家就疑惑了。”花自芳听说有理，忙将宝玉抱出轿来，送上马去。宝玉笑说：“倒难为你了。”于是仍进后门来，俱不在话下。

却说宝玉自出了门，他房中这些丫鬟们都越性恣意的玩笑，也有赶围棋的，也有掷骰抹牌的，磕了一地瓜子皮。偏奶母李嬷嬷拄拐进来请安，瞧瞧宝玉。见宝玉不在家，丫头们只顾玩闹，十分看不过。因叹道：“只从我出去了，不大进来，你们越发没个样儿了，别的妈妈们越不敢说你们了。那宝玉是个丈八的灯台——照见人家，照不见自家的。只知嫌人家脏，这是他的屋子，由着你们糟蹋，越不成体统了。”这些丫头们明知宝玉不讲究这些，二则李嬷嬷已是告老解事出去的了，如今管他们不着，因此只顾顽，并不理他。那李嬷嬷还只管问“宝玉如今一顿吃多少饭”、“什么时辰睡觉”等语。丫头们总胡乱答应。有的说：“好一个讨厌的老货！”

李嬷嬷又问道：“这盖碗里是酥酪，怎不送与我去？我就吃了罢。”说毕，拿匙就吃。一个丫头道：“快别动！那是说了给袭人留着的，回来又惹气了。你老人家自己承认，别带



small carriage and escort Baoyu home.

“I can see him back quite safely on horseback,” said Zifang.

“That’s not the point. I’m afraid of his meeting someone.”

Then Zifang hurried out to hire a sedan-chair, and not daring to detain Baoyu they saw him out. Xiren gave Mingyan some sweetmeats and money to buy firecrackers, warning him that he must keep this visit secret if he wanted to steer clear of trouble. She saw Baoyu out of the gate, watched him get into the chair and lowered its curtains. Her brother and Mingyan followed behind with the horse.

When they reached the street where the Ning Mansion stood, Mingyan ordered the chair to stop and told Zifang, “We must look in here for a while before going home, if we don’t want people to suspect anything.”

Since this made good sense, Zifang handed Baoyu out and helped him to mount his horse, while the boy apologized for troubling him. Then they slipped through the back gate, and there we will leave them.

During Baoyu’s absence, the maids in his apartments had amused themselves as they pleased at draughts, dice and cards, until the floor was strewn with melon-seed shells. Nanny Li chose this moment to hobble along with her cane to call on Baoyu and see how he was. She shook her head over the way the maids were carrying on behind his back.

“Since I’ve moved out and don’t come so often, you’ve grown quite out of hand,” she scolded. “The other nurses don’t dare take you to task either. As for Baoyu, he’s like a ten-foot lampstand that sheds light on others but none on itself. He complains that other people are dirty, yet leaves you to turn his own rooms topsyturvy. Disgraceful, I call it.”

The maids knew quite well that Baoyu would not mind, and since Nanny Li had retired and left the house she had no further authority over them. They went on amusing themselves and simply ignored her. Asked how much Baoyu ate at each meal and what time he went to bed, they just answered at random.

“What an old pest she is!” one muttered.

“Is that a bowl of junket?” asked Nanny Li. “Why didn’t you send it over to me? I’d better eat it here right now.” She picked up a spoon and started eating it.



累我们受气。”李嬷嬷听了，又气又愧，便说道：“我不信他这样坏了。且别说我吃了一碗牛奶，就是再比这值钱的，也是应该的。难道待袭人比我还重？难道他不想想怎么长大了？我的血变的奶，吃的长这么大，如今我吃他一碗牛奶，他就生气了？我偏吃了，看怎么样！你们看袭人不知怎样，那是我手里调理出来的毛丫头，什么阿物儿！”一面说，一面赌气将酥酪吃尽。又一丫头笑道：“他们不会说话，怨不得你老人家生气。宝玉还时常送东西孝敬你老去，岂有为这个不自在的。”李嬷嬷道：“你们也不必妆狐媚子哄我，打量上次为茶撵茜雪的事我不知道呢。明儿有了不是，我再来领！”说着，赌气去了。

少时，宝玉回来，命人去接袭人。只见晴雯躺在床上不动，宝玉因问：“敢是病了？再不然输了？”秋纹道：“他倒是赢的。谁知李老太太来了，混输了，他气的睡去了。”宝玉笑道：“你别和他一般见识，由他去就是了。”说着，袭人已来，彼此相见。袭人又问宝玉何处吃饭，多早晚回来，又代母妹问诸同伴姊妹好。一时换衣卸妆。宝玉命取酥酪来，丫鬟们回说：“李奶奶吃了。”宝玉才要说话，袭人便忙笑着：“原来是留的这个，多谢费心。前儿我吃的时候好吃，吃过了好肚子疼，足的吐了才好。他吃了倒好，搁在这里倒白糟塌





"You leave that alone!" cried one girl. "That's for Xiren. He'll be annoyed when he comes back, and unless you own up you'll get all of us into trouble."

"I can't believe it of him." Nanny Li was both indignant and embarrassed. "What is this, after all, but a bowl of milk? He shouldn't begrudge me that — or more costly things either. Does he think more of Xiren than of me? Has he forgotten who brought him up? It's my milk from my own heart's blood that he was raised on, so why should he be angry if I have a bowl of his milk? I declare I will, just to see what he'll do. You seem to think the world of Xiren, but who is she? A low-class girl. I should know, I trained the creature." With that, in a huff, she finished off the junket.

"They've no manners," said another maid soothingly. "I don't wonder you're cross, granny. Baoyu often sends you presents. This isn't going to upset him."

"You don't have to humour me in that sly way," Nanny Li snorted. "Do you think I don't know how Qianxue was dismissed, all because of a cup of tea? I'll come back tomorrow to hear what my punishment's to be." She went off then in a temper.

Presently Baoyu came home and sent someone to fetch Xiren. He saw Qingwen lying motionless on her bed.

"Is she ill?" he asked. "Or did she lose some game?"

"She was winning," Qiuwen told him. "But then Grandame Li came along and raised such a rumpus that she lost the game. She went to bed to sulk."

"You mustn't take Nanny Li so seriously." Baoyu smiled. "Just leave her alone."

He turned then to welcome Xiren who had only just come in. After asking where he had dined and what time he had reached home, she gave the girls greetings from her mother and cousins. When she had changed out of her visiting clothes, Baoyu called for the junket.

"Granny Li ate the lot," his maids reported.

Before he could make any comment Xiren interposed with a smile, "So that's what you kept for me — thank you. The other day I enjoyed it, but it gave me a bad stomachache afterwards until I'd brought it all up."



了。我只想风干栗子吃，你替我剥栗子，我去铺床。”

宝玉听了信以为真，方把酥酪丢开，取栗子来，自向灯前检剥。一面见众人不在房中，乃笑问袭人道：“今儿那个穿红的是你什么人？”袭人道：“那是我两姨妹子。”宝玉听了，赞叹两声。袭人道：“叹什么？我知道你心里的缘故，想是说他那里配穿红？”宝玉笑道：“不是，不是。那样的不配穿红的，谁还敢穿？我因为见他实在好的很，怎么也得他在咱们家就好了。”袭人冷笑道：“我一个人是奴才命罢了，难道连我的亲戚都是奴才命不成？定还要拣实在好的丫头才往你家来。”宝玉听了，忙笑道：“你又多心了。我说往咱们家来，必定是奴才不成？说亲戚就使不得？”袭人道：“那也搬配不上。”宝玉便不肯再说，只是剥栗子。袭人笑道：“怎么不言语了？想是我才冒撞冲犯了，你明儿赌气花几两银子，买他们进来就是了。”宝玉笑道：“你说的话怎么叫我答言呢？我不过赞他好，正配生在这深堂大院里，没的我们这种浊物倒生在这里。”袭人道：“他虽没这造化，倒也是娇生惯养的呢，我姨爹姨娘的宝贝。如今十七岁，各样的嫁妆都齐备了，明年就出嫁。”

宝玉听了“出嫁”二字，不禁又“啞”了两声。正不自在，又听袭人叹道：“只从我来这几年，姊妹们都不得在一处。如今我要回去了，他们又都去了。”宝玉听了这话内有文章，不觉吃一惊，忙丢下栗子，问道：“怎么，你如今要回去了？”袭人道：“我今儿听得我妈和哥哥商议，教我再耐烦一年，明年他们上来，就赎我出去的呢。”宝玉听了这话，越发怔了，因问：“为什么要赎你？”袭人道：“这话奇了！我又



So it's just as well she's had it. Otherwise it would have been wasted. What I'd fancy now are some dried chestnuts. Will you peel a few for me while I make your bed?"

Taking this for the truth, Baoyu thought no more of the matter but started peeling chestnuts by the lamp. And since the others had left he asked with a smile, "who was that girl in red this afternoon?"

"My mother's sister's child."

Baoyu heaved a couple of admiring sighs.

"Why are you sighing?" asked Xiren. "I know how your mind works. You think she isn't good enough to wear red."

"What an idea! If a girl like that isn't good enough to wear red, who is? I found her so charming, I thought how nice it would be if we could get her here to live with us."

"Nice, you call it?" Xiren snorted. "Nice to be a slave here?"

"Don't be so touchy," he retorted with a smile. "Living in our house doesn't have to mean being a slave. Couldn't she be our relative?"

"We're too far beneath you for that."

When Baoyu went on peeling the chestnuts in silence, Xiren laughed. "Why don't you say anything? Have I offended you? All right, tomorrow you can buy her for a few taels of silver."

"How do you expect anyone to answer you?" Baoyu grinned. "All I meant was that she looks just the person to live in a mansion like this, much more so than some of us clods who were born here."

"She may not have your luck but she's her parents' darling, the apple of their eye. She's just turned seventeen and all her dowry is ready. She'll be married next year."

The word "married" made Baoyu exclaim in dismay and feel put out.

Xiren observed with a sigh, "These last few years, since I came here, I haven't seen much of my cousins. Soon I'll be going home, but they'll all be gone."

Shocked by the implication of this, he dropped the chestnuts.

"What do you mean — going home?"

"Today I heard my mother discussing it with my brother. They told me to be patient for one more year and then they'd buy me out of service."



比不得是你这里家生子儿，一家子都在别处，独我一个人在这里，怎么是个了局？”宝玉道：“我不叫你去也难。”袭人道：“从来没这道理。便是朝廷宫里，也有个定例，或几年一选，几年一人，也没有个长远留下人的理，别说你咧！”

宝玉想一想，果然有理。又道：“老太太不放你也难。”袭人道：“为什么不放？我果然是个最难得的，或者感动了老太太、太太，必不放我出去的，设或多给我们家几两银子，留下我，然或有之；我却也不过是个平常的人，比我强的，多而且多。自我从小儿来了，跟着老太太，先伏侍了史大姑娘几年，如今又伏侍了你几年。如今我们家来赎，正是该叫去的，只怕连身价也不要，就开恩叫我去呢。若说为伏侍的你好，不叫我去，断然没有的事。那伏侍的好，是分内应当的，不是什么奇功。我去了，仍旧有好的来了，不是没了我就不成事。”宝玉听了这些话，竟是有去的理，无留的理，心内越发急了，因又道：“虽然如此说，我只一心留下你，不怕老太太不和你母亲说。多多给你母亲些银子，他也不好意思接你了。”袭人道：“我妈自然不敢强。且漫说和他好说，又多给银子；就便不好和他说，一个钱也不给，安心要强留下我，他也不敢不依。但只是咱们家从没干过这倚势仗贵霸道的事。这比不得别的东西，因为你喜欢，加十倍利弄了来给你，那卖的人不得吃亏，可以行得。如今无故平安留了我，于你又无益，反叫我们骨肉分离。这件事，老太太、太太断不肯行的。”宝玉听了，思忖半晌，乃说道：“依你说，你是去定了？”袭人道：“去定了。”宝玉听了，自思道：“谁知这样一个人，这样薄情无义。”乃叹道：“早知道都是



“Why should they do that?” Baoyu was flabbergasted.

“What a strange question! I wasn’t born a slave in your family. I have my own people outside. What future is there for me if I stay on here alone?”

“Suppose I won’t let you go?”

“That wouldn’t be right. Why, even in the Palace they make it a rule to choose new girls every few years. They can’t keep them for ever either, so how can you?”

He decided upon reflection that she was right. None the less he objected, “Suppose, though, the old lady won’t let you go?”

“Why shouldn’t she? If I were somebody special or had so won the hearts of the old lady and Lady Wang that they couldn’t do without me, they might give my people a few extra taels so as to keep me. But I’m no one out of the usual: there are plenty much better than me. When I came here as a child I was with the old lady; then I waited on Miss Shi for a couple of years, and now I’ve been waiting on you for quite a time. If my people come to redeem me, your family is bound to let me go. They may even be generous enough not to ask for any money. If you say I look after you well, there’s no merit in that — it’s my job. And my place will be taken by someone else just as good. I’m not indispensable.”

By now it did indeed sound to Baoyu as if she had every reason to leave and none at all to stay. Yet in desperation he argued, “Well, but if I insist the old lady will speak to your mother and pay her so much that she won’t like to take you away.”

“Of course my mother wouldn’t dare refuse. Even if you didn’t talk nicely to her or pay her a cent, so long as you insisted on my staying how could she stand out? But your family has never thrown its weight about like that in the past. This isn’t like offering ten times the usual price for something you happen to like, when the owner finds it worth his while to sell. If you kept me for no reason, it would do you no good and would break up my family. The old lady and Lady Wang wouldn’t dream of such a thing.”

Baoyu remained sunk in thought for several minutes.

“So this means you’ll be going for certain?”

“Yes.”



要去的，我就不该弄了来，临了剩我一个孤鬼儿。”说着，便赌气上床睡去了。

原来袭人在家，听见他母兄要赎他回去，他就说至死也不回去的。又说：“当日原是你们没饭吃，就剩我还值几两银子，若不叫你们卖，没有个看着老子娘饿死的理。如今幸而卖到这个地方，吃穿和主子一样，又不朝打暮骂。况且如今爹虽没了，你们却又整理的家成业就，复了元气。若果然还艰难，把我赎出来，再多掏澄几个钱，也还罢了，其实又不难了。这会子又赎我作什么？权当我死了，再不必起赎我的念头！”因此哭闹了一阵。

他母兄见他这般坚执，自然必不出来的了。况且原是卖倒的死契，明仗着贾宅是慈善宽厚之家，不过求一求，只怕身价银一并赏了，这是有的事呢。二则，贾府中从不曾作践下人，只有恩多威少的。且凡老少房中所有亲侍的女孩子们，更比待家下众人不同，平常寒薄人家的小姐，也不能那样尊重的。因此，他母子两个也就死心不赎了。次后忽然宝玉去了，他二人又是那般景况，他母子二人心下更明白了，越发石头落了地，而且是意外之想，彼此放心，再无赎念了。

如今且说袭人自幼见宝玉性格异常，其淘气憨顽自是出于众小儿之外，更有几件千奇百怪、口不能言的毛病儿。近来仗着祖母溺爱，父母亦不能十分严紧拘管，更觉放荡弛纵，任性恣情，最不喜务正。每欲劝时，料不能听，今日可巧有赎身之论，故先用骗词，以探其情，以压其气，然后好



“How can she be so heartless?” he wondered.

Aloud, he said with a sigh, “If I’d known that you’d be going, I shouldn’t have taken you on in the first place. I shall be left all alone here, a poor forsaken ghost.” And he retired sulkily to bed.

Now it so happened that when Xiren went home and heard her mother and brother talk of buying her out, she had assured them that Baoyu would never let her go so long as he lived.

“When you had nothing to eat and your only way of raising a little money was by selling me, I couldn’t stop you,” she said. “What girl can see her parents starve to death? I was lucky to be sold to this family, where I’m fed and clothed like a daughter of the house, not beaten all day long and scolded all night. Besides, even though father’s dead, you’ve got the family back on its feet and are as well-off again as you ever were. If you were still hard up, there might be some reason for redeeming me and re-selling me at a profit. But since there’s no need, why do it? Just pretend I’m dead and stop thinking of buying me back.”

She wept and stormed until her mother and brother realized that she was adamant and would never leave. In any case she had been sold for life and although they thought the Jia family might be generous enough to let her go without asking for any money, they also knew that the servants there were not ill-used but shown more kindness than severity. Indeed, the girls who were personal attendants of members of the family, old or young, were generally treated more handsomely than servants in other jobs. In fact, they were even better off than daughters of ordinary humble households. So Mrs. Hua and her son did not press the point.

Baoyu’s unexpected visit and the apparent intimacy between maid and master opened their eyes to the true situation, leaving them much reassured. In fact, this was something they had not even hoped for. So they abandoned all thought of buying her freedom.

As for Xiren, these years had shown her that Baoyu was no ordinary youth but more high-spirited and wilful than other boys, with some indescribably perverse streaks in his character. Of late he had been so indulged by his grandmother that his parents were unable to control him strictly and he had now become so reckless and headstrong that he was losing patience with all conventions. She had long wanted to speak to him



下箴规。今见他默默睡去了，知其情有不忍，气已馁堕。自己原不想栗子吃的，只因怕为酥酪又生事故，亦如茜雪之茶等事，是以假以栗子为由，混过宝玉不提就完了。于是命小丫头子们将栗子拿去吃了，自己来推宝玉。只见宝玉泪痕满面，袭人便笑道：“这有什么伤心的，你果然留我，我自然不出去了。”宝玉听这话有文章，便说道：“你倒说说，我还要怎么留你，我自己也难说了。”袭人笑道：“咱们素日好处，再不用说。但今日你安心留我，不在这上头。我另说出两三件事来，你果然依了我，就是你真心留我了，刀搁在脖子上，我也是不出去的。”

宝玉忙笑道：“你说，那几件？我都依你。好姐姐，好亲姐姐，别说两三件，就是两三百件，我也依。只求你们同看着我，守着我，等我有一日化成了飞灰；飞灰还不好，灰还有形有迹，还有知识。等我化成一股轻烟，风一吹便散了的时候，你们也管不得我，我也顾不得你们了。那时凭我去，我也凭你们爱那里去就去了……”急的袭人忙握他的嘴，说：“好好的，正为劝你这些，更说的狠了。”宝玉忙说道：“再不说这话了。”袭人道：“这是头一件要改的。”宝玉道：“改了，再要说，你就拧嘴。还有什么？”

袭人道：“第二件，你真喜读书也罢，假喜也罢，只是在老爷跟前或在别人跟前，你别只管批驳诮谤，只作出个喜读书的样子来，也教老爷少生些气，在人前也好说嘴。他心里



about this, but was convinced he would not listen to her.

Luckily, by throwing dust in his eyes today, she was able to sound him out and get him into a chastened mood for a good lecture. His silent retreat to bed indicated how upset he was and how wounded.

As for the chestnuts, she had pretended to hanker after them to make him forget the junket, for fear of a repetition of that incident involving maple-dew tea which had landed Qianxue in trouble.

Now she gave the chestnuts to the other maids and, coming back, nudged Baoyu gently. She found his face wet with tears.

“Why take on like this?” she coaxed. “If you really want me here, of course I won’t go.”

Sensing something behind this, Baoyu quickly rejoined, “Go on. Just tell me what else I must do to keep you. I don’t know how to persuade you.”

“We needn’t talk now of how well we get on together. If you want to keep me that’s beside the point. I’ve two or three things to ask you. If you agree to them, I’ll take it that you really and truly want me to stay. Then not even a knife at my throat could make me leave you.”

Baoyu’s face lit up. “Well, what are your conditions? I agree to them all, dear sister, good kind sister. I’d agree to three hundred conditions, let alone three. I only beseech you all to stay and watch over me until the day that I turn into floating ashes — no, not ashes. Ashes have a trace of form and consciousness. Stay until I’ve turned into a puff of smoke and been scattered by the wind. Then you’ll no longer be able to watch over me, and I shall no longer be able to care about you — you can let me go, and I’ll have to let you go wherever you please as well.”

“Steady on!” Xiren frantically clapped her hand over his mouth. “This is just what I wanted to warn you against, yet here you go, talking more wildly than ever.”

“All right,” agreed Baoyu promptly. “I promise not to.”

“This is the first fault you must correct.”

“Done. If I ever talk that way again, you can pinch my lips. What else?”

“The second thing is this. Whether you like studying or not, in front of the old master and other people stop running it down and making sarcas-

想着，我家代代读书，只从有了你，不承望你不喜读书，已经他心里又气又愧。而且背前背后乱说那些混话，读书上进的人，你就起个名字叫作‘禄蠹’；又说只除‘明明德’外无书，都是前人自己不能解圣人之书，另出己意，混编纂出来的。这些话，怎么怨得老爷不气，不时时打你。叫别人怎么想你？”宝玉笑道：“再不说了。那原是那小时不知天高地厚，信口胡说，如今再不敢说了。还有什么？”

袭人道：“再不可毁僧谤道，调脂弄粉。还有更要紧的一件，再不许吃人嘴上擦的胭脂了，与那爱红的毛病儿。”宝玉道：“都改，都改。再有什么，快说。”袭人笑道：“再也没有了。只是百事检点些，不任意任情的就是了。你若果都依了，便拿八人轿也抬不出我去了。”宝玉笑道：“你在这里长远了，不怕没八人轿你坐。”袭人冷笑道：“这我可希罕的。有那个福气，没有那个道理。纵坐了，也没甚趣。”

二人正说着，只见秋纹走进来，说：“快三更了，该睡了。方才老太太打发嬷嬷来问，我答应睡了。”宝玉命取表来看时，果然针已指到亥正，方从新盥漱，宽衣安歇，不在话下。

至次日清晨，袭人起来，便觉身体发重，头疼目胀，四肢火热。先时还挣扎得住，次后捱不住，只要睡着，因而和衣躺在炕上。宝玉忙回了贾母，传医诊视，说道：“不过偶感



tic remarks about it. At least pretend to like studying, so as not to provoke your father and give him a chance to speak well of you to his friends. After all, he thinks: The men of our family have been scholars for generations, but this son of mine has let me down — he doesn't care for books. As if this wasn't bad enough, you keep saying crazy things in public as well as in private, sneering at those who study hard so as to get on and calling them career-grubbers. You also say that, apart from that classic on 'manifesting bright virtue,'¹ all the rest are trash produced by fools of old who didn't understand the Sage. No wonder your father gets so angry with you that he keeps punishing you. What sort of impression does that make on people?"

"All right." Baoyu laughed. "That was just wild talk when I was too young to know any better. I don't say such things nowadays. What else?"

"You must stop abusing Buddhist monks and Taoist priests and playing about with girls' cosmetics and powder. Most important of all, you must stop kissing the rouge on girls' lips and running after everything in red."

"I promise, I promise. What else is there? Tell me, quick!"

"That's all. Just be a bit more careful about things in general instead of getting carried away by all your whims and fancies. If you'll do all I've asked, I promise never to leave you, not even if they send a big sedan-chair with eight bearers to fetch me away."

Baoyu chuckled. "If you stay here long enough, you'll have your sedan-chair and eight bearers some day."

"I don't covet such luck." She smiled disdainfully. "If I'm not entitled to it what's the good of riding on one?"

At this point Qiuwen appeared and said, "It's nearly the third watch: time you were in bed. Just now the old lady sent round a nurse to ask, and I told her you were asleep."

Baoyu asked her to hand him a watch and saw it was twelve o'clock. He washed and rinsed his mouth all over again, then undressed and lay down to sleep.

When Xiren got up first thing the next morning she felt heavy and out of sorts. Her head ached, her eyes were swollen, her limbs were burning like fire. She tried to carry on as usual at first but soon had to give up and

风寒，吃一两剂药疏散疏散就好了。”开方去后，令人取药来煎好。刚服下去，命他盖上被渥汗，宝玉自去黛玉房中来看视。

彼时黛玉自在床上歇午，丫鬟们皆出去自便，满屋内静悄悄的。宝玉揭起绣线软帘，进入里间，只见黛玉睡在那里，忙去上来推他道：“好妹妹，才吃了饭，又睡觉。”将黛玉唤醒。黛玉见是宝玉，因说道：“你且出去逛逛。我前儿闹了一夜，今儿还没有歇过来，浑身酸疼。”宝玉道：“酸疼事小，怕睡出病来。我替你解闷儿，混过困去就好了。”黛玉只合着眼，说道：“我不困，只略歇歇儿，你且别处去闹会子再来。”宝玉推他道：“我往那里去呢，见了别人就怪腻的。”

黛玉听了，“嗤”的一声笑道：“你既要在这里，那边去老老实实的坐着，咱们说话儿。”宝玉道：“我也歪着。”黛玉道：“你就歪着。”宝玉道：“没有枕头，咱们在一个枕头上罢。”黛玉道：“放屁！外头不是枕头？拿一个来枕着。”宝玉出至外间，看了一眼，回来笑道：“那个我不要，也不知是那个脏婆子的。”黛玉听了，睁开眼，起身笑道：“真真你就是我命中的‘天魔星’！请枕这一个。”说着，将自己枕的推与宝玉，又起身将自己的再拿了一个来，自己枕了，二人对面倒下。

黛玉因看见宝玉左边腮上有钮扣大小的一块血渍，便欠身凑近前来，以手抚之细看，又道：“这又是谁的指甲刮破了？”宝玉侧身，一面躲，一面笑道：“不是刮的，只怕是才



lie down, fully dressed, on the *kang*. Baoyu at once informed the Lady Dowager, and a doctor was sent to examine her.

"It's nothing but a cold," said the doctor. "She will be all right after a couple of doses of medicine to relieve the congestion."

The doctor left after making out the prescription. The medicine was brought and decocted, and Xiren drank it. Baoyu left her well covered so as to induce perspiration and went off to see Daiyu.

Daiyu was having a siesta, and since all her maids had gone out on their own business the place was unusually quiet. Baoyu raised the embroidered curtain and walked into the inner room, where he found her sleeping.

"Dear cousin!" he called, shaking her gently. "How can you sleep just after a meal?"

When Daiyu woke and saw who it was, she said, "Why don't you go for a stroll? I haven't recovered yet from all that excitement the other night. I'm still aching from head to foot."

"A few aches are nothing, but if you go on sleeping you'll really fall ill. Let me amuse you to keep you awake and then you'll be all right."

"I'm not sleepy." She closed her eyes. "All I want is a little rest. Run away and play for a while. You can come back later."

"Where can I go?" He nudged her again. "I find everyone else so boring."

Daiyu could not suppress a laugh. "All right, if stay you must, go and sit down properly over there and we'll talk."

"I want to curl up too." Seeing that there was no extra pillow, he added, "Why don't we share that pillow of yours?"

"What nonsense! Aren't there pillows in the outer room? Just help yourself to one."

Baoyu went out to have a look, coming back to say, "I don't want any of them. Who knows what dirty old woman has been using them?"

Daiyu opened her eyes at this and sat up, laughing.

"You really are the bane of my life! All right, have this." She pushed her pillow towards him and fetched herself another. Then they lay down facing each other. Observing on his left cheek a bloodstain the size of a button, she leaned over to look at it carefully and laid one finger on it.



刚替他们淘漉胭脂膏子，蹭上了一点儿。”说着，便找手帕子要揩拭。黛玉使用自己的帕子替他揩拭了，口内说道：“你又干这些事了。干也罢了，必定还要带出幌子来。便是舅舅看不见，别人又当奇事新鲜话儿去学舌讨好儿，吹到舅舅耳朵里，又该大家不干净惹气。”

宝玉总未听见这些话，只闻得一股幽香，却是从黛玉袖中发出，闻之令人醉魂酥骨。宝玉一把便将黛玉的袖拉住，要瞧笼着何物。黛玉笑道：“冬寒十月，谁带什么香呢。”宝玉笑道：“既然如此，这香是哪里来的？”黛玉道：“连我也不知道。想必是柜子里头的香气，衣服上熏染的也未可知。”宝玉摇头道：“未必。这香的气味奇怪，不是那些香饼子、香毬子、香袋子的香。”黛玉冷笑道：“难道我也有些‘罗汉’‘真人’给我些香不成？便是得了奇香，也没有亲哥哥、亲兄弟弄了花儿、朵儿、霜儿、雪儿替我炮制。我有的是那些俗香罢了。”

宝玉笑道：“凡我说一句，你就拉上这么些，不给你个利害，也不知道，从今儿可不饶你了。”说着翻身起来，将两只手呵了两口，便伸手向黛玉膈肢窝内两肋下乱挠。黛玉素性触痒不禁，宝玉两手伸来乱挠，便笑的喘不过气来，口里说：“宝玉！你再闹，我就恼了。”宝玉方住了手，笑问道：“你还说这些不说了？”黛玉笑道：“再不敢了。”一面理鬓笑道：“我有奇香，你有‘暖香’没有？”

宝玉见问，一时解不来，因问：“什么‘暖香’？”黛玉点头叹笑道：“蠢才，蠢才！你有玉，人家就有金来配你；人家有‘冷香’，你就没有‘暖香’去配？”宝玉方听出来。宝玉



“Whose nails was it this time?”

Baoyu drew back, grinning. “That’s not a scratch. I may have splashed myself with the lip-salve I’ve just been mixing for the girls.”

As he searched for a handkerchief, Daiyu rubbed the place clean with her own, scolding as she did so, “Isn’t that just like you? And you have to leave traces too. Even if uncle doesn’t see it, that’s the sort of thing people love to gossip about and some may tell on you in order to win favour; and if such stories reach his ears it’ll mean trouble for all of us.”

Baoyu was not listening, however, so intent was he on the fragrance emanating from Daiyu’s sleeve, which he found intoxicating — it seemed to melt the marrow of his bones. He caught hold of her sleeve to see what she had hidden inside.

“Who wears anything fragrant in mid-winter?” she asked.

“Where does that scent come from then?”

“How do I know? Unless it’s some fragrance from my wardrobe that’s clung to my gown.”

Baoyu shook his head. “I doubt it. It’s a very unusual scent. Not the kind you would get from perfumed pastilles, scent-balls or sachets.”

“Do I have a Buddhist arhat to give me scent?” demanded Daiyu archly. “Even if I had some rare recipe, I’ve no kind cousin or brother to concoct it for me with stamens, buds, dew and snow. All I have are common scents.”

“Whenever I say one word, off you go!” Baoyu grinned. “I shall have to teach you a lesson. From now on, I’ll show you no mercy.”

He rose to his knees, blew on his hands, then stretched them out and started tickling her in the ribs and under her armpits.

Daiyu had always been ticklish, and this surprise attack set her giggling so much that she very nearly choked.

“Stop it, Baoyu,” she gasped. “Stop, or I’ll be angry.”

He desisted then, demanding with a smile, “Will you talk that way any more?”

“I dare not.” Smoothing her hair she laughed. “You say I’ve an unusual scent, have you a *warm* scent?”

“A warm scent?” He looked puzzled.

Daiyu shook her head with a sigh. “How dense you are! You have



笑道：“方才求饶，如今更说狠了。”说着，又去伸手。黛玉忙笑道：“好哥哥，我可不敢了。”宝玉笑道：“饶便饶你，只把袖子我闻一闻。”说着，便拉了袖子笼在脸上，闻个不住。黛玉夺了手道：“这可该去了。”宝玉笑道：“去？不能。咱们斯斯文文的躺着说话儿。”说着，复又倒下。黛玉也倒下，用手帕子盖上脸。宝玉有一搭没一搭的说些鬼话，黛玉只不理。宝玉问他几岁上京，路上见何景致古迹，扬州有何遗迹故事，土俗民风。黛玉只不答。

宝玉只怕他睡出病来，便哄他道：“暖哟！你们扬州衙门里有一件大故事，你可知道？”黛玉见他说的郑重，且又正言厉色，只当是真事，因问：“什么事？”宝玉见问，便忍着笑顺口诌道：“扬州有一座黛山，山上有个林子洞。”黛玉笑道：“真是撒谎，自来也没听见这山。”宝玉道：“天下山水多着呢，你那里知道这些？等我说完了，你再批评。”黛玉道：“你且说。”宝玉又诌道：“林子洞里原来有群耗子精。那一年腊月初七日，老耗子升座议事，因说：‘明日乃是腊八，世上人都熬腊八粥。如今我们洞中果品短少，须得乘此打劫些来方妙。’乃拔令箭一枝，遣一能干的小耗子前去打听。一时小耗回报：‘各处察访打听已毕，惟有山下庙里果米最





jade, and someone else has gold to match it. So don't you have a warm scent to match her cold scent?"

Baoyu caught her meaning then and chuckled. "You were begging for mercy a minute ago, but now you're worse than ever." He reached out again.

"Dear cousin, I promise not to tease," she cried hastily.

"All right, I'll forgive you if you let me smell your sleeve."

With that he covered his face with her sleeve and started sniffing as if he would never stop. She pulled away her arm.

"You ought to go now."

"Go I can't. Let's lie down in a civilized way and chat."

He stretched out again while Daiyu lay down too, covering her face with her handkerchief and paying no attention to his rambling questions. How old had she been when she came to the capital? What fine sights and monuments had she seen on the way? What places of historical interest were there in Yangzhou? What were the local customs and traditions? Daiyu made no reply and to keep her awake — for he feared sleep might give her indigestion — Baoyu played a new trick.

"Aiyah!" he exclaimed. "Do you know the extraordinary thing that happened near your yamen in Yangzhou?"

Taken in by his straight face and earnest manner, Daiyu asked to hear about it. Then Baoyu, suppressing a laugh, started romancing.

"In Yangzhou there's a hill called Mount Dai, in the side of which is a cavern called Lin Cavern."

"You're making this up," cried Daiyu. "I've never heard of such a hill."

"Do you know all the hills and streams in the world? Let me finish my story before you pull it to pieces."

"Go on, then."

Baoyu went on, "In Lin Cavern lived a number of rat spirits. One year on the seventh day of the twelfth moon, the Rat Patriarch ascended his throne to hold a council. He announced, 'Tomorrow is the Feast of Winter Gruel when all men on earth will be cooking their sweet gruel. Here in our cave we have few fruits or nuts; we must go foraging.' He handed an arrow of command to an able young rat and ordered him to go



多。’老耗问：‘米有几样？果有几品？’小耗道：‘米豆成仓，不可胜记。果品有五种：一红枣，二栗子，三落花生，四菱角，五香芋。’老耗听了大喜，即时点耗前去。乃拔令箭问：‘谁去偷米？’一耗便接令去偷米。又拔令箭问：‘谁去偷豆？’又一耗接令去偷豆。然后一一的都各领令去了。只剩了香芋一种，因又拔令箭问：‘谁去偷香芋？’只见一个极小极弱的小耗应道：‘我愿去偷香芋。’老耗并众耗见他这样，恐不谙练，且怯懦无力，都不准他去。小耗道：‘我虽年小身弱，却是法术无边，口齿伶俐，机谋深远。此去包管比他们偷的还巧呢。’众耗忙问：‘如何比他们巧呢？’小耗道：‘我不学他们直偷。我只摇身一变，也变成个香芋，滚在香芋堆里，使人看不出，听不见，却暗暗的用分身法搬运，渐渐的就搬运尽了。岂不比直偷硬取的巧些？’众耗听了，都道：‘妙却妙，只是不知怎么个变法，你先变个我们瞧瞧。’小耗听了，笑道：‘这个不难，等我变来。’说毕，摇身就变，竟变了一个最标致美貌的一位小姐。众耗忙笑道：‘变错了，变错了。原说变果子的，如何变出小姐来。’小耗现形笑道：‘我说你们没见世面，只认得这果子是香芋，却不知盐课林





out and reconnoitre.

“Soon the young rat returned to report, ‘I have made a thorough search and inquired far and wide. The best store of grain and dried fruits is to be found in the temple at the foot of this hill.’”

“‘How many kinds of grain? How many sorts of dried fruits?’

“‘A whole granary full of rice and beans past counting, and five kinds of dried fruits: dates, chestnuts, peanuts, caltrops and sweet taros.’

“Delighted by this information, the Patriarch promptly detailed rats to go forth. Taking up an arrow of command he asked:

“‘Who will steal rice?’

“One rat took the arrow and went off.

“‘Who will steal beans?’ the Patriarch asked, picking up another arrow.

“Another rat accepted the mission.

“One by one they went off until finally there were only sweet taros left to be stolen.

“The Patriarch, holding an arrow, asked, ‘Who will go and steal sweet taros?’

“A very small, puny mouse volunteered, ‘I’ll go!’

“Seeing how small and weak she was, the Patriarch and the rest of the tribe would not hear of her going, for fear she proved unequal to the task.

“But the little mouse insisted, ‘Young and weak as I am, I have wonderful magic powers and great eloquence and cunning. I swear to manage better than all the rest.’

“Asked to explain how, she said, ‘I shan’t steal outright like them, but change myself into a sweet taro and mix in a pile of others to escape detection. Then I shall spirit the taros away one by one, until there are none left. Wouldn’t that be more effective than stealing outright?’

“‘It certainly sounds it,’ replied the other rats. ‘But how do you manage the metamorphosis? Do show us.’

“‘That’s easy.’ The little mouse laughed. ‘Just watch.’ She shook herself and changed into a lovely girl with a most bewitching face.

“The other rats laughed. ‘You’ve made a mistake,’ they cried. ‘You’ve changed into a young lady, not a sweet taro.’

老爷的小姐才是真正的香玉呢。””

黛玉听了，翻身爬起来，按着宝玉笑道：“我把你烂了嘴的！我就知道你是编我呢。”说着，便拧的宝玉连连央告，说：“好妹妹，饶我罢，再不敢了！我因为闻你香，忽然想起这个典故来。”黛玉笑道：“饶骂了人，还说是典故呢。”

一语未了，只见宝钗走来，笑问：“谁说典故呢？我也听听。”黛玉忙让坐，笑道：“你瞧瞧，有谁！他饶骂了人，还说是典故。”宝钗笑道：“原来是宝兄弟，怨不得他，他肚子里的典故原多。只是可惜一件，凡该用典故之时，他偏就忘了。有今日记得的，前儿夜里的芭蕉诗就该记得。眼面前的倒想不起来，别人冷的那样，你急的只出汗。这会子偏又有记性了。”黛玉听了笑道：“阿弥陀佛！到底是我的好姐姐，你一般也遇见对子了。可知一还一报，不爽不错的。”刚说到这里，只听宝玉房中一片声嚷，吵闹起来。后回再见。





“‘You ignorant lot!’ retorted the little mouse, resuming her original form. ‘You only know what sweet taros are, but don’t know that the daughter of Salt Commissioner Lin is sweeter than any taro.’”²

Daiyu scrambled over and pinned Baoyu down. “You scoundrel!” she cried laughing. “I knew you were making fun of me.”

She pinched Baoyu until he begged for mercy. “Dear cousin, let me off. I won’t do it again,” he pleaded. “It was smelling that sweet scent of yours that reminded me of this allusion.”

“You make fun of me and dare pretend it’s an allusion....”

Just then in walked Baochai with a radiant face. “Who’s talking about allusions?” she asked. “I must hear this.”

Daiyu hastily offered her a seat. “Can’t you see?” She laughed. “He mocks me, then pretends it’s an allusion.”

“Cousin Bao, is it? No wonder.” Baochai smiled. “He knows so many allusions. The only trouble is that he forgets them just when he needs them most. If his memory is so good today, why didn’t he remember that allusion about the plantain the other night? He actually forgot the most obvious one. Everyone else was freezing, but he was so frantic that he was perspiring. So now his memory has come back again.”

“Amida Buddha!” cried Daiyu laughing outright. “She’s my good sister after all. You’ve met your match now. This just shows that no one can escape retribution.”

At that moment the sound of squabbling and angry shouting broke out in Baoyu’s apartments. What it was will be disclosed in the next chapter.



第二十回

王熙凤正言弹妒意 林黛玉俏语谑娇音

话说贾宝玉在林黛玉房中说“耗子精”，宝钗撞来，讽刺宝玉元宵不知“绿蜡”之典，三人正在房中互相讥刺取笑。那宝玉正恐黛玉饭后贪眠，一时存了食，或夜间走了困，皆非保养身体之法；幸而宝钗走来，大家谈笑，那林黛玉方不欲睡，自己才放了心。忽听他房中嚷起来，大家侧耳听了一听，林黛玉先笑道：“这是你妈妈和袭人叫呢。那袭人也罢了，你妈妈再要认真排场他，可见老背晦了。”

宝玉忙要赶过来，宝钗忙一把拉住道：“你别和你妈妈吵才是，他老糊涂了，倒要让他一步为是。”宝玉道：“我知道了。”说毕走来，只见李嬷嬷拄着拐棍，在当地骂袭人：

“忘了本的小娼妇！我抬举你起来，这会子我来了，你大模大样的躺在炕上，见我来也不理一理。一心只想妆狐媚子哄宝玉，哄的宝玉不理我，听你们的话。你不过是几两臭银子买来的毛丫头，这屋里你就作耗，如何使得！好不好拉出去配一个小子，看你还妖精似的哄宝玉不哄！”袭人先只道李嬷嬷不过为他躺着生气，少不得分辨说“病了，才出汗，蒙着头，原没看见你老人家”等语。后来只管听他说“哄宝玉”、“装狐媚”，又说“配小子”等话，由不得又愧又委



Chapter 20

Xifeng Reproves a Jealous Woman Daiyu Mocks a Prattling Girl

Baoyu, as we saw, was in Daiyu's room telling her the story about the rat spirits when Baochai burst in and teased him for forgetting the "green wax" allusion on the night of the Feast of Lanterns. Baoyu felt relieved as they laughed and made fun of each other, for he had feared that sleeping after lunch might give Daiyu indigestion or insomnia that night, and so injure her health. Luckily Baochai's arrival and the lively conversation that followed it had woken Daiyu up.

Just then, a commotion broke out in Baoyu's apartments and the three of them pricked up their ears.

"It's your nanny scolding Xiren," announced Daiyu. "There's nothing wrong with Xiren, yet your nanny is for ever nagging at her. Old age has befuddled her."

Baoyu wanted to rush straight over, but Baochai laid a restraining hand on his arm. "Don't quarrel with your nurse now." She warned him. "She's a silly old thing, but you should bear with her."

"I know," said Baoyu, and dashed off.

Back in his apartments he found Nanny Li leaning on her cane in the middle of his room and roundly abusing Xiren.

"Ungrateful slut!" she scolded. "You owe your position to me, yet there you lie giving yourself such airs on the *kang*, and won't even look at me when I come in. All you think about is making up to Baoyu, so that he pays no attention to *me* but does everything *you* say. A slave girl bought for a few taels of stinking silver, you've turned everything here topsyturvy. If you don't behave, you'll be dragged out and married off. We'll see whether you can still bewitch Baoyu then."

Imagining that Nanny Li was angry with her for lying in bed, Xiren at first explained, "I'm ill and just starting to perspire, so I'd covered up my

屈，禁不住哭起来。

宝玉虽听了这些话，也不好怎样，少不得替袭人分辨病了吃药等话，又说：“你不信，只问别的丫头们。”李嬷嬷听了这话，益发气起来了，说道：“你只护着那起狐狸，那里认得我了，叫我问谁去，谁不帮着你呢，谁不是袭人拿下马来！我都知道那些事。我只和你在老太太、太太跟前去讲了。把你奶了这么大，到如今吃不着奶了，把我丢在一旁，逞着丫头们要我的强。”一面说，一面也哭起来。彼时黛玉、宝钗等也走过来劝说：“妈妈，你老人家担待他们一点子就完了。”李嬷嬷见他二人来了，便拉住诉委屈，将当日吃茶，茜雪出去，与昨日酥酪等事，唠唠叨叨说个不清。

可巧凤姐正在上房算完输赢账，听得后面声嚷动，便知是李嬷嬷老病发了，排揎宝玉的人，正值他今儿输了钱，迁怒于人。便连忙赶过来，拉了李嬷嬷，笑道：“好妈妈，别生气。大节下，老太太才喜欢了一日，你是个老人家，别人高声，你还要管他们呢；难道你反不知道规矩，在这里嚷起来，叫老太太生气不成？你只说谁不好，我替你打他。我家里烧的滚热的野鸡，快来跟我吃酒去。”一面说，一面拉着走，又叫：“丰儿，替你李奶奶拿着拐棍子，擦眼泪的手帕子。”那李嬷嬷脚不沾地跟了凤姐走了，一面还说：“我也不要这老命了，越性今儿没了规矩，闹一场子，讨个没脸，强



head and didn't see you, granny."

But when the old woman accused her of vamping Baoyu and threatened to have her married off, the injustice of these taunts reduced her to tears.

Baoyu overheard this tirade, but there was not much he could do except explain that Xiren was unwell and had just taken medicine.

"If you don't believe me," he added, "ask any of the maids."

This only added fuel to the fire.

"That's right. Stick up for those vixens of yours. Who am I, after all?" his nurse stormed. "Which of them am I supposed to ask? They'll all take your side. They're all under Xiren's thumb. I know everything that goes on here. I'm going to have this out with you in the presence of the old lady and Lady Wang. I suckled you, I raised you; but now that you don't need my milk any more, you push me aside and let your maids insult me." She was weeping with rage.

By this time Daiyu and Baochai had come over too and they set to work to soothe her.

"Make some allowances for them, nanny," they urged. "Let it blow over."

The old woman seized on them to pour out her complaints: Qianxue's dismissal for drinking a cup of tea, and the business of the junket the previous day.... It was hard to make head or tail of her maundering.

Xifeng happened just then to be in the Lady Dowager's apartments totting up the scores after a game. When she heard angry voices she knew that Nanny Li was on the rampage again, working off on Baoyu's maids her annoyance over her gambling losses today. She hurried across and pulled the nurse aside.

"Don't be angry, nanny dear," she said with a smile. "It's just after the festival and the old lady's had a happy day. At your age you ought to stop other people from brawling. Don't forget yourself and start a rumpus here which may upset the old lady. Tell me who's been annoying you and I'll have her beaten for you. Now I've a broiled pheasant in my room, piping hot. Come along and have a drink with me, quick!"

With these words she tugged the nurse out, calling over her shoulder to her maid, "Fenger, bring Nanny Li's cane for her, and a handkerchief to dry her tears."

Unable to hold her ground Nanny Li was borne off, lamenting as she



如受那娼妇蹄子的气!”后面宝钗、黛玉随着，见凤姐儿这般，都拍手笑道：“亏这一阵风来，把个老婆子撮了去了。”

宝玉点头叹道：“这又不知是那里的账，只拣软的排揎。昨儿又不知是那个姑娘得罪了，上在他帐上。”一句未了，晴雯在旁笑道：“谁又不疯了，得罪他作什么。便得罪了他，就有本事承任，不犯带累别人!”袭人一面哭，一面拉宝玉道：“为我得罪了一个老奶奶，你这会子又为我得罪这些人，这还不够我受的，还只是拉别人。”宝玉见他这般病势，又添了这些烦恼，连忙忍气吞声，安慰他仍旧睡下出汗。又见他汤烧火热，自己守着他，歪在旁边，劝他只养着病，别想着些没要紧的事生气。袭人冷笑道：“要为这些事生气，这屋里一刻还站不得了。但只是天长日久，只管这样，可叫人怎么样才好呢。时常我劝你，别为我们得罪人，你只顾一时为我们那样，他们都记在心里，遇着坎儿，说的好说不好听，大家什么意思。”一面说，一面禁不住流泪，又怕宝玉烦恼，只得又勉强忍着。

一时杂使的老婆子煎了二和药来。宝玉见他才有汗意，不肯叫他起来，自己便端着，就枕与他吃了，即命小丫头子们铺炕。袭人道：“你吃饭不吃饭，到底老太太、太太跟前坐





went, "I'm old enough to die and have done with it. But I'd sooner forget myself and lose face making a scene like this than put up with the insolence of that dirty bitch."

Baochai and Daiyu in the background had been watching how Xifeng handled the situation. Now they laughed and clapped their hands.

"How lucky that this hurricane sprang up and carried the old creature off!"

Baoyu nodded and sighed. "Goodness only knows how this started. She keeps picking on people who can't defend themselves. I suppose one of the other girls annoyed her yesterday, and she tried to settle scores like this...."

The words were scarcely out of his mouth when Qingwen gave a laugh.

"We're not off our heads," she said. "Why should we annoy her? And even if we had, we'd have taken the blame ourselves, not shift it to somebody else."

Xiren caught hold of Baoyu's hand and sobbed, "First you offend your old nurse because of me, and now because of me you're offending everyone here. Haven't I enough to put up with, without dragging them in as well?"

Because she was ill and upset Baoyu had to be patient. He urged her to lie down again and perspire. She was burning with fever and stretching out beside her he tried to soothe her.

"Just think of your health. Don't upset yourself over such trifles."

Xiren smiled bitterly.

"If I got upset easily, how could I stay a single minute in this room? But when it goes on like this day after day, what do you expect us to do? I'm always urging you to stop offending people on our account. You're just out to stick up for us on the spur of the moment, but *they* remember it, and the next chance they have at the very least they say something unpleasant. Think how difficult you make it for us all." She could not help crying as she spoke, but for fear of upsetting Baoyu she fought back her tears.

Presently the odd-job woman brought in the second dose of medicine. Baoyu would not let Xiren get up since she seemed on the point of per-

一会子，和姑娘们玩一会子再回来。我就静静的躺一躺也好。”宝玉听说，只得替他去了簪环，看他躺下，自往上房来。同贾母吃毕饭，贾母犹欲同那几个老管家嬷嬷斗牌解闷，宝玉记着袭人，便回至房中，见袭人朦朦睡去。自己要睡，天气尚早。彼时晴雯、绮霰、秋纹、碧痕都寻热闹，找鸳鸯、琥珀等耍戏去了，独见麝月一个人在外间房里灯下抹骨牌。宝玉笑问道：“你怎么不同他们玩去？”麝月道：“没有钱。”宝玉道：“床底下堆着那么些，还不够你输的？”麝月道：“都玩去了，这屋里交给谁呢？那一个又病了。满屋里上头是灯，下头是火。那些老妈妈子们，老天拔地，伏侍一天，也该叫他们歇歇；小丫头子们也是伏侍了一天，这会子还不叫他们玩玩去。所以让他们都去罢，我在这里看着。”

宝玉听了这话，公然又是一个袭人。因笑道：“我在这里坐着，你放心去罢。”麝月道：“你既在这里，越发不用去了，咱们两个说话玩笑岂不好？”宝玉笑道：“咱两个作什么呢？怪没意思的。也罢了，早上你说头痒，这会子没什么事，我替你篦头罢。”麝月听了便道：“就是这样。”说着，将文具镜匣搬来，卸去钗钏，打开头发，宝玉拿了篦子替他一一的梳篦。只篦了三五下，只见晴雯忙忙走进来取钱。一



spiring. Instead he carried the medicine to her and raised her on the pillow to drink it. Then he told some of the younger maids to prepare his *kang*.

“Whether you mean to eat there or not, you’d better go and sit with the old lady and Lady Wang for a while,” suggested Xiren. “Then keep the young ladies company for a bit before coming back. I shall be all right after a quiet nap here.”

Hearing this, Baoyu removed her hairpins and bracelets for her and settled her for the night before going to dine in the Lady Dowager’s quarters.

After dinner his grandmother felt disposed to play cards with some of the old stewardesses. Baoyu, still worried about Xiren, went back to find her dozing. It was still early for him to go to bed, but Qingwen, Yixian, Qiuwen and Bihen had gone off to have some fun with Yuanyang and Hupo, leaving only Sheyue playing solitaire by the lamp in the outer room.

With a smile Baoyu asked, “Why didn’t you go with the others?”

“I haven’t any money.”

“There’s a pile stacked under the bed. Isn’t that enough for you to lose?”

“If we all went off to play, who’d mind this place, with her lying ill here too? There are lamps above and stoves below everywhere. Those old women deserve a rest after waiting on you all day, and the girls ought to have some fun too after a day’s work. So I let them all go while I keep an eye on things here.”

Why, she’s another Xiren, thought Baoyu and smiled.

“I’ll be here,” he told her. “Don’t worry. You can go.”

“If you’re here there’s even less reason for me to go. Why don’t we both sit here and talk?”

“Just the two of us sounds rather dull. What can we do? I know! You were saying this morning that your head felt itchy. Since we’ve nothing to do, let me comb your hair for you.”

“If you like.”

Sheyue fetched her dressing-case and mirror, then pulled out her hairpins and let down her hair. Baoyu had just started combing it with a fine comb when Qingwen hurried in to fetch some money. She laughed mock-

见了他两个，便冷笑道：“哦，交杯盏还没吃，倒上头了！”宝玉笑道：“你来，我也替你篦一篦。”晴雯道：“我没那么大福。”说着，拿了钱，便摔帘子出去了。

宝玉在麝月身后，麝月对镜，二人在镜内相视。宝玉便向镜内笑道：“满屋里就只是他磨牙。”麝月听说，忙向镜中摆手，宝玉会意，忽听“唿”一声帘子响，晴雯又跑进来问道：“我怎么磨牙了？咱们倒要说说。”麝月笑道：“你去你的罢，又来问人了。”晴雯笑道：“你又护着。你们那瞞神弄鬼的，我都知道。等我捞回本儿来，再说话。”说着，一径出去了。这里宝玉通了头，命麝月悄悄的伏侍他睡下，不肯惊动袭人。一宿无话。

至次日，清晨起来，袭人已是夜间发了汗，觉得轻省了些，只吃些米汤静养。宝玉放了心。因饭后走到薛姨妈这边来闲逛。彼时正月内，学房中放年学，闺阁中忌针，却都是闲时。贾环也过来玩，正遇见宝钗、香菱、莺儿三个赶围棋作耍，贾环见了也要玩。宝钗素习看他亦如宝玉，并没他意。今儿听他要玩，让他上来坐了一处玩。一磊十个钱，头一回自己赢了，心中十分欢喜。后来接连输了几盘，便有些着急。赶着这盘正该自己掷骰子，若掷个七点便赢，若掷个六点，下该莺儿掷三点就赢了。因拿起骰子来，狠命一掷，一个作定了五，那一个乱转。莺儿拍着手只叫“么”，贾环便瞪着眼，“六——七——八”混叫。那骰子偏生转出么



ingly at the sight of them.

"Fancy! You haven't yet drunk the bridal cup but already you're doing her hair."

Baoyu grinned.

"Come, I'll comb yours too if you like."

"I'm not destined for such good fortune."

Qingwen went off with the money, slamming the portière behind her.

Baoyu was standing just behind Sheyue, who was seated in front of the mirror. They exchanged glances in it and Baoyu smiled.

"She's got the sharpest tongue of you all," he remarked.

Sheyue wagged a warning finger, but it was too late. With another clack of the portière, Qingwen ran in again.

"Just what did you mean by that? We must have this out."

"Run along!" Sheyue giggled. "Why take it up?"

"You're covering up for him again. I know all your sly tricks. We must have this out after I've won back my money."

With that she went straight out.

When Baoyu had finished combing Sheyue's hair he asked her to help him quietly to bed without disturbing Xiren.

The rest of the night passed without incident.

The next morning Xiren was better, having perspired, and after taking some gruel she lay back to rest. After breakfast Baoyu felt easy enough in his mind to go and call on Aunt Xue.

Because it was the first month when the schools were on holiday and needlework was taboo for the womenfolk, everyone was free. And Jia Huan, going there to play, had found Baochai, Xiangling and Yinger enjoying a game of dice. He asked to join in.

Baochai, who always treated Jia Huan exactly like Baoyu, made him sit down beside them. They were staking ten cash on each throw, and Jia Huan gloated when he won the first round; but then he lost several times running and started to fret.

The next time it came to his turn he stood to win if he threw more than six, while Yinger needed only three to win. Jia Huan shook the two dice from the pot as hard as he could. One turned up five, the other rolled over

来。贾环急了，伸手便抓起骰子来，然后就拿钱，说是个六点。莺儿便说：“分明是个么！”宝钗见贾环急了，便瞅莺儿说道：“越大越没规矩，难道爷们还赖你？还不放下钱来呢！”莺儿满心委屈，见宝钗说，不敢则声，只得放下钱来，口内嘟囔说：“一个作爷的，还赖我们这几个钱，连我也不放在眼里。前儿我和宝玉玩，他输了那些，也没着急。下剩的钱，还是几个小丫头子们一抢，他一笑就罢了。”宝钗不等说完，连忙断喝。贾环道：“我拿什么比宝玉呢。你们怕他，都和他好，都欺负我不是太太养的。”说着，便哭了。宝钗忙劝他：“好兄弟，快别说这话儿，人家笑话你。”又骂莺儿。

正值宝玉走来，见了这般形况，问是怎么了。贾环不敢则声。宝钗素知他家规矩，凡作兄弟的，都怕哥哥。却不知那宝玉是不要人怕他的。他想着：“弟兄们一并都有父母教训，何必我多事，反生疏了。况且我是正出，他是庶出，饶这样还有人背后谈论，还禁得辖治他了。”更有个呆意思存在心里。——你道是何呆意？因他自幼姊妹丛中长大，亲姊妹有元春、探春，叔伯的有迎春、惜春，亲戚中又有史湘云、林黛玉、薛宝钗等诸人。他便料定，原来天生人为万物之灵，凡山川日月之精秀，只钟于女儿，须眉男子不过是些



and over. Yinger clapped her hands and cried, "One!" while Jia Huan, his eyes glued to the dice, yelled at random, "Six, seven, eight!" Finally, however, the dice came to rest at one. In exasperation he snatched up both dice and grabbed the stakes, insisting that he had thrown six.

"Anyone could see it was one," protested Yinger.

Observing how upset Jia Huan was, Baochai shot her a reproving glance.

"You're getting above yourself," she said. "Is it likely that one of the young masters would cheat you? Hurry up and put down your stake."

The unfairness of this made Yinger fume, but she dared not answer back. As she slapped down some cash she muttered under her breath: "Fancy a young gentleman cheating! Even *I* wouldn't make such a fuss over a few cash. Last time we played with Baoyu he lost a whole packet, yet he didn't mind. Even when the girls grabbed all *he* had left, he only laughed."

She would have gone on in this vein, but Baochai told her sharply to hold her tongue.

"How can I compare with Baoyu?" whined Jia Huan. "You keep in with him because you're afraid of him, but you bully me because I'm a concubine's son." He started to snivel.

"Don't talk like that, dear cousin, or people will laugh at you," Baochai advised him.

She was scolding Yinger again when Baoyu walked in and, seeing this state of affairs, asked them what had happened. Jia Huan lacked the courage to tell him.

Baochai knew the Jia family's rule: a younger brother must show respect to an elder. What she did not realize was that Baoyu did not want anyone to be afraid of him. He reasoned: We all have our parents to train us. Why should I butt in and strain relations with the younger ones? As I'm the wife's son and he's a concubine's son, people will gossip even if I do nothing, much more so if I now try to control him.

He had an even more fantastic idea — do you know what it was, Reader? As a result of being brought up among girls — his sisters Yuanchun and Tanchun, his cousins Yingchun and Xichun of the Jia house, and his distaff-cousins Shi Xiangyun, Lin Daiyu and Xue Baochai — he had come to the conclusion that while human beings were the highest

渣滓浊沫而已。因有这个呆念在心，把一切男子都看成混沌浊物，可有可无。只是父亲叔伯兄弟中，因孔子是亘古第一人说下的，不可忤慢，只得要听他这句话。所以，弟兄之间不过尽其大概的情理就罢了，并不想自己是丈夫，须要为子弟之表率。是以贾环等都不怕他，却怕贾母，才让他三分。如今宝钗恐怕宝玉教训他，倒没意思，便连忙替贾环掩饰。宝玉道：“大正月里哭什么？这里不好，你别处玩去。你天天念书，倒念糊涂了。比如这件东西不好，横竖那一件好，就弃了这件取那个。难道你守着这个东西哭一会子就好了不成？你原是取乐玩的，既不能取乐，就往别处去再寻乐，玩一会子。你如今自招烦恼，难道算取乐玩了不成？倒招自己烦恼，不如快去为是呢。”贾环听了，只得回来。

赵姨娘见他这般，因问：“又是那里垫了踹窝来了？”一问不答，再问时，贾环便说：“同宝姐姐玩的，莺儿欺负我，赖我的钱，宝玉哥哥撵我来了。”赵姨娘啐道：“谁叫你上高台盘去了？下流没脸的东西！那里玩不得？谁叫你跑了去讨没意思！”

正说着，可巧凤姐在窗外过，都听在耳内。便隔窗说道：“大正月又怎么了？环兄弟小孩子家，一半点儿错了，你只教导他，说这些淡话作什么！凭他怎么去，还有太太、老爷管他呢，就大口啐他！他现是主子，不好了，横竖有教导他的人，与你什么相干！环兄弟，出来，跟我玩去。”贾环



form of creation, the finest essences of Nature were embodied in girls, men being nothing but the dregs and scum. To him, therefore, all men were filthy clods who might just as well not have existed. Only deference to Confucius, the greatest sage of all time who taught that fathers, uncles and brothers should be respected, made him keep on a fairly good footing with his brothers and boy cousins. It never entered his head that he as a man should set the younger boys a good example. This is why Jia Huan and the others were not afraid of him, only yielding to him to some extent for fear of the Lady Dowager.

To prevent Baoyu from scolding Jia Huan, which would only have made matters worse, Baochai covered up for him as best she could.

“The first month is no time for snivelling,” said Baoyu. “If you don’t like it here, find somewhere else to play. All that studying every day seems to have made you even more muddle-headed. Suppose you find one thing no good and another good, just drop the first and go for the second. Can you improve on something you dislike by sticking to it and crying over it? You came here to have a good time. Since you don’t feel happy, go somewhere else to enjoy yourself. Why vex yourself so? Better take yourself off, quick.”

Jia Huan went back to his mother, the concubine Zhao.

At sight of his dejected face she asked, “Who’s been treating you as a doormat this time?” When he did not answer, she repeated the question.

“I was playing with Cousin Baochai. Yinger was mean to me and cheated me. Then Brother Baoyu turned me out.”

His mother spat in disgust.

“Shameless little brat! Who told you to put yourself forward? Is there nowhere else for you to play? Why go looking for trouble?”

Xifeng, who was passing outside, overheard this exchange and called back through the window:

“What’s this rumpus in the middle of the first month? Huan’s only a child. If he makes some small mistake you can set him right. Why carry on at him like that? No matter where he goes, the master and Her Ladyship are there to keep him in order. Imagine spitting at him! He’s one of the young masters, and if he does misbehave there are people to correct

素日怕凤姐比怕王夫人更甚，听见叫他，忙唯唯的出来。赵姨娘也不敢则声。凤姐向贾环道：“你也是个没气性的！时常说给你：要吃，要喝，要玩，要笑，只爱同那一个姐姐、妹妹、哥哥、嫂子玩，就同那个玩。你不听我的话，反叫这些人教的歪心邪意，狐媚子霸道的。自己不尊重，要往下流走，安着坏心，还只管怨人家偏心。输了几个钱？就这么个样儿！”贾环见问，只得诺诺的回说：“输了一二百。”凤姐道：“亏你还是爷，输了一二百钱就这样！”回头叫丰儿：“去取一吊钱来，姑娘们都在后头玩呢，把他送了玩去。你明儿再这么下流狐媚子，我先打了你，打发人告诉学里，皮不揭了你的！为你这个不尊重，恨的你哥哥牙痒，不是我拦着，窝心脚把你的肠子抓出来了。”喝命：“去罢！”贾环诺诺的跟了丰儿，得了钱，自己和迎春等玩去。不在话下。

且说宝玉正和宝钗玩笑，忽见人说：“史大姑娘来了。”宝玉听了，抬身就走。宝钗笑道：“等着，咱们两个一齐走，瞧瞧他去。”说着，下了炕，同宝玉一齐来至贾母这边。只见史湘云大笑大说的，见他两个来，忙问好厮见。正值林黛玉在旁，因问宝玉：“在那里的？”宝玉便说：“在宝姐姐家的。”黛玉冷笑道：“我说呢，亏在那里绊住，不然早就飞了来了。”宝玉笑道：“只许同你玩，替你解闷儿。不过偶然去





him — what business is it of yours? Come on, Brother Huan, come out and play with me.”

Jia Huan stood in even greater awe of Xifeng than of Lady Wang. He made haste, therefore, to obey and his mother dared raise no objection.

“You’re too spineless,” Xifeng scolded. “I’ve told you time and again that you’re free to eat or drink whatever you like and to play with any of the girls or boys. But instead of doing as I say, you let other people warp your mind and teach you these sneaky ways. You’ve no self-respect but will lower yourself. You behave spitefully yourself and then complain that everybody else is unfair! How much did you lose to make you take on like this?”

“A couple of hundred cash,” he told her meekly.

“All this fuss over a couple of hundred cash! And you one of the young wasters!” She turned to Fenger. “Go and fetch a string of cash. Then take him to the back where the girls are playing. If you do anything so mean and sneaky again, Huan, first I’ll give you a good spanking and then send some one to tell your teacher about it — he’ll flay you alive for it. Your total lack of self-respect has got Cousin Lian gnashing his teeth. He’d have ripped out your guts before now if I hadn’t stopped him. Now be off with you!”

“Yes,” said Jia Huan and trotted off with Fenger, taking the string of cash. He then joined Yingchun and the others at their game. And there we can leave him.

Let us return to Baoyu. He was joking with Baochai when someone announced, “Miss Shi has arrived.”

He started up at once to go and see her.

“Wait,” said Baochai. “Let’s go together.”

She got down from the *kang* and went with Baoyu to the Lady Dowager’s apartments, where they found Shi Xiangyun laughing and chattering away. After they had greeted each other, Daiyu, who was also there, asked Baoyu where he had been.

“With Cousin Baochai.”

“I thought so,” said Daiyu tartly. “Thank goodness there was someone to keep you there, or you’d have flown here long ago.”

“Are you the only one I’m allowed to play with or to amuse?” he

他那里一趟，就说这话。”林黛玉道：“好没意思的话！去不去管我什么事，我又没叫你替我解闷儿。可许你从此不理我呢！”说着，便赌气回房去了。

宝玉忙跟了来，问道：“好好的又生气了？就是我说错了，你到底也还坐在那里，和别人说笑一会子。又来自己纳闷。”林黛玉道：“你管我呢！”宝玉笑道：“我自然不敢管你，只没有个看着你自己作践了身子呢。”林黛玉道：“我作践坏了身子，我死，与你何干！”宝玉道：“何苦来，大正月里，死了活了的。”林黛玉道：“偏说死！我这会子就死！你怕死，你长命百岁的，如何？”宝玉笑道：“要像只管这样闹，我还怕死呢？倒不如死了干净。”黛玉忙道：“正是了，要是这样闹，不如死了干净。”宝玉道：“我说我自己死了干净，别听错了话赖人。”正说着，宝钗走来道：“史大妹妹等你呢。”说着，便推宝玉走了。这里黛玉越发气闷，只向窗前流泪。

没两盏茶的工夫，宝玉仍来了。林黛玉见了，越发哽哽噎噎的哭个不住。宝玉见了这样，知难挽回，打叠起千百样的款语温言来劝慰。不料自己未张口，只见黛玉先说道：

“你又来作什么？横竖如今有人和你玩，比我又会念，又会作，又会写，又会说笑，又怕你生气，拉了你去，你又作什么来？死活凭我去罢了！”宝玉听了，忙上来悄悄的说道：



answered with a smile. "I happen to drop in on her once and you make such an issue of it."

"Nonsense. What do I care if you go to see her or not? I've never asked you to amuse me either. You can leave me alone in future."

With that she retired angrily to her room.

Baoyu promptly followed her there.

"Why lose your temper for no reason at all?" he protested. "Even if I said something wrong, you might at least sit there and chat with the others for a bit, instead of sulking alone."

"What I do is none of your business."

"Of course not, but I can't bear to see you ruining your health."

"If I ruin my health and die, that's *my* affair. Nothing to do with you."

"Why talk about 'dying' or 'living' just after the New Year?"

"I shall, so there! I'm ready to die any minute. If you're so afraid of death, you can live to be a hundred — how about that?"

"If you just carry on like this all the time I'm not afraid." He smiled. "Death would be better."

"Exactly!" she retorted swiftly. "If you carry on like this it would be better for me to die."

"I meant better for *me* to be dead. How you twist my words!"

As they were bickering, Baochai slipped in.

"Cousin Shi is waiting for you."

She propelled Baoyu out.

More wretched than ever, Daiyu sat down by her window and shed tears of rage.

But in less time than it takes to drink two cups of tea Baoyu was back again. The sight of him made her sob convulsively. He knew it would be hard to pacify her and was prepared to coax her with all sorts of blandishments and kind words. But she forestalled him by asking:

"What have you come back for? You've got a new playmate now, someone better than I am at reading, writing and versifying, better at talking and laughing with you too. Someone who dragged you away for fear you might lose your temper. So why come back? Why not leave me to die in peace?"

“你这么个明白人，难道连‘亲不间疏，先不僭后’也不知道？我虽糊涂，却明白这两句话。头一件，咱们是姑舅姊妹，宝姐姐是两姨姊妹，论亲戚，他比你疏。第二件，你先来，咱们两个一桌吃，一床睡，长的这么大了，他是才来的，岂有个为他疏你的？”林黛玉啐道：“我难道为叫你疏他？我成了个什么人了呢？我为的是我的心。”宝玉道：“我也为的是我的心。难道你就知你的心，不知我的心不成？”林黛玉听了，低头一语不发，半日说道：“你只怨人行动嗔怪了你，你再不知道你自己怄人难受。就拿今日天气比，分明今儿冷的这样，你怎么倒反把个青氍披风脱了呢？”宝玉笑道：“何尝不穿着，见你一恼，我一炮躁就脱了。”林黛玉叹道：“回来伤了风，又该饿着吵吃的了。”

二人正说着，见湘云走来，笑道：“二哥哥，林姐姐，你们天天一处玩，我好容易来了，也不理我一理儿。”黛玉笑道：“偏咬舌子爱说话，连这‘二’哥哥也叫不出来，只是‘爱’哥哥‘爱’哥哥的。回来赶围棋儿，又该着你闹‘么爱三四五’了。”宝玉笑道：“你学惯了他，明儿连你还咬起来呢。”史湘云道：“他再不放人一点儿，专挑人的不好。你自己便比世人好，也不犯着见一个打趣一个。指出一个人来，你敢挑他，我就服你。”黛玉忙问是谁，湘云道：“你敢挑宝姐姐的短处，就算你是好的。我算不如你，他怎么不及



Baoyu stepped to her side and said softly, "Someone of your intelligence should know that distant relatives can't come between close ones, and new friends can't take the place of old. Dense as I am, *I* know that. Look, you're the daughter of my father's sister, while Baochai's a cousin on my mother's side — you're more closely related to me than she is. Besides, you came here first, we've eaten at the same table, slept in the same bed and grown up together, while she has only recently arrived. How could I be less close to you because of her?"

"Do I want you to be less close to her? What do you take me for? It's just that my feelings are hurt."

"And it's your feelings that concern me. Do you only know your own heart and not mine?"

Daiyu lowered her head and was silent. After a pause she said:

"You blame other people for finding fault with you, without realizing how provoking you can be. Take today, for example. Why leave off your fox-fur cape when it's turned so cold?"

Baoyu laughed.

"I was wearing it till you grew angry. Then I got so hot and bothered that I took it off."

"Well," she sighed, "if you catch cold there'll be the devil to pay."

They were interrupted by Xiangyun's arrival.

"Why, *Ai* Brother and Sister Lin!" she cried cheerfully. "You can be together every day, but it's rarely I have a chance to visit you; yet you pay no attention to poor little me."

"The lisper loves to rattle away," said Daiyu with a laugh. "Fancy saying *ai* instead of *er*¹ like that. I suppose, when we start dicing, you'll be shouting one, love, three, four, five...."

"If you copy her long enough, you'll soon be talking the same way," Baoyu teased.

"How you do pick on one!" cried Xiangyun. "Always finding fault! Even if you *are* better than all the rest of us, there's no need to go making fun of everyone else. But I know someone you'd never dare find fault with. If you do, I'll really respect you."

"Who's that?" Daiyu promptly asked.

"Dare you pick fault with Cousin Baochai? If so, good for you. I may



你呢。”黛玉听了，冷笑道：“我当是谁，原来是他！我那里敢挑他呢。”宝玉不等说完，忙用话分开。湘云笑道：“这一辈子，我自然比不上你。我只保佑着明儿得一个咬舌的林姐夫，时时刻刻你可听‘爱’‘厄’去。阿弥陀佛，那才现在我眼里！”说的众人一笑，湘云忙回身跑了。要知端的，下回分解。





not be up to you, but you've met your match in *her*."

"Oh, *her*." Daiyu snorted. "I wondered whom you meant. How could I ever presume to find fault with her?"

Baoyu tried to stop them, but Xiangyun rattled on:

"Naturally I'll never come up to you in this lifetime. I just pray that you'll marry a husband who talks like me, so that you hear nothing but 'love' the whole day long. Amida Buddha! May I live to see that day!"

That set everyone laughing, and Xiangyun turned and ran out.

To know the sequel, you must read the next chapter.





NOTES

Chapter 1

¹ Homophone for “true facts concealed.”

² Homophone for “fiction in rustic language.”

³ Homophone for “roots of love.”

⁴ Two ladies in the Han Dynasty noted for their scholarship.

⁵ Cao Zijian (192-232), Cao Cao’s younger son, entitled Prince of Chen, a noted poet of Wei of the Three Kingdoms Period; Zhuo Wenjun, the widow who married the scholar Sima Xiangru in the second century B. C. ; Hongniang, the maid and go-between in the Yuan drama *The Western Chamber*; Huo Xiaoyu, the heroine of a Tang romance.

⁶ Present-day Shandong.

⁷ Present-day Suzhou.

⁸ Homophone for “false talk.”

Chapter 2

¹ Present-day Nanjing.

² The northwestern section of Nanjing.

³ Yao and Shun were legendary sage kings of ancient China; Yu, founder of the Xia Dynasty (21st-16th century B.C.), was the legendary pacifier of flood; Tang founded the Shang Dynasty (16th-11th century B.C.); King Wen and King Wu founded the Western Zhou Dynasty (11th century-771 B.C.); Duke Zhou and Duke Shao were early Zhou statesmen; Dong Zhongshu (179-104 B.C.) was a Confucian philosopher of the Han Dynasty; Han Yu (768-824), a Confucian writer of the Tang Dynasty; Zhou Dunyi, Cheng Hao, Cheng Yi and Zhu Xi were neo-Confucianists of the Northern Song Dynasty (960-1127); and Zhang Zai (1020-1077) was a Northern Song philosopher with some materialist ideas.

⁴ Gong Gong, a legendary figure, was considered a rebel by China’s feudal rulers; Jie and Zhou were the last rulers of the Xia and Shang dynasties; Qin Shi Huang (259-210 B.C.) was the founder and First Emperor of the Qin Dynasty; Wang Mang usurped power towards the end of the Western Han Dynasty; Cao Cao (155-220) was a poet, statesman and military strategist of the Three Kingdoms Period; Huan Wen (312-373) was an eastern Jin general; An Lushan was a rebel general in the Tang Dynasty, and Qin Hui was a corrupt prime minister in the Southern Song Dynasty (1127-1279).

⁵ Xu You, an ancient legendary hermit; Tao Qian (365-427), an Eastern Jin poet who gave up an official career to live in retirement; Yuan Ji, Ji Kang and Liu Ling, third century poets and eccentrics; the Wang and Xie families, nobles of the Eastern Jin Dynasty (317-420); Gu Kaizhi, a famous Eastern Jin painter; Chen Shubao, last ruler of the Chen Dynasty (557-589); Minghuang (685-762), a Tang emperor; Huizong (1082-1135), a Northern Song emperor, painter and calligrapher; Wen Tingyun, a romantic poet of the late Tang Dynasty; Mi Fu (1051-1107), a Song Dynasty painter; Shi Yannian, a Song Dynasty poet; Liu Yong, a Song poet; Qin Guan, a Song poet, author of many love poems.



⁶ Ni Zan, a Yuan scholar and painter; Tang Yin, a Ming painter and poet, celebrated especially for his paintings of beautiful women; Zhu Yunming, a Ming scholar and calligrapher.

⁷ Li Guinian, a Tang musician; Huang Fanchuo, a Tang actor; Jing Xinmo, a tenth-century actor; Hongfo, the beautiful servant girl who married Li Jing, a duke in the early Tang Dynasty; Xue Tao, a Tang poetess; Cui Yingying, heroine of *The Western Chamber*; Zhaoyun, concubine of the Song poet Su Dongpo.

⁸ Cardinal Spring.

⁹ *Min* has the same radical as She and Zheng.

¹⁰ A parent's name was taboo and had to be used in an altered form.

Chapter 3

¹ Another name for Nanjing.

² Splendid Phoenix.

³ Confucian classics.

⁴ A prince noted for his great intelligence at the end of the Shang Dynasty.

⁵ A famous beauty of the ancient Kingdom of Yue.

⁶ Knitted Brows.

⁷ Flower.

⁸ Literally "assails men."

Chapter 4

¹ Plain Silk.

² Palace Seamstress.

Chapter 5

¹ A Han Dynasty scholar, Liu Xiang, was said to have been studying late one night when a god came with a torch to teach him the classics.

² See Note 6 in Chapter 2.

³ See Note 5 in Chapter 2.

⁴ A Tang empress.

⁵ A Han emperor's favourite, a light dancer, hence her name "Feiyan," meaning "Flying Swallow."

⁶ See Note 4 in Chapter 2.

⁷ The favourite of the Tang emperor Minghuang.

⁸ The beautiful daughter of Emperor Wu of the Song Kingdom (420-479), the Northern and Southern Dynasties.

⁹ A Tang princess.

¹⁰ See Note 5 in Chapter 3.

¹¹ See Note 5 in Chapter 1.

¹² A famous beauty in the Han Dynasty.

¹³ "Tiger" and "Hare" are the third and fourth years in the twelve-year cycle.



¹⁴ The festival, usually on the 5th of April, when the Chinese visited the family graves.

¹⁵ A pun meaning the three months of spring and the three elder Jia girls. All the Jia girls had the character *chun* or spring in their names.

¹⁶ It was said that Sakyamuni attained Buddhahood in a grove of *sal* trees.

¹⁷ "Combining the best," i. e., the best features of Baochai and Daiyu.

Chapter 7

¹ About February 20.

² About September 8.

³ About October 23.

⁴ About November 22.

⁵ A slang term for adultery between a man and his daughter-in-law.

Chapter 10

¹ A Taoist tract on divine retribution.

Chapter 11

¹ A scene from *The Peony Pavilion*, by the Ming playwright Tang Xianzu.

² A scene from *The Palace of Eternal Youth*, by the Qing playwright Hong Sheng.

³ A popular opera chosen for its auspicious title.

Chapter 17

¹ The Censer Peak of Mount Lushan in Jiangxi Province.

² The scenic Zhongnan Mountain in Shanxi Province.

³ A Song Dynasty writer.

⁴ According to the *Book of Songs*, the area around the River Qi, in the northern part of present-day Henan, abounded with bamboo in ancient times.

⁵ Garden of Prince Xiao of Liang in the Han Dynasty.

⁶ Fan Chengda, a Song Dynasty poet, is famous for his poems on country life.

⁷ Both "The Spring of Wuling" and "The Refuge of a Man of Qin" refer to the imaginary land beyond the peach-blossom stream at Wuling described by the Jin poet Tao Yuanming.

⁸ *Li Sao*, long narrative poem by the Chu poet Qu Yuan in the fourth century B.C.; *Wen Xuan*, an anthology of literature compiled by a prince of Liang in the sixth century.

⁹ A poem by Cui Hao, another Tang poet.

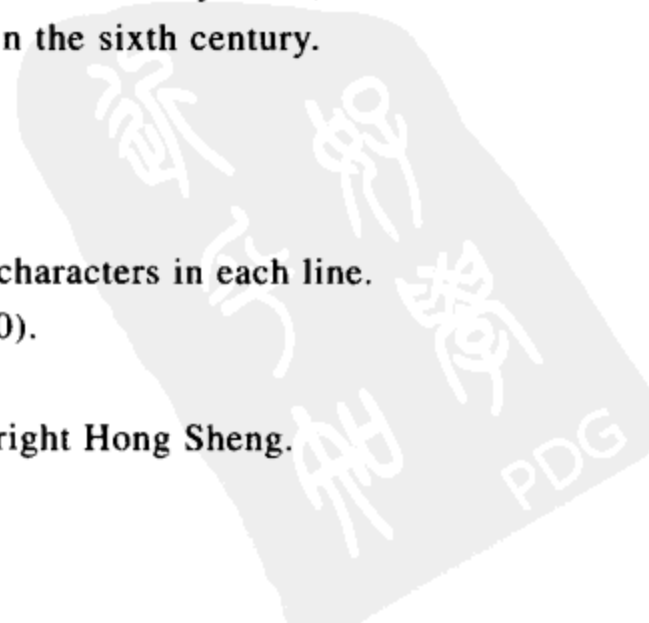
Chapter 18

¹ A kind of poem consisting of eight lines with five or seven characters in each line.

² A celebrated garden in Henan owned by Shi Chong (249-300).

³ From *A Handful of Snow* by the Ming playwright Li Yu.

⁴ From *The Palace of Eternal Youth* by the early Qing playwright Hong Sheng.



⁵ From *The Dream at Handan* by the Ming playwright Tang Xianzu.

⁶ From *The Peony Pavilion* by Tang Xianzu.

⁷ Two more scenes from *The Peony Pavilion*.

⁸ Scenes from *The Hairpin and the Bracelet* by a Ming playwright by the pseudonym of Master of the Moon Pavilion.

⁹ Meaning "as you wish."

Chapter 19

¹ The Confucian classic *The Great Learning* says: "The way to great learning is manifesting bright virtue."

² This is an untranslatable pun. The *yu* in Daiyu's name has the same sound as *yu* meaning "taro."

Chapter 20

¹ *Er* means "two" or "second" and *ai* "love."

