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## 红楼梦

A DREAM  
OF RED MANSIONS



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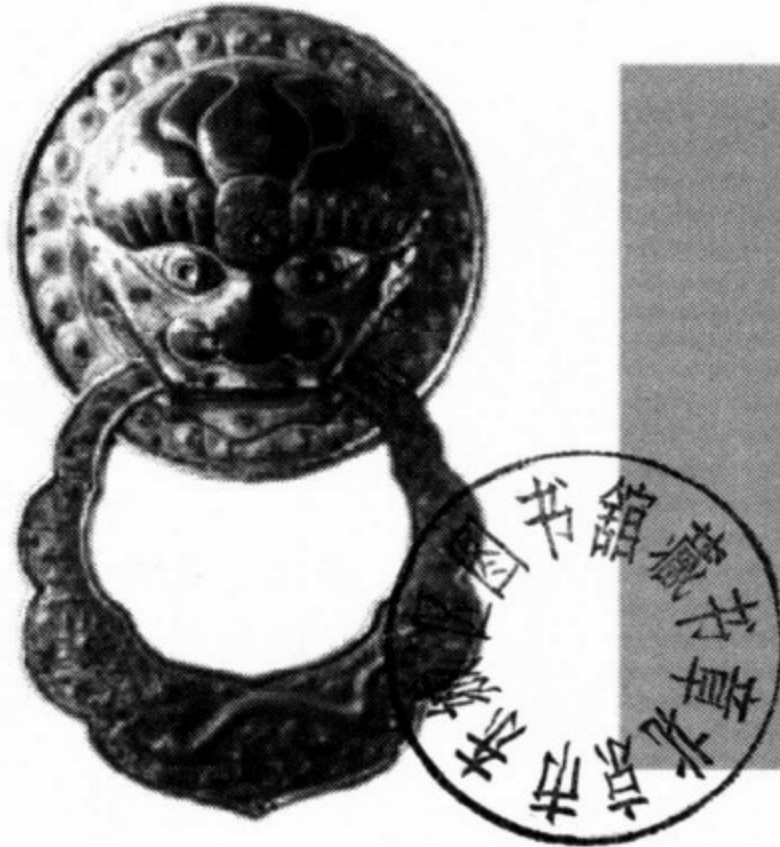
LIBRARY OF CHINESE CLASSICS

Chinese-English

# 红楼梦

## A Dream of Red Mansions

### II



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Red Mansions  
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賢襲人嬌  
嘆葳蕤玉



## 第二十一回

贤袭人娇嗔箴宝玉 俏平儿软语救贾琏

话说史湘云跑了出来，怕林黛玉赶上，宝玉在后忙说：“仔细绊跌了！那里就赶上了？”林黛玉赶到门前，被宝玉叉手在门框上拦住，笑劝道：“饶他这一遭罢。”林黛玉扳着手说道：“我要饶过云儿，再不活着！”湘云见宝玉拦住门，料黛玉不能出来，便立住脚笑道：“好姐姐，饶我这一遭罢。”恰值宝钗来在湘云身后，也笑道：“我劝你两个看宝兄弟分上，都丢开手罢。”黛玉道：“我不依。你们是一气的，都戏弄我不成！”宝玉劝道：“谁敢戏弄你！你不打趣儿，他焉敢说你。”四人正难分解，有人来请吃饭，方往前边来。那天早又掌灯时分，王夫人、李纨、凤姐、迎、探、惜等都往贾母这边来，大家闲话了一回，各自归寝。湘云仍往黛玉房中安歇。

宝玉送他二人到房，那天已二更多时，袭人来催了几次，方回自己房中来睡。次日天明时，便披衣鞞鞋往黛玉房中来，不见紫鹃、翠缕二人，只见他姊妹两个尚卧在衾内。那林黛玉严严密密裹着一幅杏子红绫被，安稳合目而睡。那史湘云却一把青丝拖于枕畔，被只齐胸，一弯雪白的膀子撂于被外，又带着两个金镯子。宝玉见了，叹道：“睡觉还是不老实！回来风吹了，又嚷肩窝疼了。”一面说，一面轻轻的





## Chapter 21

### Prudent Xiren Gently Takes Baoyu to Task Pretty Pinger Quietly Comes to Jia Lian's Rescue

As Xiangyun ran out of the room to escape Daiyu, Baoyu called after her, "Mind you don't fall! She can't catch you." He barred Daiyu's way at the door and urged with a chuckle, "Do let her off this time!"

"I'll kill myself first," she cried, tugging at his arm.

Seeing Baoyu blocking the doorway and Daiyu unable to get past, Xiangyun stopped and called with a laugh, "Let me off, dear cousin, please! Just this once!"

Baochai who had come up behind her chimed in, "Do make it up, both of you, for Baoyu's sake."

"Not I!" cried Daiyu, "Are you all ganging up to make fun of me?"

"Who dares make fun of you?" countered Baoyu, "She wouldn't if you hadn't teased her first."

The four of them were still at loggerheads when a summons to dinner arrived and they went through the dusk to the Lady Dowager's quarters where Lady Wang, Li Wan, Xifeng and the three Jia girls had already assembled. After dinner they chatted for a while before retiring for the night, and Xiangyun went back to Daiyu's rooms, with Baoyu escorting them there. It was after the second watch and Xiren had to hurry him several times before he would return to his own room to sleep.

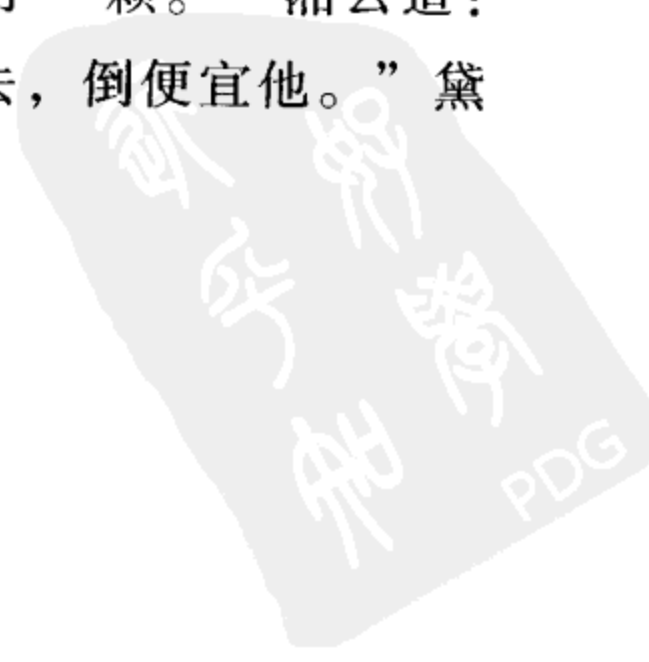
As soon as it was light next morning he scrambled into his clothes and hurried over in his slippers to Daiyu's quarters. Zijuan and Cuilu were nowhere to be seen, and his two cousins were still sleeping. Daiyu lay peacefully with closed eyes, snugly wrapped in an apricot-red silk quilt, while Xiangyun's black hair had tumbled all over the pillow, her quilt barely reached her shoulders, and she had flung one white arm adorned with two gold bracelets outside the covers.

"She fidgets even in her sleep," he sighed. "If there's a draught



替他盖上。林黛玉早已醒了，觉得有人，就猜着定是宝玉，因翻身一看，果中其料。因说道：“这早晚就跑过来作什么？”宝玉笑道：“这天还早呢！你起来瞧瞧。”黛玉道：“你先出去，让我们起来。”宝玉听了，转身出至外边。

黛玉起来叫醒湘云，二人都穿了衣服。宝玉复又进来，坐在镜台旁边，只见紫鹃、雪雁进来伏侍梳洗。湘云洗了面，翠缕便拿残水要泼，宝玉道：“站着，我趁势洗了就完了，省得又过去费事。”说着便走过来，弯着腰洗了两把。紫鹃递过香皂去，宝玉道：“这盆里的就不少，不用搓了。”再洗了两把，便要手巾。翠缕道：“还是这个毛病儿，多早晚才改。”宝玉也不理，忙忙的要过青盐擦了牙，漱了口，完毕，见湘云已梳完了头，便走过来笑道：“好妹妹，替我梳上头罢。”湘云道：“这可不能了。”宝玉笑道：“好妹妹，你先时怎么替我梳了呢？”湘云道：“如今我忘了，怎么梳呢？”宝玉道：“横竖我不出门，又不带冠子勒子，不过打几根散辫子就完了。”说着，又千妹妹万妹妹的央告。湘云只得扶过他的头来，一一梳篦。在家不戴冠，并不总角，只将四围短发编成小辫，往顶心发上归了总，编一根大辫，红绦结住。自发顶至辫梢，一路四颗珍珠，下面有金坠脚。湘云一面编着，一面说道：“这珠子只三颗了，这一颗不是的。我记得是一样的，怎么少了一颗？”宝玉道：“丢了一颗。”湘云道：“必定是外头去掉下来，不防被人拣了去，倒便宜他。”黛





she'll be complaining of a stiff neck again." He gently pulled up the covers.

Daiyu, awake now, had sensed someone's presence and guessed that it was Baoyu. Looking round to make sure she asked:

"What are *you* doing here so early?"

"Early? Get up and see what time it is."

"You'd better go outside if you want us to get up."

Baoyu withdrew to the sitting-room while Daiyu roused Xiangyun. As soon as they were up and dressed he rejoined them and sat by the dressing-table watching as Zijuan and Xueyan helped them with their toilet. When Xiangyun finished washing, Cuilu picked up the basin to empty it.

"Wait!" cried Baoyu, "I may as well wash here to save the trouble of going back to my room."

He went over and leant down to wash his face but declined Zijuan's offer of soap, explaining, "There's plenty in here, I don't need any more." After dabbling for a while he asked for a towel.

"Still up to your old tricks," teased Cuilu, "Will you never grow up?"

Ignoring this, Baoyu called for salt to brush his teeth and rinse his mouth. This done, he saw that Xiangyun had finished doing her hair, so he went over and begged her:

"Good cousin, do my hair for me, will you?"

"I can't," she said.

"Dear cousin, you did before," he coaxed with a smile.

"Well, now I've forgotten how to."

"I'm not going out today anyway, and I'm not going to wear a cap," he persisted. "Just plait it anyhow."

He coaxed and wheedled her with endless terms of endearment until Xiangyun took hold of his head and combed his hair. Since he wore no cap at home, she simply plaited the short hairs round his head and looped them together on top in one big queue tied with a crimson braid. This braid was decorated with four pearls and had a golden pendant at the end.

"There are only three of these pearls left," she commented. "This fourth one doesn't belong to the set. I remember they used to match. Why is one missing?"

玉一旁盥手，冷笑道：“也不知是真丢了，也不知是给了人，镶什么戴去了！”宝玉不答，因镜台两边俱是妆奁等物，顺手拿起来赏玩，不觉又顺手拈了胭脂，意欲要往口边送。因又怕史湘云说，正犹豫间，湘云果在身后看见，一手掠着辫子，便伸手来“拍”的一下，从手中将胭脂打落，说道：“这不长进的毛病儿，多早晚才改过！”

一语未了，只见袭人进来，看见这般光景，知是梳洗过了，只得回来自己梳洗。忽见宝钗走来，因问：“宝兄弟那去了？”袭人含笑道：“宝兄弟那里还有在家里的工夫！”宝钗听说，心中明白。又听袭人叹道：“姊妹们和气，也有个分寸礼节，也没个黑家白日闹的！凭人怎么劝，都是耳旁风。”宝钗听了，心中暗忖道：“倒别看错了这个丫头，听他说话，倒有些识见。”宝钗便在炕上坐了，慢慢的闲言中套问他年纪家乡等语，留神窥察，其言语志量深可敬爱。

一时宝玉来了，宝钗方出去。宝玉便问袭人道：“怎么宝姐姐和你说的这么热闹，见我进来就跑了？”问一声不答，再问时，袭人方道：“你问我么？我那里知道你们的原故。”宝玉听了这话，见他脸上气色非往日可比，便笑道：“怎么动了真气？”袭人冷笑道：“我那里敢动气！只是从今以后别进这屋子了。横竖有人伏侍你，再别来支使我。我仍旧还伏侍老太太去。”一面说，一面便在炕上合眼倒下。宝玉见了这般



"I lost it."

"You must have dropped it when you were out. How lucky for whoever picked it up!"

Daiyu washing her hands near by smiled ironically. "Who knows whether it was lost or given to someone to mounted in a trinket?"

Instead of answering, Baoyu started playing with the toilet articles on the dressing-table by the mirror, absent-mindedly picking up some rouge. He was wondering if he could taste it without Xiangyun noticing when she reached out from behind him and, holding his queue with one hand, with the other knocked the rouge out of his grasp.

"Are you never going to change your silly ways?" she demanded.

Just then Xiren entered the room, but withdrew on seeing that Baoyu had obviously finished his toilet. She went back and was attending to her own when in came Baochai and asked her where he was.

"He's hardly ever at home nowadays," replied Xiren bitterly.

Baochai understood.

The maid went on with a sigh, "It's all right to be fond of cousins, but still there's a limit. They shouldn't play about together day and night. But it's no use *our* talking, we just waste our breath."

Why, thought Baochai, judging by what she says this maid shows excellent sense.

She sat down on the *kang* to ask Xiren her age and where she came from, carefully sounding her out on various subjects and receiving a most favourable impression. But soon Baoyu returned, and then she took her leave.

"You two seemed to be having a good chat," said Baoyu to Xiren. "Why did Cousin Baochai leave when I came in?"

Xiren did not answer till he repeated the question.

"Why ask *me*?" she retorted then, "Do I know what goes on between you?"

Baoyu saw she was not her usual self. "What's made you so cross?" he asked gently.

"Who am I to be cross?" Xiren smiled sarcastically. "But you'd better keep away from here. There are others who'll look after you, so don't bother me. I shall go back to wait on the old lady." She lay down on

景况，深为骇异，禁不住赶来劝慰。那袭人只管合了眼不理。宝玉无了主意，因见麝月进来，便问道：“你姐姐怎么了？”麝月道：“我知道么？问你自己便明白了。”宝玉听说，呆了一回，自觉无趣，便起身叹道：“不理罢，我也睡去。”说着，便起身下炕，到自己床上歪下。袭人听他半日无动静，微微的打鼾，料他睡着，便起身拿一领斗篷来，替他刚压上，只听“忽”的一声，宝玉便掀过去，也仍合目装睡。袭人明知其意，便点头冷笑道：“你也不用生气，从此后我只当哑子，再不说你一声儿，如何？”宝玉禁不住起身问道：“我又怎么了？你又劝我。你劝我也罢了，才刚又没见你劝，我一进来你就不理我，赌气睡了。我还摸不着是因为什么，这会子你又说我恼了。我何尝听见你劝我是什么话了。”袭人道：“你心里还不明白，还等我说呢！”

正闹着，贾母遣人来叫他吃饭，方往前边来，胡乱吃了半碗，仍回自己房中。只见袭人睡在外头炕上，麝月在旁边抹骨牌。宝玉素知麝月与袭人亲厚，一并连麝月也不理，揭起软帘，自往里间来。麝月只得跟进去。宝玉便推他出去，说：“不敢惊动你们。”麝月只得笑着出来，唤了两个小丫头进来。宝玉拿一本书，歪着看了半日，因要茶，抬头只见两个小丫头在地下站着。一个大些的生得十分水秀，宝玉便



the *kang* and closed her eyes.

In dismay Baoyu hurried to her side to soothe her, but she kept her eyes shut and paid no attention to him. He was puzzling over this when in came Sheyue.

“What’s the matter with her?” he asked.

“How should I know? Better ask yourself.”

This took Baoyu so aback that he said nothing. Then, sitting up, he sighed, “All right. If you’re going to ignore me I’ll go to sleep too.”

He left the *kang* and went over to his own bed. When he had been quiet for some time and his regular breathing made Xiren sure he was sleeping, she got up to put a cape over him. The next moment she heard a soft thud. With closed eyes, still shamming sleep, he had thrown it off. Xiren smiled knowingly and nodded.

“You needn’t lose your temper. From now on I’ll play dumb and not say one word against you — how about that?”

This goaded Baoyu into sitting up.

“What have I done now?” he demanded. “Why do you keep on at me? I don’t mind your scolding, but you didn’t scold just now. When I came in you ignored me and lay down in a huff — I’ve no idea why. Now you accuse me of temper, but I haven’t heard you say anything against me yet.”

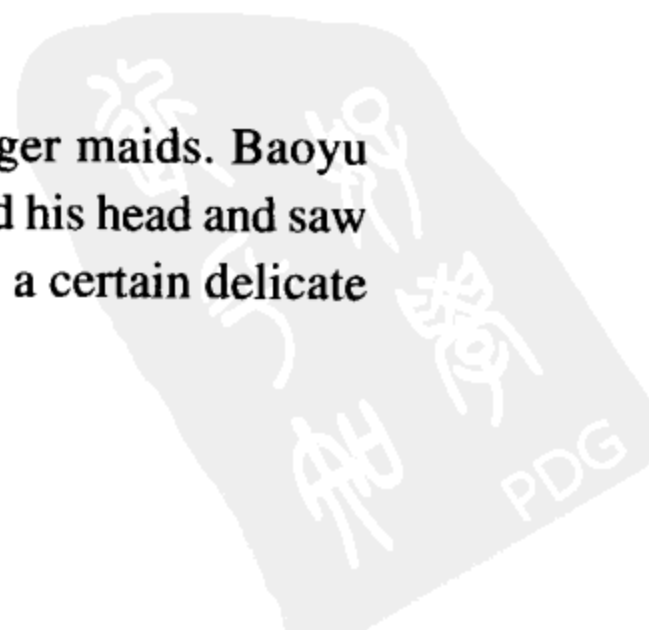
“You know perfectly well without my telling you.”

This tiff was cut short by a summons from the Lady Dowager. Baoyu joined her for a meal and managed to swallow half a bowl of rice before going back to his quarters. He found Xiren asleep on the *kang* in the outer room with Sheyue playing solitaire beside her. Knowing that the two girls were good friends he ignored her too and raising the door curtain went into his bedroom. When Sheyue followed him he pushed her out.

“I wouldn’t think of troubling you.”

She withdrew with a smile and sent in two younger maids. Baoyu curled up with a book until, wanting some tea, he raised his head and saw the two girls standing there. The elder of the two had a certain delicate charm.

“What is your name?” he asked.



问：“你叫甚么名字？”那丫头便说：“叫蕙香。”宝玉便问：“是谁起的？”蕙香道：“我原叫芸香的，是花大姐姐改了蕙香。”宝玉道：“正经该叫‘晦气’罢了，什么蕙香呢！”又问：“你姊妹几个？”蕙香道：“四个。”宝玉道：“你第几？”蕙香道：“第四。”宝玉道：“明儿就叫‘四儿’，不必什么‘蕙香’‘兰气’的。那一个配比这些花，没的玷辱了好名好姓。”一面说，一面命他倒了茶来吃。袭人和麝月在外间听了，抿嘴而笑。

这一日，宝玉也不大出房，也不和姊妹丫头等厮闹，自己闷闷的，只不过拿书解闷，或弄笔墨；也不使唤众人，只叫四儿答应。谁知这个四儿是个聪敏乖巧不过的丫头，见宝玉用他，他变尽方法笼络宝玉。至晚饭后，宝玉因吃了两杯酒，眼饧耳热之际，若往日则有袭人等大家喜笑有兴，今日却冷清清的一人对灯，好没兴趣。待要赶了他们去，又怕他们得了意，以后越发来劝；若拿出做上的规矩来镇唬，似乎无情太甚。说不得横心只当他们死了，横竖自然也要过的。便权当他们死了，毫无牵挂，反能怡然自悦。因命四儿剪灯烹茶，自己看了一回《南华经》。正看至《外篇·胠篋》一则，其文曰：

故绝圣弃知，大盗乃止；摘玉毁珠，小盗不起；焚符破玺，而民朴鄙；掊斗折衡，而民不争；殫残天下之圣法，而民始可与论议。擢乱六律，铄绝竽瑟，塞瞽旷之耳，而天下始人含其聪矣；灭文章，散五采，胶离朱





“Huixiang.”

“Who gave you that name?”

“My name used to be Yunxiang, but Sister Hua changed it to Huixiang.”

“You should be called Huiqi,<sup>1</sup> not Huixiang.<sup>2</sup> How many girls are there in your family?”

“Four.”

“And where do you come?”

“I’m the youngest.”

“Then we’ll call you Sier, Number Four, and drop this business of fragrance and of orchids. Which of *you* can compare with such flowers? It’s an insult to *them*, calling you by their lovely names.”

Thereupon he ordered tea. Xiren and Sheyue, listening outside, compressed their lips to check their laughter.

That whole day Baoyu stayed indoors moping, not playing about with the girls of the house or his maids, just reading or writing to while away the time. And instead of calling for any other attendants he gave all his orders to Sier, who being a clever minx made full use of this chance and put herself out to please him.

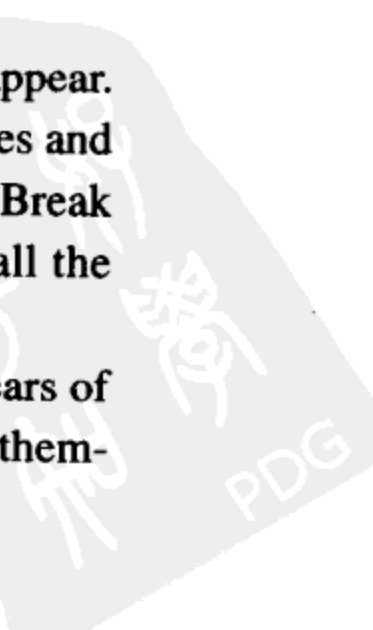
After dinner, flushed by a few cups of wine, Baoyu would normally have amused himself with Xiren and the others; but this evening he sat all alone, disconsolate, by the lamp. Although tempted to join the girls, he was afraid that would make them gloat and give him even more talkings-to in future, while if he threw his weight about as the young master that would be too unkind.

“I’ll pretend they’re dead,” he resolved, “and I have to fend for myself. That’ll leave me free to amuse myself as I please.”

Then he read the chapter “The House-Breaker” in *Zhuangzi* till he came to the following passage:

“Do away with sages and wise men, and great robbers will disappear. Destroy jade and pearls, and no petty thieves will arise. Burn tallies and smash seals, and the people will revert to their natural simplicity. Break measures and scales, and they will no longer quarrel. Abolish all the sacred laws of the world and the people will discuss things freely.

“Confuse the musical scales, break harps and lutes, stop the ears of good musicians, and all men under heaven will learn to hear for them-





之日，而天下始人含其明矣；毁绝钩绳而弃规矩，搯工  
倕之指，而天下始人有其巧矣。

看至此段，意趣洋洋，逞着酒兴，不禁提笔续曰：

焚花散麝，而闺阁始人含其劝矣；戕宝钗之仙姿，  
灰黛玉之灵窍，丧减情意，而闺阁之美恶始相类矣。彼  
含其劝，则无参商之虞矣；戕其仙姿，无恋爱之心矣；  
灰其灵窍，无才思之情矣。彼钗、玉、花、麝者，皆张  
其罗而穴其隧，所以迷眩缠陷天下者也。

续毕，掷笔就寝。头刚着枕便忽睡去，一夜竟不知所之，直  
至天明方醒。翻身看时，只见袭人和衣睡在衾上。宝玉将昨  
日的事已付诸度外，便推他说道：“起来好生睡，看冻着了。”

原来袭人见他无晓夜和姊妹厮闹，若直劝他，料不能  
改，故用柔情以警之，料他不过半日片刻仍复好了。不想宝  
玉一昼夜竟不回转，自己反不得主意，直一夜没好生睡得。  
今忽见宝玉如此，料他心意回转，便越性不睬他。宝玉见他  
不应，便伸手替他解衣。刚解开了钮子，被袭人将手推开，  
又自扣了。宝玉无法，只得拉他的手笑道：“你到底怎么  
了？”连问几声，袭人睁眼说道：“我也不怎么。你睡醒了，





selves. Dispense with ornaments and coloured patterns, glue up the eyes of the keen-sighted, and all men under heaven will learn to see for themselves. Destroy quadrants and yard-measures, throw away compasses and squares, cut off the fingers of deft artisans, and all men under heaven will learn skill for themselves.”

Baoyu was so delighted with this passage that, stimulated as he was by wine, he picked up his brush and continued in the same vein:

“Burn the flower (Xiren), get rid of the musk (Sheyue), and those in the inner apartments will keep their advice to themselves. Spoil the beauty of the precious trinket (Baochai), dull the intelligence of the black jade (Daiyu), do away with affection, and in the inner chambers fair and foul will then be on an equal footing. Advice kept to oneself does away with the danger of discord; beauty marred obviates affection; intelligence dulled cuts out admiration for talents. For trinket, jade, flower and musk are alike spreading nets and laying traps to ensnare and bewitch all men under heaven....”

This written he threw down his brush and went to bed, falling into a dreamless sleep as soon as his head touched the pillow.

He did not awake till the morning, when he turned and saw Xiren lying fully dressed on the cover at his side. Yesterday’s grievance forgotten, he nudged her gently.

“Get up and sleep properly. You’ll catch cold like that.”

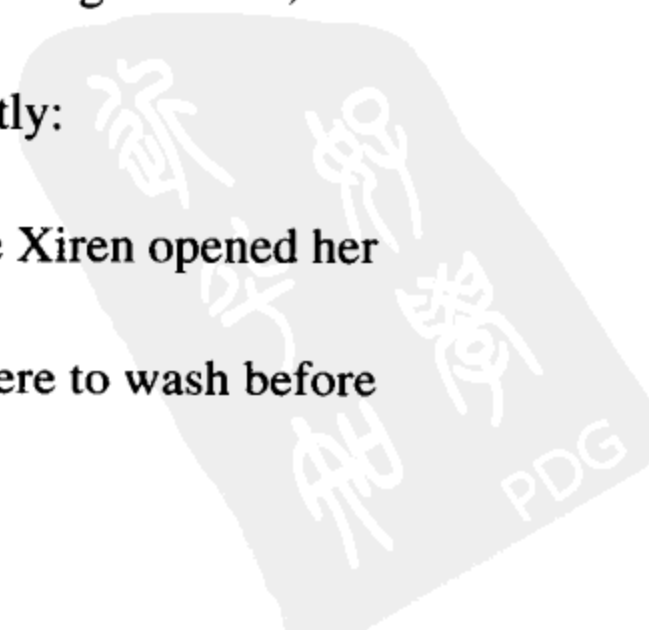
Now the wild way Baoyu played around with his cousins at all hours of the day and night had convinced Xiren that he would be impervious to advice, and so she had decided to teach him a lesson by disclosing her own feelings, expecting that he would soon get over it. When he sulked for a whole day it was her turn to be at a loss, and she passed a sleepless night. Seeing that he was obviously feeling better today, she deliberately ignored him. When he tried to take off her jacket, undoing a button, she pushed his hand away and buttoned it up again.

Baoyu caught hold of her hand then and asked softly:

“What’s really the matter?”

He had to repeat his question several times before Xiren opened her eyes.

“Nothing,” she said. “If you’re awake, go over there to wash before it’s too late.”



你自过那边房里去梳洗，再迟了就赶不上。”宝玉道：“我过那里去？”袭人冷笑道：“你问我，我知道你爱往那里去，就往那里去。从今咱们两个丢开手，省得鸡声鹅斗，叫别人笑。横竖那边腻了过来，这边又有个什么‘四儿’、‘五儿’伏侍。我们这起东西，可是白‘玷辱了好名好姓’的。”宝玉笑道：“你今儿还记着呢！”袭人道：“一百年还记着呢！比不得你，拿着我的话当耳旁风，夜里说了，早起就忘了。”宝玉见他娇嗔满面，情不可禁，便向枕边拿起一根玉簪来，一跌两段，说道：“我再不听你说，就同这个一样。”袭人忙的拾了簪子，说道：“大清早起，这是何苦来！不听什么要紧，也值得这种样子。”宝玉道：“你那里知道我心里急！”袭人笑道：“你也知道着急么！可知我心里怎么样？快起来洗脸去罢。”说着，二人方起来梳洗。

宝玉往上房去后，谁知黛玉走来，见宝玉不在房中，因翻弄案上书看，可巧翻出昨日的《庄子》来。看至所续之处，不觉又气又笑，不禁也提笔续书云：

无端弄笔是何人？作践南华《庄子因》。

不悔自己无见识，却将丑语怪他人！

写毕，也往上房来见贾母，后往王夫人处来。



“Where am I to go?”

“How should I know?” Xiren snorted. “Go wherever you like. We may as well part company from now on, to stop people laughing at our rows and rumpuses. Besides, if you get tired of them over there you’ve a Sier and Wuer here to look after you. The rest of us are just a disgrace to our lovely names.”

Baoyu chuckled. “So you still remember that?”

“I’ll remember it if I live to be a hundred. I’m not like you, letting what I say go in at one ear and out at the other, forgetting what’s said at night by the next morning.”

Touched by the cloud on her pretty face, Baoyu took a jade hairpin from beside the pillow and threw it on the floor, breaking it in two.

“May the same thing happen to me if I don’t listen to you in future,” he cried.

“What a way to talk! First thing in the morning too.” Xiren hastily picked up the pieces. “It doesn’t really matter whether you listen to me or not, but why carry on like that?”

“You don’t know how bad I feel.”

“So you can feel bad too?” She smiled. “Then how do you think I feel? Hurry up and get dressed now.”

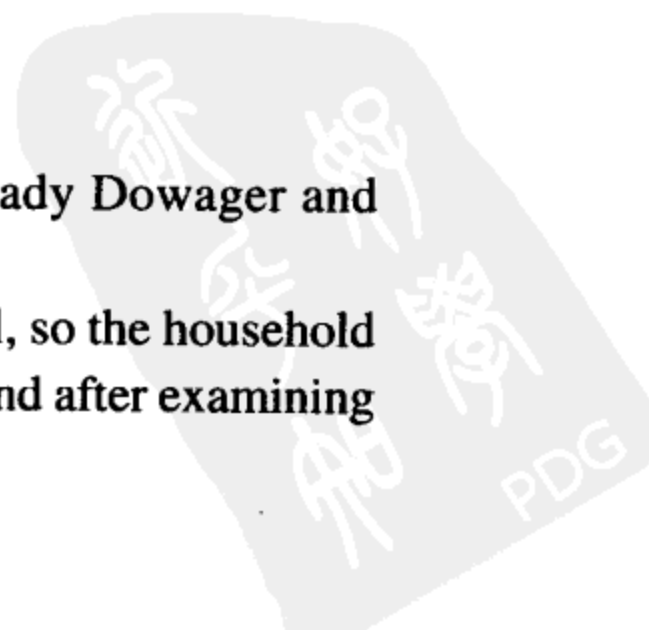
They both got up then and began their toilet.

Baoyu had gone to pay his respects to his grandmother when Daiyu came to his room. Finding him out, she looked through the books on his desk and discovered the passage in *Zhuang zi* which he had been reading the previous evening. Amused as well as provoked by the lines he had added, she picked up a brush and appended a quatrain herself:

Who can the scurrile writer be  
Who makes of *Zhuangzi* such a travesty  
And, blind to his own incapacity,  
Heaps such abuse on others?

This done, she went to pay her respects to the Lady Dowager and then Lady Wang.

It so happened that Xifeng’s daughter Dajie was ill, so the household was upside down. A doctor had just been summoned and after examining the child he announced:





谁知凤姐之女大姐病了，正乱着请大夫来诊过脉。大夫便说：“替夫人奶奶们道喜，姐儿发热是见喜了，并非别病。”王夫人、凤姐听了，忙遣人问：“可好不好？”医生回道：“病虽险，却顺，倒还不妨。预备桑虫、猪尾要紧。”凤姐听了，登时忙将起来：一面打扫房屋，供奉痘疹娘娘；一面传与家人，忌煎炒等物；一面命平儿打点铺盖衣服，与贾琏隔房；一面又拿大红尺头，与奶子丫头亲近人丁裁衣。外面又打扫净室，款留两个医生，轮流斟酌诊脉下药，十二日不放回家去。贾琏只得搬出外书房来斋戒，凤姐与平儿都随着王夫人日日供奉娘娘。

那个贾琏，只离了凤姐便要寻事，独寝了两夜，便十分难熬，便暂将小厮们内有清俊的选来出火。不想荣国府内有一个极不成器破烂酒头厨子，名唤多官，人见他懦弱无能，都唤他作“多浑虫”。因他自小父母替他在外娶了一个媳妇，今年方二十来往年纪，生得有几分人才，见者无不羡慕。他生性轻浮，最喜拈花惹草，多浑虫又不理论，只是有酒有肉有钱，便诸事不管了，所以荣、宁二府之人都得入手。因这个媳妇美貌异常，轻浮无比，众人都呼他作“多姑娘儿”。如今贾琏在外熬煎，往日也曾见过这媳妇，失过魂魄，只是内惧娇妻，外惧妾宠，不曾下得手。那多姑娘儿也





“I am happy to inform Her Ladyship and Madam Lian that the little girl’s fever is simply due to smallpox.”

At once Lady Wang and Xifeng sent to ask whether the small patient was in any danger.

The answer was: “Although this is a serious illness, it is taking its natural course. There is no need to worry. But you must prepare loranthus and *sanguis caudae* or hog-tail’s blood.”

Xifeng lost no time in having a room cleared out for sacrifice to the Goddess of Smallpox. At the same time she directed that no fried food should be served in her quarters, ordered Pinger to take some bedding and clothes to a different room for Jia Lian, and issued red cloth to her nurses, maids and other attendants for clothes. Clean rooms were also prepared for the two doctors who would take it in turn to attend the child and make out prescriptions for her, remaining there in residence for twelve days.

So Jia Lian had to move to his study in the outer compound, while Xifeng and Pinger joined Lady Wang in daily sacrifice to the Goddess of Smallpox.

Jia Lian was the sort of man who once away from his wife was bound to get into mischief. Two nights alone were more than he could bear: he vented his ardour on his handsome page boys.

Now in the Rong Mansion was a rascally drunkard of a cook by the name of Duo Guan, a man so useless and cowardly that he was commonly known as Duo the Muddy Worm. While he was young his parents had found him a wife who was now just about twenty, and whose good looks were the admiration of all. But she was a flighty creature who loved nothing better than to have affairs. The Muddy Worm made no objection, for provided he had wine, meat and money himself he cared for nothing else. So most of the men in the Ning and Rong Mansions had had their fling with her. And because she was such a remarkably good-looking wanton, everyone called her “Miss Duo.”

Jia Lian was now inflamed by his banishment from his own bedroom. He used to eye Miss Duo avidly but had so far taken no steps to get her for fear of his wife at home and his fancy boys outside.

Miss Duo for her part had been hankering after Jia Lian too, waiting eagerly for her chance. As soon as she heard that he had moved to the



曾有意于贾琏，只恨没空。今闻贾琏挪在外书房来，他便没事走三趟去招惹。惹的贾琏似饥鼠一般，少不得和心腹的小厮们计议，合同遮掩谋求，多以金帛相许。小厮们焉有不允之理，况都和这媳妇是好友，一说便成。是夜二鼓人定，多浑虫醉昏在炕，贾琏便溜了来相会。进门一见其态，早已魄飞魂散，也不用情谈款叙，便宽衣动作起来。谁知这媳妇有天生的奇趣，一经男子挨身，便觉遍身筋骨瘫软，使男子如卧绵上；更兼淫态浪言，压倒娼妓，诸男子至此岂有惜命者哉。那贾琏恨不得连身子化在他身上。那媳妇故作浪语，在下说道：“你家女儿出花儿，供着娘娘，你也该忌两日，倒为我脏了身子。快离了我这里罢。”贾琏一面大动，一面喘吁吁答道：“你就是娘娘！我那里还管什么娘娘！”那媳妇越浪，贾琏越丑态毕露。一时事毕，两个又海誓山盟，难分难舍，此后遂成相契。

一日大姐毒尽癩回，十二日后送了娘娘，合家祭天祀祖，还愿焚香，庆贺放赏已毕，贾琏仍复搬进卧室。见了凤姐，正是俗语云“新婚不如远别”，更有无限恩爱，自不必烦絮。

次日早起，凤姐往上屋去后，平儿收拾贾琏在外的衣服







study she kept strolling past to flaunt her charms, and Jia Lian rose to the bait like a famished rat. He consulted his trusted pages, who agreed to arrange a secret assignation for him, for not only did he promise them rich rewards — they were all on intimate terms themselves with Miss Duo. So the matter was settled at once.

At the second watch that night, when the household had retired and the Muddy Worm lay on his *kang* in a drunken stupor, Jia Lian slipped into her room. The mere sight of her threw him into such a frenzy that with no preliminary professions of love he flung off his clothes and set to work.

Now this woman was so curiously constituted that the touch of a man seemed to melt her very bones, so that he felt as if bedded in cotton-wool, while in her wanton tricks and amorous cries she outdid any prostitute. No man but was driven to utter frenzy by her. Jia Lian only wished he could melt into her body!

To inflame him further, the woman under him teased, “Your daughter has smallpox and they’re sacrificing in your home to the goddess. You ought to lead a clean life for a couple of days, not dirty yourself for me. Hurry up and get out of here.”

“You’re my goddess,” he panted, going all out. “What do I care for any other goddess?”

The more wanton the woman, the more debauched Jia Lian revealed himself. At the end of this bout they vowed to be true to each other and could hardly bear to part. From that day they became sworn lovers.

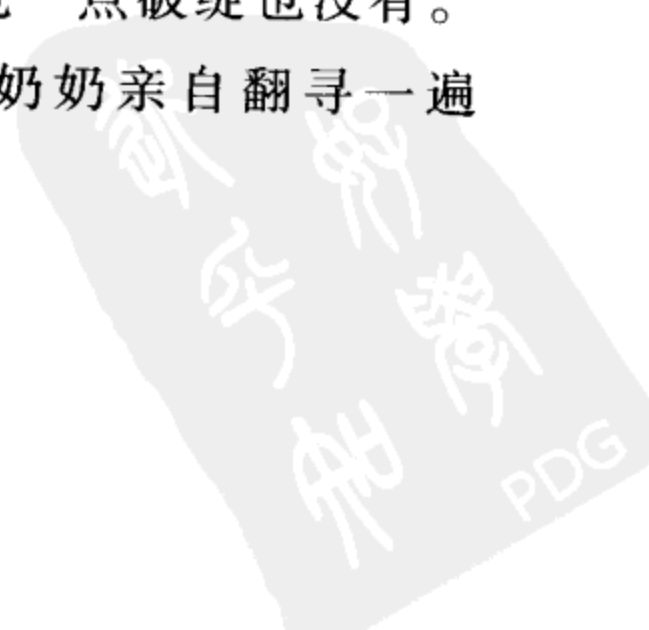
But Dajie’s illness spent its course, her pustules gradually healed. After twelve days they “saw off” the goddess and the whole family sacrificed to Heaven and their ancestors, made offerings, burnt incense, exchanged congratulations and distributed largesse. When these ceremonies were at an end, Jia Lian returned to his old quarters and Xifeng. As the proverb says, “Reunion after long separation is better than a wedding night.” We need not dwell on the transports of their love.

The next morning when Xifeng had gone to pay her respects to the senior ladies, Pinger brought back the clothes and bedding Jia Lian had used outside. To her surprise a long strand of hair fell out of the pillowcase. The knowing maid quickly tucked it in her sleeve and went into Jia Lian’s room, where she showed him the hair with a smile.



铺盖，不承望枕套中抖出一绺青丝来。平儿会意，忙拽在袖内，便走至这边房内来，拿出头发来，向贾琏笑道：“这是什么？”贾琏看见着了忙，抢上来要夺。平儿便跑，被贾琏一把揪住，按在炕上，掰手要夺，口内笑道：“小蹄子，你不趁早拿出来，我把你膀子撅折了。”平儿笑道：“你就是没良心的。我好意瞒着他来问，你倒赌狠！你只赌狠，等他回来我告诉他，看你怎么。”贾琏听说，忙陪笑央求道：“好人，赏我罢，我再不赌狠了。”

一语未了，只听凤姐声音进来。贾琏听了，松了不是，抢又不是，只叫：“好人，别叫他知道。”平儿刚起身，凤姐已走进来，命平儿快开匣子，替太太找样子。平儿忙答应了找时，凤姐见了贾琏，忽然想起来，便问平儿：“前儿拿出去的东西都收进来了么？”平儿道：“收进来了。”凤姐道：“可少什么没有？”平儿道：“我也怕丢下一两件，细细的查了查，也不少。”凤姐道：“不少就好，只是别多出来罢？”平儿笑道：“不丢万幸，谁还添出来呢？”凤姐冷笑道：“这半个月难保干净，或者有相厚的丢下的东西：戒指、汗巾、香袋儿，再至于头发、指甲，都是东西。”一席话，说的贾琏脸都黄了。贾琏在凤姐身后，只望着平儿杀鸡抹脖使眼色儿。平儿只装着看不见，因笑道：“怎么我的心就和奶奶的心一样！我就怕有这些个，留神搜了一搜，竟一点破绽也没有。奶奶不信时，那些东西我还没收呢，奶奶亲自翻寻一遍





“What’s this?” she demanded.

As Jia Lian tried to grab it, Pinger turned to fly. He caught hold of her and threw her on to the *kang*, then tried to snatch the hair from her.

“You vixen! Give it to me, or I’ll break your arm.”

“You heartless brute!” she giggled, “I was kind enough to keep this between ourselves, yet you start manhandling me. Wait till she comes back and I tell her. You won’t half catch it!”

At once Jia Lian begged with a smile, “Give it me, there’s a good girl, and I won’t use force.”

Just at that moment they heard Xifeng’s voice. Pinger had barely regained her feet when Xifeng came in and told her: “Get the patterns out of that box for the mistress, quick.”

As the maid was doing this, the sight of Jia Lian reminded Xifeng of something else.

“Have you brought back all the things he used outside?”

“Yes, madam.”

“Anything missing?”

“No. I was worried too that there might be, but I’ve checked carefully and there’s nothing missing.”

“Is anything there that shouldn’t be?”

Pinger laughed.

“Isn’t it enough that nothing’s missing? What else could be there?”

“Who knows what dirty business he’s been up to this last fortnight.” Xifeng smiled coldly. “One of his little friends might have left something: a ring or sash or pouch. Or even some locks of hair or finger-nails, for all we know. They’re all souvenirs.”

Jia Lian turned pale at this. Behind his wife’s back he sawed at his throat to warn Pinger not to speak. She pretended not to see him, however, and laughed.

“Fancy, exactly the same idea occurred to me, madam. That’s why I searched carefully. But there wasn’t a sign of any monkey business. If you don’t believe me, madam, look for yourself. I haven’t put the things away yet.”

“Silly girl! If he had anything of the sort, would he let us find it?”

She went off again with the patterns.



去。”凤姐笑道：“傻丫头，他便有这些东西，那里就叫咱们翻着了！”说着，寻了样子又上去了。

平儿指着鼻子，晃着头笑道：“这件事怎么回谢我呢？”喜的个贾琏身痒难挠，跑上来搂着，“心肝肠肉”乱叫乱谢。平儿仍拿了头发笑道：“这是我一生的把柄了。好就好，不好就抖出这事来。”贾琏笑道：“你只好生收着罢，千万别给他知道。”口里说着，瞅他不防，便抢了过来，笑道：“你拿着终是祸患，不如我烧了他完事了。”一面说着，一面便塞于靴掖内。平儿咬牙道：“没良心的东西，过了河就拆桥，明儿还想我替你扯谎！”贾琏见他娇俏动情，便搂着求欢，被平儿夺手跑了，急的贾琏弯着腰恨道：“死促狭小淫妇！一定浪上人的火来，他又跑了。”平儿在窗外笑道：“我浪我的，谁叫你动火了？难道图你受用一回，叫他知道了，又不待见我。”贾琏道：“你不用怕他，等我性子上来，把这醋罐打个稀烂，他才认得我呢！他防我像防贼的，只许他同男人说话，不许我和女人说话；我和女人略近些，他就疑惑。他不论小叔子、侄儿，大的小的，说说笑笑，就不怕我吃醋了。以后我也不许他见人！”平儿道：“他醋你使得，你醋他使不得。他原行的正、走的正；你行动便有个坏心，连我也不放心，别说他了。”贾琏道：“你两个一口贼气。都是你们行的是，我凡行动都存坏心。多早晚都死在我手里！”





Pointing at her own nose, Pinger shook her head and laughed.

“How are you going to thank me for that?”

Jia Lian, beaming, rushed to embrace her, pouring out an incoherent flood of endearments.

Dangling the hair in front of him, she teased, “I’ll have this hold over you for the rest of my life. If you’re nice to me, well and good. If not, I’ll let the cat out of the bag.”

“Keep it safely then. Don’t, for goodness’ sake, let her find out.”

As he spoke, catching her off guard, he snatched the hair.

“I don’t trust you with it,” he chortled. “I’d better burn it and be done with it.” He stuffed the hair into his boot.

“You beast!” she cried through clenched teeth. “As soon as the river’s crossed you pull down the bridge. Don’t ever expect me to lie for you again.”

Inflamed by her charming show of temper, Jia Lian threw his arms round her and tried to make love to her. But Pinger slipped from his grasp and ran out of the room, leaving him doubled up in frustration.

“Little flirt!” he swore. “You get a man all worked up then run away.”

From outside the window Pinger laughed. “If I’m a flirt that’s my business. Who told you to get so worked up? If I let you have your way and she got to know, I’d be the one to suffer.”

“Don’t be afraid of her. One of these days when I really lose my temper, I’m going to give that vinegary bitch a good beating to show her who’s master here. She spies on me as if I were a thief. It’s all right for her to talk to other men, but she won’t let me say a word to another woman. If I do, she suspects the worst. Yet she carries on as she pleases, chattering and laughing with any younger brother-in-law or nephew, old or young, quite regardless of my feelings. I’ll forbid her to see anyone in future.”

“She’s right to be jealous of you, but you’re wrong to be jealous of her,” retorted Pinger. “She’s done nothing that’s improper. But you, you’re up to no good. Even *I* wouldn’t trust you.”

“The two of you are in league. All *you* two do is right, all I do is wrong. Sooner or later I’ll settle scores with you both.”

While he was fuming Xifeng came back to the courtyard, and seeing Pinger at the window demanded:

“Why not talk inside? Why run out here to shout through the window?”



一句未了，凤姐走进院来，因见平儿在窗外，就问道：“要说话，两个人不在屋里说，怎么跑出一个来，隔着窗子，是什么意思？”贾琏在窗内接道：“你可问他，倒像屋里有老虎吃他呢。”平儿道：“屋里一个人没有，我在他跟前作什么？”凤姐儿笑道：“正是没人才好呢。”平儿听说，便说道：“这话是说我呢？”凤姐笑道：“不说你说谁？”平儿道：“别叫我说出好话来了。”说着，也不打帘子让凤姐，自己先摔帘子进来，往那边去了。凤姐自掀帘子进来，说道：“平儿疯魔了。这蹄子认真要降伏我，仔细你的皮要紧！”贾琏听了，已绝倒在炕上，拍手笑道：“我竟不知平儿这么利害，从此倒伏他了。”凤姐道：“都是你惯的他，我只和你说！”贾琏听说，忙道：“你两个不卯，又拿我来作人。我躲开你们。”凤姐道：“我看你躲到那里去。”贾琏道：“我就来。”凤姐道：“我有话和你商量。”不知商量何事，且听下回分解。

正是：

淑女自来多抱怨，娇妻从古便含酸。





What's the idea?"

"That's right!" Jia Lian called from the room. "The way she acts, you'd think there was a tiger here waiting to eat her."

"Why should I stay there alone with him?" asked Pinger.

"All the better, surely." Xifeng smiled.

"Is that remark aimed at me?"

"Who else?" Xifeng laughed.

"Don't make me say things you'll be sorry for!"

Instead of raising the door curtain for her mistress Pinger swept in ahead of her, swishing the curtain behind her, and passed through the hall into the other room.

Xifeng raised the curtain herself and walked in remarking, "The girl must be out of her mind, trying to get the upper hand of *me*. You'd better watch out, little bitch!"

Jia Lian had fallen back laughing on the *kang*.

"I never knew Pinger had it in her," he crowed, clapping his hands. "She's gone up in my estimation."

"It's you who've spoilt her. I hold you responsible."

"When you two fall out, why put the blame on me? I'd better make myself scarce."

"Where are you going?"

"I'll be back presently."

"Wait," said Xifeng. "There's something I want to discuss with you."

To know what it was, read the next chapter.

Truly:

Virtuous maids have always harboured grief,  
And charming wives since of old have known jealousy.

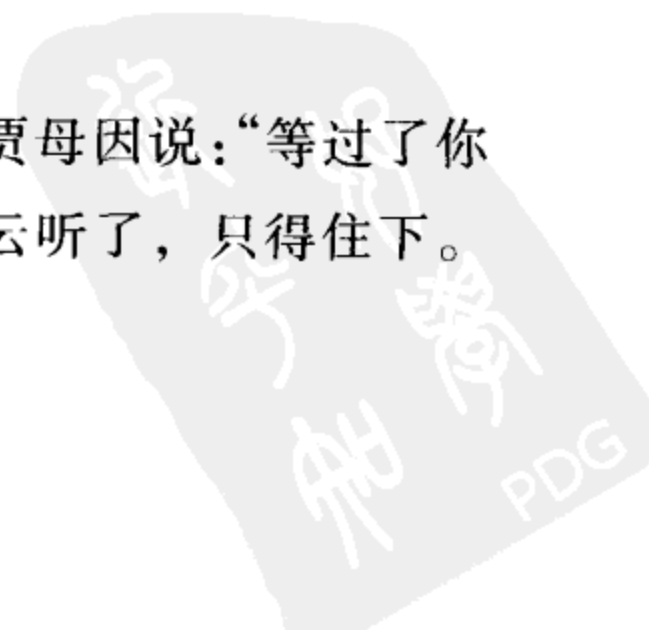


## 第二十二回

听曲文宝玉悟禅机 制灯谜贾政悲谶语

话说贾琏听凤姐儿说有话商量，因止步问是何话。凤姐道：“二十一是薛妹妹的生日，你到底怎么样呢？”贾琏道：“我知道怎么样！你连多少大生日都料理过了，这会子倒没了主意？”凤姐道：“大生日料理，不过是有一定的则例在那里。如今他这生日，大又不是，小又不是，所以和你商量。”贾琏听了，低头想了半日道：“你今儿糊涂了。现有比例，那林妹妹就是例。往年怎么给林妹妹过的，如今也照依给薛妹妹过就是了。”凤姐听了，冷笑道：“我难道连这个也不知道？我原也这么想定了。但昨儿听见老太太说，问起大家的年纪生日来，听见薛大妹妹今年十五岁。虽不是整生日，也算得将笄之年。老太太说要替他作生日。想来若果然替他作，自然比往年与林妹妹不同了。”贾琏道：“既如此，比林妹妹的多增些。”凤姐道：“我也这么想着，所以讨你的口气。我若私自添了东西，你又怪我不告诉明白你了。”贾琏笑道：“罢，罢，这空头情我不领。你不盘察我就够了，我还怪你！”说着，一径去了，不在话下。

且说史湘云住了两日，因要回去。贾母因说：“等过了你宝姐姐的生日，看了戏再回去。”史湘云听了，只得住下。







## Chapter 22

### A Song Awakens Baoyu to Esoteric Truths Lantern-Riddles Grieve Jia Zheng with Their Ill Omens

Hearing that Xifeng wanted to consult him about something, Jia Lian stopped to ask what it was.

“It’s Baochai’s birthday on the twenty-first,” she said. “What do you intend to do about it?”

“Why ask me that?” he retorted. “You’ve handled plenty of big birthday celebrations. Why can’t you cope with this?”

“For big birthdays there are definite rules but this is neither big nor small, that’s why I wanted your advice.”

He lowered his head to think before answering.

“You’re losing your grip,” he said after a pause. “There’s a precedent in Baiyu’s birthday. Just celebrate this the same way.”

“As if that hadn’t occurred to me too!” Xifeng smiled mockingly. “But yesterday the old lady told me she’d been asking everybody’s age and learned that Baochai would be fifteen this year, and although that’s not a round number it means she’s reached marriageable age. If the old lady wants to celebrate her birthday specially, it’ll have to be different from Daiyu’s in the past.”

“In that case, have things on a more lavish scale.”

“That’s what I thought, but I wanted to sound you out so as not to be blamed for doing something extra on my own initiative without consulting you.”

“Well, well! Why this sudden show of consideration? Me blame you? I’m quite satisfied if you don’t find fault with me.”

With that he left, but where he went does not concern us.

Let us return now to Xiangyun. After spending several days in the Rong Mansion it was time for her to go home, but the Lady Dowager urged her to wait until after Baochai’s birthday and the performance of



又一面遣人回去，将自己旧日作的两色针线活计取来，为宝钗生辰之仪。

谁想贾母自见宝钗来了，喜他稳重和平，正值他才过第一个生辰，便自己蠲资二十两，唤了凤姐来，交与他置酒戏。凤姐凑趣笑道：“一个老祖宗给孩子们作生日，不拘怎样，谁还敢争，又办什么酒戏。既高兴要热闹，就说不得自己花上几两。巴巴的找出这霉烂的二十两银子来作东道，这意思还叫我赔上。果然拿不出来也罢了，金的、银的、圆的、扁的，压塌了箱子底，只是勒掯我们。举眼看看，谁不是儿女？难道将来只有宝兄弟顶了你老人家上五台山不成？那些梯己只留于他，我们如今虽不配使，也别苦了我们。这个够酒的？够戏的？”说的满屋里都笑起来。贾母亦笑道：“你们听听这嘴！我也算会说的，怎么说不过这猴儿。你婆婆也不敢强嘴，你和我梆梆的。”凤姐笑道：“我婆婆也是一样的疼宝玉，我也没处去诉冤，倒说我强嘴。”说着，又引着贾母笑了一回，贾母十分喜悦。

到晚间，众人都在贾母前，定昏之余，大家娘儿姊妹等说笑时，贾母因问宝钗爱听何戏，爱吃何物等语。宝钗深知贾母年老人，喜热闹戏文，爱甜烂之食，便总依贾母往日所喜者说了出来。贾母更加欢悦。次日便先送过衣服玩物礼去，王夫人、凤姐、黛玉等诸人皆有随分不一，不须多记。





operas. So Xiangyun, having to stay on, sent home for two pieces of her embroidery as a birthday-present for her cousin.

The fact was that the Lady Dowager had taken a fancy to Baochai since her arrival on account of her steady, amiable behaviour. And as this would be her first birthday in their house, the old lady summoned Xifeng and gave her twenty taels of silver from her own coffer for a feast and an opera.

Xifeng teased, "When an Old Ancestress wants to celebrate some grandchild's birthday, no matter how grandly, who are we to protest? So there's to be a feast and opera too, is there? Well, if you want it to be lively you'll have to pay for it yourself instead of trying to play host with a mouldy twenty taels. I suppose you expect me to make up the rest? If you really couldn't afford it, all right. But your cases are bursting with gold and silver ingots of every shape and size — the bottoms of the chests are dropping out, they're so full. Yet you're still squeezing us. Look, aren't all of us your children? Is Baoyu the only one who'll carry you as an immortal on his head to Mount Wutai,<sup>1</sup> that you keep everything for him? Even if the rest of us aren't good enough, don't be so hard on us. Is this enough for a feast or theatricals?"

The whole company burst out laughing.

"Listen to that tongue of hers!" The old lady chuckled. "I'm not exactly tongue-tied myself but I'm no match for this monkey. Not even your mother-in-law would think of arguing with me, but you give me tit for tat."

"My mother-in-law dotes on Baoyu just as much as you do," retorted Xifeng with a smile. "So I've no one to take my side. Instead, you make me out a termagant."

That set the old lady crowing with laughter and put her in the highest of spirits.

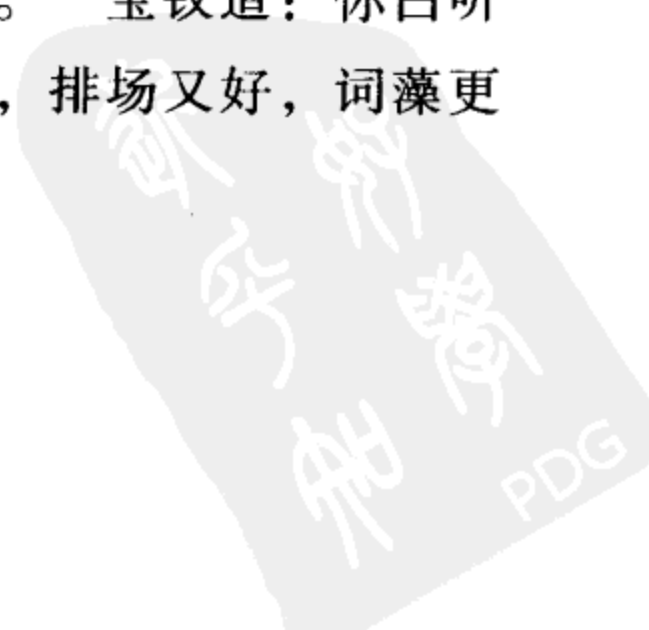
That night, after the family had gathered to pay their evening respects to the Lady Dowager and then gone on to chat, she asked Baochai to name her favourite operas and dishes. Knowing the old lady's partiality for lively shows and sweet, pappy food, Baochai gave these as her own preferences, adding even more to the Lady Dowager's pleasure.

The first thing next day she had presents of clothing and trinkets sent to the girl. Lady Wang, Xifeng, Daiyu and the others also sent theirs

至二十一日，就贾母内院中搭了家常小巧戏台，定了一班新出小戏，昆弋两腔皆有。就在贾母上房排了几席家宴酒席，并无一个外客，只有薛姨妈、史湘云、宝钗是客，余者皆是自己人。这日早起，宝玉因不见林黛玉，便到他房中来寻，只见林黛玉歪在炕上。宝玉笑道：“起来吃饭去，就开戏了。你爱看那一出？我好点。”林黛玉冷笑道：“你既这样说，你特叫一班戏来，拣我爱的唱给我看。这会子犯不上趾着人借光儿问我。”宝玉笑道：“这有什么难的。明儿就这样行，也叫他们借咱们的光儿。”一面说，一面拉起他来，携手出去。

吃了饭点戏时，贾母一定先叫宝钗点。宝钗推让一遍，无法，只得点了一折《西游记》。贾母自是欢喜，然后命凤姐点。凤姐亦知贾母喜热闹，更喜谑笑科诨，便点了一出《刘二当衣》。贾母果真更又喜欢，然后便命黛玉点。黛玉因让薛姨妈、王夫人等。贾母道：“今日原是我特带着你们取笑，咱们只管咱们的，别理他们。我巴巴的唱戏摆酒，为他们不成？他们在这里白听白吃，已经便宜了，还让他们点呢！”说着，大家都笑了。黛玉方点了一出。然后宝玉、史湘云、迎、探、惜、李纨等俱各点了，接出扮演。

至上酒席时，贾母又命宝钗点。宝钗点了一出《鲁智深醉闹五台山》。宝玉道：“只好点这些戏。”宝钗道：“你白听了这几年的戏，那里知道这出戏的好处，排场又好，词藻更





according to the status of each. But these need not be enumerated in detail.

On the twenty-first a small stage was set up in the Lady Dowager's inner courtyard and a new troupe of young actresses had been hired who were able to perform both *Kunqu* and *Yiyang* operas. Tables were laid in the hall for a family feast, to which no outsiders were asked: apart from Aunt Xue, Xiangyun and Baochai, who were guests, all the rest would be members of the family.

Not seeing Daiyu that morning, Baoyu went to look for her and found her curled up on her *kang*.

"Come on to breakfast," he said, "The show will soon be starting. Tell me which opera you'd like and I'll ask for it."

Daiyu smiled disdainfully.

"If that's how you feel, you'd better hire a special company to play my favourite pieces instead of expecting me to cash in on someone else's birthday."

"That's easy, we'll hire a company next time and let the rest of them cash in on us."

He pulled her up and they went off hand in hand.

After breakfast it was time to choose the plays and the Lady Dowager called on Baochai to name her choice. The girl declined the honour at first but finally, to the old lady's delight, named a scene from *Pilgrimage to the West*. Next, Xifeng was ordered to take her pick. And knowing the old lady's liking for lively plays, especially comedies and burlesques, she pleased her even more by selecting *Liu Er Pawns His Clothes*.

Daiyu, told to choose next, deferred to Aunt Xue and Lady Wang.

"I planned today as a treat for you girls," said the Lady Dowager, "So make your choice and never mind your aunts. I didn't lay on this show and feast for them. They're lucky to be here at all, able to watch and eat free of charge, but I won't let them choose any items."

All laughed at that, and then Daiyu suggested one piece. She was followed by Baoyu, Xiangyun, the three Jia girls and Li Wan, and their choices were put on in turn.

When the feast was ready the Lady Dowager told Baochai to select another opera, and she asked for *The Drunken Monk*.

妙。”宝玉道：“我从来怕这些热闹。”宝钗笑道：“要说这一出热闹，你还算不知戏呢。你过来，我告诉你，这一出热闹戏，是一套北《点绛唇》，铿锵顿挫，韵律不用说是好的了；只那词藻中有一支《寄生草》，填的极妙，你何曾知道。”宝玉见说的这般好，便凑近来央告：“好姐姐，念与我听听。”宝钗便念道：

漫搵英雄泪，相离处士家。谢慈悲剃度在莲台下。  
没缘法转眼分离乍。赤条条来去无牵挂。那里讨烟蓑雨笠卷单行？一任俺芒鞋破钵随缘化！

宝玉听了，喜的拍膝画圈，称赏不已，又赞宝钗无书不知。林黛玉道：“安静看戏罢，还没唱《山门》，你倒《妆疯》了。”说的湘云也笑了。于是大家看戏。

至晚散时，贾母深爱那作小旦的与一个作小丑的，因命人带进来。细看时，益发可怜见。因问年纪，那小旦才十一岁，小丑才九岁，大家叹息一回。贾母令人另拿些肉果与他两个，又另外赏钱两串。凤姐笑道：“这个孩子扮上活像一个人，你们再看不出来。”宝钗心里也知道，便只一笑不肯



"You always choose something rowdy," objected Baoyu.

"You've been watching operas all these years for nothing if you don't know how good this is," retorted Baochai. "Besides being spectacular it has some magnificent lines."

"I never could stand noisy shows," he persisted.

"If you call this noisy that just shows how little you know about opera," she rejoined. "Come over here and let me explain. This opera has most stirring arias sung in the northern mode *Dian Jiang Chun*, which needless to say is an excellent melody; and the verses set to *Ji Sheng Cao* are quite superb, did you but know it."

Baoyu edged closer then and begged her to recite them to him.

Baochai declaimed:

"Dried are the hero's tears.  
My patron's house left behind;  
By grace divine  
Tonsured below the Lotus Throne.  
Not destined to stay,  
I leave the monastery in a flash,  
Naked I go without impediment;  
My sole wish now  
To roam alone in coir cape and bamboo hat,  
And in straw sandals with a broken alms bowl!  
To wander where I will."

Baoyu pounded his lap to the rhythm of the verse and nodded appreciatively, loud in his praise of these words as well as of her erudition.

"Do be quiet and watch," said Daiyu. "Before we've seen *The Drunken Monk* you're playing *The General Feigns Madness*."

This set Xiangyun giggling.

They went on watching operas until dusk. By then the Lady Dowager had taken a special fancy to the girl who played the part of the heroines and the one who took the clown's role. She had them brought to her and on closer inspection found them even sweeter. All marvelled when it was disclosed that the heroine was only eleven, the clown only nine. The old lady rewarded them with some extra delicacies and two additional strings of cash.

"When that child's made up she's the living image of someone here,"

说。宝玉也猜着了，亦不敢说。史湘云接着笑道：“倒像林妹妹的模样儿。”宝玉听了，忙把湘云瞅了一眼，使个眼色。众人却都听了这话，留神细看，都笑起来了，说果然不错。一时散了。

晚间，史湘云更衣时，便命翠缕把衣包打开收拾，都包了起来。翠缕道：“忙什么，等去的日子再包不迟。”湘云道：“明儿一早就走。在这里作什么？看人家的鼻子眼睛，什么意思！”宝玉听了这话，忙赶近前拉他，说道：“好妹妹，你错怪了我。林妹妹是个多心的人。别人分明知道，不肯说出来，也皆因怕他恼。谁知你不防头就说了出来，他岂不恼你。我是怕你得罪了人，所以才使眼色。你这会子恼我，不但辜负了我，而且反倒委曲了我。若是别人，那怕他得罪了十个人，与我何干呢。”湘云摔手道：“你那花言巧语别哄我。我也原不如你林妹妹，别人说他，拿他取笑都使得，只我说了就有不是。我原不配说他。他是小姐主子，我是奴才丫头，得罪了他，使不得！”宝玉急的说道：“我倒是为你，反为出不是来了。我要有外心，立刻就化成灰，叫万人践踏！”湘云道：“大正月里，少信嘴胡说。这些没要紧的恶誓、散话、歪话，说给那些小性儿、行动爱恼的人、会辖治你的人听去！别叫我啐你。”说着，一径至贾母里间，忿忿的躺着去了。





remarked Xifeng. "Have none of you noticed?"

Baochai knew whom she meant but she just smiled. Baoyu too had guessed but did not dare to speak out.

Xiangyun, however, blurted out, "I know! She looks just like Cousin Daiyu."

Too late Baoyu shot her a warning glance, for by now everyone had noticed the resemblance and laughingly declared that it was most striking. Soon afterwards they scattered.

That evening while undressing, Xiangyun ordered Cuilu to pack her things.

"What's the hurry?" asked the maid. "We can start packing when it's time to leave."

"We're leaving tomorrow morning. Why should we stay here and put up with dirty looks?"

Baoyu overheard this exchange and hurried in to take Xiangyun by the hand.

"Dear cousin, you've got me wrong," he said. "Daiyu is so terribly sensitive that the others didn't name her for fear of upsetting her. How could she help being annoyed, the way you blurted it out? I looked at you warningly because I didn't want you to hurt her feelings. It's ungrateful as well as unfair of you to be angry with *me*. If it had been anybody else but you, I wouldn't care how many people she offended."

Xiangyun waved him crossly away.

"Don't try to get round me with your flattering talk. I'm not in the same class as your Cousin Daiyu. It's all right for other people to make fun of her, but I'm not even allowed to mention her. She's a grand young lady, I'm a slave — how dare I offend her?"

"I was only thinking of you, yet now you put me in the wrong." Baoyu was desperate. "If I meant any harm, may I turn into dust this instant and be trampled on by ten thousand feet!"

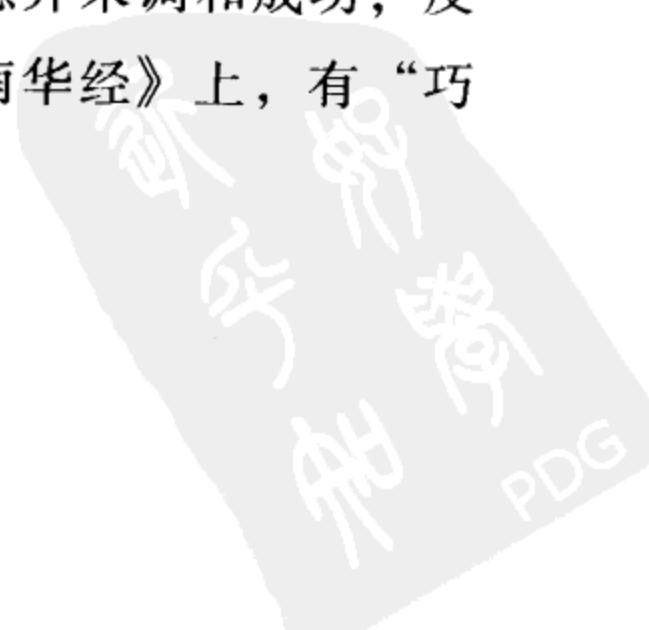
"Stop talking such nonsense just after the New Year. Or go and rave if you must to those petty-minded creatures who are so quick to take offence, and who know how to manage you. Don't make me spit at you!"

She flounced off to the Lady Dowager's inner room and threw her-

宝玉没趣，只得又来寻黛玉。刚到门槛前，黛玉便推出来，将门关上。宝玉又不解何意，在窗外只是吞声叫“好妹妹”。黛玉总不理他。宝玉闷闷的垂头自审。袭人早知端的，当此时断不能劝。那宝玉只是呆呆的站在那里。黛玉只当他回房去了，便起来开门，只见宝玉还站在那里。黛玉反不好意思，不好再关，只得抽身上床歪着。宝玉随进来问道：“凡事都有个原故，说出来，人也不委屈。好好的就恼了，终究是为什么起？”林黛玉冷笑道：“问的我倒好，我也不知为什么。我该给你们取笑儿的，——拿我比戏子给众人取笑。”宝玉道：“我并没有比你，我并没笑，为什么恼我呢？”黛玉道：“你还要比？你还要笑？你不比不笑，比人比了笑了的还利害呢！”宝玉听说，无可分辩，不则一声。

黛玉又道：“这一节还可恕。再你为什么又和云儿使眼色？这安的是什么心？莫不是他和我玩，他就自轻自贱了？他原是公侯的小姐，我原是贫民的丫头，他和我玩，设如我回了口，岂不他自惹人轻贱呢。是这主意不是？这却也是你的好心，只是那一个偏又不领你这好情，一般也恼了。你又拿我作情，倒说我小性儿，行动肯恼。你又怕他得罪了我，我恼他。我恼他，与你何干？他得罪了我，又与你何干？”

宝玉见说，方才与湘云私谈，他已听见了。细想自己原为他二人，怕生隙恼，方在中调和，不想并未调和成功，反已落了两处的贬谤。正合着前日所看《南华经》上，有“巧





self down angrily on a couch.

After this snub Baoyu went to look for Daiyu, but scarcely had he set foot in her room than she pushed him out and closed the door in his face. Mystified, he called in a subdued voice through the window:

“Dear cousin!”

But Daiyu simply ignored him.

He hung his head then in dejected silence. Xiren knew it would be useless to reason with him just then. So he was standing there like a fool when Daiyu opened the door, thinking him gone. When she saw him still standing there, she hadn't the heart to shut him out again. She turned away and curled up on her bed, while he followed her into the room.

“There's always a reason for everything,” he said. “If you'd explain, people wouldn't feel so hurt. What's upset you suddenly?”

“A fine question to ask!” Daiyu gave a short laugh. “I don't know. For you I'm a figure of fun, to be compared with an actress in order to raise a laugh.”

“But why be angry with me? I didn't make the comparison. I didn't laugh.”

“I should hope not, indeed! But what you did was even worse than the others laughing and making comparisons.”

Baoyu did not know how to defend himself and was silent.

“I wouldn't have minded so much if you hadn't made eyes at Xiangyun,” Daiyu went on. “Just what did you mean by that? That she'd lower and cheapen herself by joking with me? She's the daughter of a noble house, I'm a nobody. If she were to joke with me and I answered back, that would be degrading for her — was that the idea? That was certainly kind on your part. Too bad she didn't appreciate your thoughtfulness, but flared up all the same. Then you tried to excuse yourself at my expense, calling me ‘petty-minded and quick to take offence.’ You were afraid she might offend me, were you? But what is it to you if I get angry with her? Or if she offends me?”

Baoyu realized that she had overheard his conversation with Xiangyun. He had intervened in an attempt to prevent bad feeling between them but, having failed, was now held to blame by both sides. This reminded him of the passage in *Zhuangzi*:



者劳而智者忧，无能者无所求，饱食而遨游，汎若不系之舟”；又曰“山木自寇，源泉自盗”等语。因此越想越无趣。再细想来，目下不过这两个人，尚未应酬妥协，将来犹欲为何？想到其间，也无庸分辩回答，自己转身回房来。林黛玉见他去了，便知回思无趣，赌气去了，一言也不曾发，不禁自己越发添了气，便说道：“这一去，一辈子也别来，也别说话。”

宝玉不理，回房躺在床上，只是瞪瞪的。袭人深知原委，不敢就说，只得以他事来解释，因笑道：“今儿看了戏，又勾出几天戏来。宝姑娘一定要还席的。”宝玉冷笑道：“他还不还，管谁什么相干。”袭人见这话不是往日口吻，因又笑道：“这是怎么说？好好的大正月里，娘儿姊妹们都喜欢欢的，你又怎么这个形景了？”宝玉冷笑道：“他们娘儿们、姊妹们欢喜不欢喜，也与我无干。”袭人笑道：“他们既随和，你也随和，岂不大家彼此有趣。”宝玉道：“什么是‘大家彼此’！他们有‘大家彼此’，我是‘赤条条来去无牵挂’。”谈及此句，不觉泪下。袭人见此景况，不肯再说。宝玉细想这一句趣味，不禁大哭起来。翻身起来至案，遂提笔立占一偈云：

你证我证，心证意证。





“The ingenious work hard, the wise are full of care; but those without ability have no ambition. They enjoy their food and wander at will like drifting boats freed from their moorings. ”

And again:

“Mountain trees are the first to be felled, clear fountains the first to be consumed. ”

The more he thought the more depressed he grew.

“If I can’t even cope now with just these two, what will it be like in future?” he reflected. At this point it seemed quite useless to attempt to justify himself, so he started back to his room.

Daiyu realized that he must be very dejected by what had occurred to go off so sulkily without a word. But this only made her angrier than ever.

“Go, then!” she cried. “And don’t ever come back! Don’t speak to me again!”

Baoyu paid no attention. Returning to his room, he lay down on his bed staring fixedly before him. Although Xiren knew what had happened, she dared not mention it and tried to distract him with some more cheerful subject.

“Today’s plays are bound to lead to others,” she prophesied. “Miss Baochai is sure to give a return party. ”

“What do I care whether she does or not?” he snapped back, quite unlike his usual self.

“What do you mean?” asked Xiren. “This is the beginning of a new year when all the ladies and girls are enjoying themselves. Why carry on like this?”

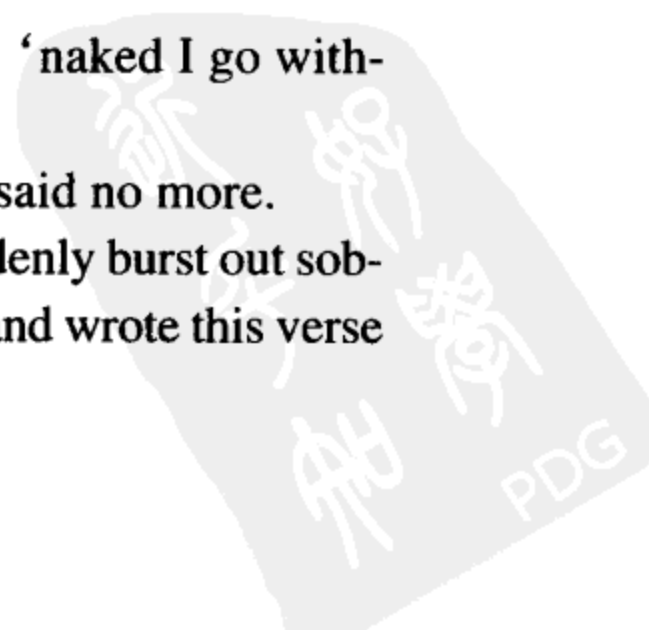
“I don’t care whether they’re enjoying themselves or not.”

“If they are so obliging to each other, shouldn’t you be obliging too? Wouldn’t that be pleasanter for everyone?”

“For everyone? Let *them* oblige each other while ‘naked I go without impediment.’”

Tears ran down his cheeks and, seeing them, she said no more.

Baoyu, pondering the significance of that line, suddenly burst out sobbing. Getting up, he went to his desk, took up a brush and wrote this verse in the style of a Buddhist *gatha*:





是无有证，斯可云证。

无可云证，是立足境。

写毕，自虽解悟，又恐人看此不解，因此亦填一支《寄生草》，也写在偈后。自己又念一遍，自觉无挂碍，中心自得，便上床睡了。

谁想黛玉见宝玉此番果断而去，故以寻袭人为由，来视动静。袭人笑回：“已经睡了。”黛玉听说，便要回去。袭人笑道：“姑娘请站住，有一个字帖儿，瞧瞧是什么话。”说着，便将方才那曲子偈语悄悄拿来，递与黛玉看。黛玉看了，知是宝玉因一时感忿而作，不觉可笑可叹，便向袭人道：“作的是玩意儿，无甚关系。”说毕，便携了回房去，与湘云同看。次日又与宝钗看。宝钗看其词曰：

无我原非你，从他不解伊。肆行无碍凭来去。茫茫着甚悲愁喜，纷纷说甚亲疏密。从前碌碌却因何，到如今，回头试想真无趣！

看毕，又看那偈语，又笑道：“这个人悟了。都是我的不是，都是我昨儿一支曲子惹出来的。这些道书禅机，最能移性。明儿认真说起这些疯话来，存了这个意思，都是从我这一只曲子上来，我成了个罪魁了。”说着，便扯了个粉碎，递与丫头们说：“快烧了罢。”黛玉笑道：“不该撕，等我问他。你们跟我来，包管叫他收了这痴心邪话。”





Should you test me and I test you,  
Should heart and mind be tested too,  
Till there remained no more to test,  
That test would be of all the best.  
When nothing can be called a test,  
My feet will find a place to rest.

For fear that others might not grasp the meaning, he then appended a verse after the melody *Ji Sheng Cao* and read the whole through again. Then he went to bed, feeling less frustrated, and slept.

Now some time after Baoyu's abrupt departure Daiyu came, ostensibly to see Xiren, to find out how things were. Told that he was asleep she was turning to leave when Xiren said with a smile:

"Just a minute, miss! He wrote something you might like to look at."

She quietly fetched and handed Baiyu the verses Baoyu had just written, and the girl was both touched and amused to see what he had tossed off in a fit of pique.

"It's just a joke, nothing serious," she told Xiren.

She took it back to her own room and showed it to Xiangyun. Next day she showed it to Baochai as well. Baochai read the second verse. It ran:

If there's no "I," then neither is there "you,"  
If she misunderstands you then why rue?  
Freely I come and freely too I go.  
Giving myself to neither joy nor woe,  
Close kin or distant — it's the same to me.  
What did it serve, my assiduity?  
Today I see its true futility.

Having read this she read the first verse then laughed.

"So that's the enlightenment he's attained! This is all my fault for reciting that song to him yesterday. There's nothing so apt to lead people astray as these Taoist teachings and Chan paradoxes. If he really starts taking such nonsense seriously and gets it fixed in his head just because of that song I quoted, I'm the first to blame."

She tore up the verses and told her maids to burn them at once.

"You shouldn't have done that," protested Daiyu with a smile. "I've

三人果然都往宝玉屋里来。一进来，黛玉便笑道：“宝玉，我问你：至贵者是‘宝’，至坚者是‘玉’。你有何贵？你有何坚？”宝玉竟不能答。三人拍手笑道：“这样钝愚，还参禅呢。”黛玉又说：“你那偈末云，‘无可云证，是立足境’，固然好了，只是据我看，还未尽善。我再续两句在后。”因念云：“无立足境，是方干净。”宝钗道：“实在这方悟彻。当日南宗六祖惠能，初寻师至韶州，闻五祖弘忍在黄梅，他便充役火头僧。五祖欲求法嗣，令徒弟诸僧各出一偈。上座神秀说道：‘身是菩提树，心如明镜台，时时勤拂拭，莫使有尘埃。’彼时惠能在厨房碓米，听了这偈，说道：‘美则美矣，了则未了。’因自念一偈曰：‘菩提本非树，明镜亦非台，本来无一物，何处染尘埃？’五祖便将衣钵传他。今儿这偈语，亦同此意了。只是方才这句机锋，尚未完全了结，这便丢开手不成？”黛玉笑道：“彼时不能答，就算





some questions to ask him. Come with me, both of you. We'll soon cure him of this nonsense. ”

So the three girls went together to Baoyu's rooms. Daiyu opened the attack by saying:

“Listen, Baoyu. *Bao* means that which is most precious, and *yu* that which is most solid. But in what way are you precious? In what way are you solid?”

When Baoyu could not answer, the girls clapped their hands and laughed.

“And this stupid fellow wants to dabble in metaphysics!”

Daiyu continued, “The last two lines of your verse are all very well —

When nothing can be called a test  
My feet can find a place to rest.

But it seems to me they still lack a little something. Let me add two more:

When there's no place for feet to rest,  
That is the purest state and best. ”

“Yes, that shows *real* understanding,” put in Baochai. “In the old days when the Sixth Patriarch Huineng of the Southern Sect went to Shaozhou in search of a teacher, he heard that the Fifth Patriarch Hongren was in the monastery on Mount Huangmei, so he took a job as cook there. The Fifth Patriarch, on the look-out for a successor, ordered each of his monks to compose a Buddhist *gatha*. His senior disciple Shenxiu recited:

‘The body is a Bodhi tree,  
The mind a mirror clear;  
Then keep it cleaned and polished —  
Let no dust settle there.’

“Huineng heard this as he was hulling rice in the kitchen and commented. ‘Very fine, but it needs rounding off.’ With that he declaimed:

‘The Bodhi tree is no tree,  
The mirror no mirror clear;  
Since nothing actually exists,  
Where can any dust appear?’

Then the Fifth Patriarch passed on his robe and alms bowl to him. Your

输了，这会子答上了也不为出奇。只是以后再不许谈禅了。连我们两个所知所能的，你还不知不能呢，还去参禅呢。”宝玉自己以为觉悟，不想忽被黛玉一问，便不能答；宝钗又比出“语录”来，此皆素不见他们能者。自己想了一想：“原来他们比我的知觉在先，尚未解悟，我如今何必自寻苦恼。”想毕，便笑道：“谁又参禅，不过一时玩话罢了。”说着，四人仍复如旧。

忽然人报，娘娘差人送出一个灯谜来，命你们大家去猜，猜着了，每人也作一个进去。四人听说，忙来至贾母上房。只见一个小太监，拿了一盏四角平头红纱灯，专为灯谜而制，上面已有一个，众人都争看乱猜。小太监又下谕道：

“众小姐猜着了，不要说出来，每人只暗暗的写在纸上，一齐封进宫去，娘娘自验是否。”宝钗等听了，近前一看，是一首七言绝句，并无甚新奇。口中少不得称赞，只说难猜，故意寻思，其实一见便猜着了。宝玉、黛玉、湘云、探春四个人也都解了，各自暗暗的写了半日。一并将贾环、贾兰等传来，一齐各揣心机都猜了，写在纸上。然后各人拈一物作成一谜，恭楷写了，挂在灯上。

太监去了，至晚出来传谕：“前娘娘所制，俱已猜着，惟



verse amounts to much the same thing. But what about the conundrum you set him just now? He hasn't answered it yet. How can you leave it at that?"

"Failure to answer promptly means defeat," said Daiyu. "And even if he answered it now it would hardly count. But you mustn't talk about Chan any more. You know even less about it than the two of us yet you dabble in metaphysics."

Baoyu had in fact fancied that he had already attained enlightenment, but now that he had been floored by Daiyu, and Baochai had quoted Buddhist lore that he had never suspected her of knowing, he thought to himself, "They understand more about these things than I do, yet still they haven't attained full enlightenment. Why should I trouble my head over such matters?" Thereupon he said with a laugh:

"I wasn't dabbling in metaphysics. I just wrote that for fun."  
So the four of them made it up.

Just then they were told that the Imperial Consort had sent over a lantern-riddle for everybody to guess, after which they were to make up a riddle apiece and send these to the Palace.

At once the four of them hurried to the Lady Dowager's quarters where they found a young eunuch with a square, flat-topped lantern of red gauze made specially for lantern-riddles. One riddle was already hanging on it. They gathered round to read it and try to guess it, while the eunuch passed on the order:

"When the young ladies have guessed, they are not to tell anyone their answers but write them down privately to be sealed up and taken to the Palace. Her Royal Highness will see which are correct."

Baochai stepped forward with the others then to look at the riddle. It was a quite nondescript quatrain, but of course she praised its ingenuity and pretended to be thinking hard although she had guessed it at once. Baoyu, Daiyu, Xiangyun and Tanchun had guessed it too and they went off quietly to write down their answers. Then Jia Huan, Jia Lan and others were fetched, and having racked their brains they wrote down their answers. After that each made up a riddle, copied it out neatly and hung it on the lantern for the eunuch to take away.

二小姐与三爷猜的不是。小姐们作的也都猜了，不知是否。”说着，已将写的拿出来。也有猜着的，也有猜不着的，都胡乱说猜着了。太监又将颁赐之物送与猜着之人，每人一个宫制诗筒，一柄茶筴，独迎春、贾环二人未得。迎春自为玩笑小事，并不介意，贾环便觉得没趣。且又听太监说：“三爷说的这个不通，娘娘也没猜，叫我带回问三爷是个什么。”众人听了，都来看他作的什么，写道是：

大哥有角只八个，二哥有角只两根。

大哥只在床上坐，二哥爱在房上蹲。

众人看了，大发一笑。贾环只得告诉太监说：“一个枕头，一个兽头。”太监记了，领茶而去。

贾母见元春这般有兴，自己越发喜欢。便命速作一架小巧精致围屏灯来，设于堂屋，命他姊妹各自暗暗的作了，写出来粘于屏上，然后预备下香茶细果以及各色玩物，为猜着之贺。贾政朝罢，见贾母高兴，况在节间，晚上也来承欢取乐。设了酒果，备了玩物，上房悬了彩灯，请贾母赏灯取乐。上面贾母、贾政、宝玉一席，下面王夫人、宝钗、黛玉、湘云又一席，迎、探、惜三个又一席。地下婆娘、丫鬟站满。李宫裁、王熙凤二人在里间又一席。贾政因不见贾兰，便问：“怎么不见兰哥？”地下婆娘忙进里间问李氏，李氏起身笑着回道：“他说方才老爷并没去叫他，他不肯来。”



Towards evening the eunuch returned to announce that the Imperial Consort's riddle had been correctly guessed by all except the Second Young Lady and Third Young Master, and Her Highness had thought of answers to theirs but did not know whether or not they were correct. With that he showed them the answers written down. Some were right, others wrong, but all made haste to say they were correct.

The eunuch then proceeded to give the winners their prizes: a poem-container made in the Palace and a bamboo whisk for cleaning teapots. The only two left out were Yingchun and Jia Huan, and while she regarded this as a game and did not take it to heart he was most disappointed.

And then the eunuch announced, "Her Highness did not attempt to guess the answer to the Third Young Master's riddle, because it did not seem to her to make sense. She told me to bring it back and ask what it means."

All of them gathered round to read the riddle:

First Brother has eight corners,  
Second Brother two horns instead;  
Second Brother likes to squat on the roof,  
First Brother just sits on the bed.

A roar of laughter went up, and Jia Huan told the eunuch that the answer was a head-rest and an animal-head tile. The eunuch having noted this down accepted some tea and then left.

The old lady was delighted to know that Yuanchun was in such good spirits. She ordered a dainty screen-lantern to be made at once and put in the hall so that the girls could make up riddles and paste them on it. Scented tea and sweetmeats were prepared, as well as various little prizes.

Jia Zheng on his return from court found his mother in a cheerful frame of mind, and since this was a festival he came over that evening to join in the fun. He also had refreshments and prizes prepared and coloured lanterns lit in the hall, then invited the old lady in to see them. She sat with Jia Zheng and Baoyu at the highest table, while below, Lady Wang, Baochai, Daiyu and Xiangyun occupied one table and Yingchun, Tanchun and Xichun another. The hall was thronged with nurses and maids in attendance. Li Wan and Xifeng had a table in the inner room.

When Jia Zheng commented on Jia Lan's absence, a nurse went inside to ask Li Wan the reason. She rose to reply:



婆娘回复了贾政。众人都笑说：“天生的牛心古怪。”贾政忙遣贾环与两个婆娘将贾兰唤来。贾母命他在身旁坐了，抓果子与他吃。大家说笑取乐。

往常间只有宝玉长谈阔论，今日贾政在这里，惟有唯唯而已。余者湘云虽系闺阁弱女，却素喜谈论，今日贾政在席，也自缄口禁言。黛玉本性懒与人共，原不肯多语。宝钗原不妄言轻动，便此时亦是坦然自若。故此一席虽是家常取乐，反见拘束不乐。贾母亦知因贾政一人在此所致之故，酒过三巡，便撵贾政去歇息。贾政亦知贾母之意，撵了自己去后，好让他们姊妹、兄弟取乐的。贾政忙陪笑道：“今日原听见老太太这里大设春灯雅谜，故也备了彩礼酒席，特来入会。何疼孙子孙女之心，便不略赐以儿子半点？”贾母笑道：“你在这里，他们都不敢说笑，没的倒叫我闷。你要猜谜时，我便说一个你猜，猜不着是要罚的。”贾政忙笑道：“自然要罚。若猜着了，也是要领赏的。”贾母道：“这个自然。”说着便念道：

猴子身轻站树梢。

——打一果名。

贾政已知是荔枝，便故意乱猜别的，罚了许多东西；然后方猜着，也得了贾母的东西。然后也念一个与贾母猜，念道：

身自端方，体自坚硬。

虽不能言，有言必应。

——打一用物。





“He says he won’t come because the master hasn’t invited him.”

When this was reported to Jia Zheng the others laughed and remarked, “What a queer, stubborn boy.”

Jia Zheng promptly sent Jia Huan and two serving-women to fetch him. And the Lady Dowager made him sit next to her and helped him to dainties, while the others chatted and enjoyed themselves.

Normally Baoyu liked to hold forth at great length but today, in his father’s presence, he simply answered briefly when spoken to; and Xiangyun, although a great chatterbox for a girl, seemed afflicted with dumbness by her uncle too. Daiyu was too reserved ever to talk much in company, and Baochai also behaved in the manner natural to her, choosing her words with care. So there was a constraint about this family party.

The Lady Dowager, knowing that Jia Zheng was the cause, suggested after three rounds of drinks that he should withdraw to rest. Aware that she wanted him out of the way so that the young people might enjoy themselves better, Jia Zheng said with a smile:

“When I heard today that you had prepared all these lantern-riddles, I brought some gifts and delicacies to join in. Won’t you spare your son a little of the love you have for your grandchildren?”

The old lady chuckled.

“None of them will laugh and talk with you here, and that’s very dull,” she said. “Well, if it’s riddles you want, I’ll give you one. But if you guess wrong you’ll have to pay a forfeit.”

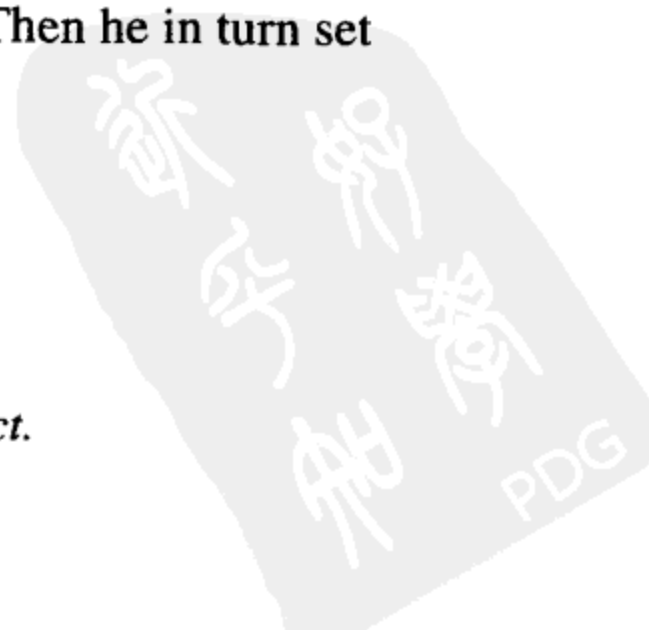
“Certainly. And if I guess right shall I win a prize?”

“Of course.” Then she recited, “The monkey, being light of limb, stands on the topmost branch. It’s the name of a fruit.”

Jia Zheng knew of course that the answer was lichee,<sup>2</sup> but he deliberately gave wrong answers and had to pay several forfeits before he guessed right and received a prize from his mother. Then he in turn set her a riddle:

Its body is square,  
Its substance firm and hard;  
Though it cannot speak  
It will assuredly<sup>3</sup> record anything said.

— *A useful object.*



说毕，便悄悄的说与了宝玉。宝玉意会，又悄悄的告诉了贾母。贾母想了想，果然不差，便说：“是砚台。”贾政笑道：“到底是老太太，一猜就是。”回头说：“快把贺彩送上来。”地下妇女答应一声，大盘小盘一齐捧上。贾母逐件看去，都是灯节下所用所玩新巧之物，甚喜，遂命：“给你老爷斟酒。”宝玉执壶，迎春送酒。贾母因说：“你瞧瞧那屏上，都是他姊妹们做的，再猜一猜我听。”

贾政答应，起身走至屏前，只见头一个写道是：

能使妖魔胆尽摧，身如束帛气如雷。

一声震得人方恐，回首相看已化灰。

贾政道：“这是炮竹嘎。”宝玉答道：“是。”贾政又看道是：

天运人功理不穷，有功无运也难逢。

因何镇日纷纷乱，只为阴阳数不同。

贾政道：“这是算盘。”迎春笑道：“是。”又往下看道是：

阶下儿童仰面时，清明妆点最堪宜。

游丝一断浑无力，莫向东风怨别离。

贾政道：“这是风筝。”探春笑答：“是。”又看道是：





He whispered the answer to Baoyu, who took the hint and secretly told his grandmother. The old lady thought it over and decided he was right.

“An inkstone,” she said.

“Trust you, mother, to get it right first time.” Jia Zheng smiled and turned to order, “Bring in the presents.” There was an answering cry from the women below, who brought forward various trays and little boxes. The Lady Dowager, inspecting them one by one, was delighted to find them novelties for the Lantern Festival.

“Pour wine for the master,” she ordered.

Baoyu poured the wine and Yingchun presented it, after which the old lady said:

“Let me hear you guess some of the riddles the children have put on the screen.”

Jia Zheng rose and walked up to the screen. The first riddle he saw was:

Monsters I can affright and put to flight;  
A roll of silk my form; my thunderous crash  
Strikes dread into the hearts of all,  
Yet when they look around I've turned to ash.

“Isn't this a firecracker?” asked Jia Zheng.

When Baoyu said that was right, his father read on:

No end to the labours of men, to heaven's decrees,  
But labour unblessed by Heaven will fruitless be.  
What causes this constant, frenzied activity?  
The uncertainty of mortal destiny.

“An abacus?”

Yingchun agreed with a smile.

Jia Zheng read the next riddle:

The children by the steps look up:  
Spring surely has no fitter decoration.  
But when the silk cord breaks it drifts away,  
Blame not the east wind for this separation.  
“That sounds like a kite,” said Jia Zheng.





前身色相总无成，不听菱歌听佛经。

莫道此生沉黑海，性中自有大光明。

贾政道：“这是佛前海灯嘎。”惜春笑答道：“是海灯。”

贾政心内沉思道：“娘娘所作爆竹，此乃一响而散之物。迎春所作算盘，是打动乱如麻。探春所作风筝，乃飘飘浮荡之物。惜春所作海灯，一发清净孤独。今乃上元佳节，如何皆用此不祥之物为戏耶？”心内愈思愈闷。因在贾母之前，不敢形于色，只得仍勉强往下看去。只见后面写着七言律诗一首，却是宝钗所作，随念道：

朝罢谁携两袖烟，琴边衾里总无缘。

晓筹不用鸡人报，五夜无烦侍女添。

焦首朝朝还暮暮，煎心日日复年年。

光阴荏苒须当惜，风雨阴晴任变迁。

贾政看完，心内自忖道：“此物还倒有限。只是小小之人作此诗句，更觉不祥，皆非永远福寿之辈。”想到此处，愈觉烦闷，大有悲戚之状，因而将适才的精神减去十分之八九，只垂头沉思。

贾母见贾政如此光景，想到或是他身体劳乏亦未可定，又兼恐拘束了众姊妹不得高兴玩耍，即对贾政云：“你竟不必猜了，去安歇罢。让我们再坐一会，也好散了。”贾政一闻此言，连忙答应几个“是”字，又勉强劝了贾母一回酒，方才退出去了。回至房中只是思索，翻来复去竟难成寐，不由





When Tanchun had confirmed this he looked at another riddle:

A former life's appearance come to nought,  
Deaf to folk-songs the chanting of sutras  
she now hears;  
Say not this life is sunk in a sea of darkness,  
For in her heart a shining light appears.

"The lamp before a Buddhist shrine?" queried Jia Zheng.

"Yes," said Xichun with a smile.

Jia Zheng thought to himself: "Her Royal Highness wrote about a firecracker which disintegrates after a single explosion. Yingchun's subject, the abacus, is in constant commotion; Tanchun's kite is something which drifts away with the wind; Xichun's temple lamp is even more lonely and neglected. What ill-omened subjects for all of them to choose so soon after the New Year!"

The more he reflected, the deeper his dismay. But in his mother's presence he dared not disclose it and forced himself to look at the other riddles. Observing that the last was a verse by Baochai, he read it.

Who leaves the levée with smoke-scented sleeves?  
Not destined by the lute or quilt to sit,  
It needs no watchman to announce the dawn,  
No maid at the fifth watch to replenish it.  
Burned with anxiety both day and night,  
Consumed with anguish as time slips away,  
As life speeds past we learn to hold it dear —  
What cares it whether foul or fair the day?

After reading this Jia Zheng reflected with dismay, "The object itself isn't ill-omened,<sup>4</sup> but what inauspicious lines for a young girl to write. It doesn't look as if any of these girls will have good fortune or long life."

Sunk in gloom he looked the picture of grief as he lowered his head in thought.

His mother imagined that he must be tired, and felt his presence was spoiling the young people's enjoyment.

"There's no need for you to guess any more answers," she said. "You'd better go and rest. We shan't sit up much longer either."

Jia Zheng assented with alacrity and forced himself to toast his mother

伤悲感慨，不在话下。

且说贾母见贾政去了，便道：“你们可自在乐一乐罢。”一言未了，早见宝玉跑至围屏灯前，指手画脚，满口批评，这个这一句不好，那一个做的不恰当，如同开了笼的猴子一般。宝钗便道：“还像适才坐着，大家说说笑笑，岂不斯文些儿。”凤姐自里间忙出来插口道：“你这个人，就该老爷每日令你寸步不离方好。适才我忘了，为什么不当着老爷，撺掇叫你也作诗谜儿。若果如此，怕不得这会子正出汗呢。”说的宝玉急了，扯着凤姐儿，扭股儿糖似的只是厮缠。贾母又与李宫裁并众姊妹说笑了一会，也觉有些困倦起来。听了听已是漏下四鼓，命将食物撤去，赏散与众人，随起身道：“我们安歇罢。明日还是节下，该当早起。明日晚间再玩罢。”且听下回分解。





once more before he withdrew. Back in his own apartment, he turned the matter over in his mind with a grievous sense of foreboding and was unable to sleep. But no more of this.

As soon as he had gone the Lady Dowager urged her grand-children, “Now relax and have some fun!”

Baoyu had already run up to the screen-lantern and was prancing about like a monkey freed from its chain, pulling different riddles to pieces.

“Why not sit down as you were before,” said Baochai, “and chat with us in a more civilized way?”

Xifeng, who had joined them now, chimed in, “you ought to have the master keeping you by his side all the time. I forgot just now to suggest that you should make up some riddles in his presence. If I had, I’m sure you’d still be in a cold sweat.”

Baoyu made a frantic grab at her and a scrimmage ensued.

After chatting a little with Li Wan and the girls the Lady Dowager began to feel tired, and hearing the fourth watch sounded she ordered the food to be cleared away, telling the servants they could have what was left.

“Let’s rest now,” she said, rising to her feet. “Tomorrow’s still a holiday, and we ought to get up early. We can enjoy ourselves again in the evening.”

To know what happened next day, read the chapter which follows.







詞西  
通宿  
戲記  
話鈔



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## 第二十三回

西厢记妙词通戏语 牡丹亭艳曲警芳心

话说贾元春自那日幸大观园回宫去后，便命将那日所有的题咏，命探春依次抄录妥协，自己编次，叙其优劣，又命在大观园勒石，为千古风流雅事。因此，贾政命人各处选拔精工名匠，在大观园磨石镌字，贾珍率领贾蓉、贾萍等监工。因贾蔷又管理着文官等十二个女戏并行头等事，不大得便，因此贾珍又将贾菖、贾菱唤来监工。一日，汤蜡钉硃，动起手来。这也不在话下。

且说那个玉皇庙并达摩庵两处，一班的十二个小沙弥并十二个小道士，如今挪出大观园来，贾政正想要打发到各庙去居住。不想后街上住的贾芹之母周氏，正盘算着也要到贾政这边谋一个大小事务与儿子管管，也好弄些银钱使用，可巧听见这件事，便坐轿子来求凤姐。凤姐因见他素日不大拿班作势的，便依允了。想了几句话，便回王夫人说：“这些小和尚、道士万不可打发到别处去，一时娘娘出来就要承应。倘或散了，若再用时，可是又费事。依我的主意，不如将他们竟送到咱们家庙里铁槛寺去，月间不过派一个人拿几两银子去买柴米就完了。说声用，走去叫来，一点儿不费事的。”王夫人听了，便商之于贾政。贾政听了笑道：“倒是提



## Chapter 23

### Lines from "The Western Chamber" Are Quoted in Fun A Song from "Peony Pavilion" Distresses a Tender Heart

After Yuanchun's return to the Palace from her visit to Grand View Garden she gave instructions that Tanchun should copy out all the poems written that day for her to arrange in order of merit, because she wished them to be inscribed on the tablets in the Garden as a lasting memorial to that splendid occasion. Jia Zheng accordingly ordered skilled artisans to be found to polish and engrave the stones under the supervision of Jia Zhen, assisted by Jia Rong and Jia Ping. As Jia Qiang had his hands full looking after the twelve actresses and their properties, he asked Jia Chang and Jia Ling to supervise the work instead. In due course wax was melted over the tablets and the poems were engraved in vermilion. But no more of this.

The twenty-four young Buddhists and Taoists from the Dharma Convent and Jade Emperor's Temple in the Garden had now been moved out, and Jia Zheng had been thinking of sending them to various temples elsewhere. Word of this reached Jia Qin's mother nee Zhou who lived in the street behind just as she had decided to look in Jia Zheng's house for some remunerative job, whether big or small, for her son. So she came by sedan-chair to enlist Xifeng's help.

As this woman was normally unassuming, Xifeng agreed. Having thought out the right approach she told Lady Wang:

"We mustn't send away the little Buddhists and Taoists, because they'll be needed next time Her Highness comes, and it would be hard to get them together again if once they'd been dispersed. My idea is to move them all to our family's Iron Threshold Temple. Then all we need do is to send someone with a few taels of silver every month for their firewood and rice, and they can be fetched back if needed without any trouble."





醒了我，就是这样。”即时唤贾琏来。

当下贾琏正同凤姐吃饭，一闻呼唤，不知何事，放下饭便走。凤姐一把拉住，笑道：“你且站住，听我说话。若是别的事我也不管，若是为小和尚们的那事，好歹依我这么着。”如此这般教了一套话。贾琏笑道：“我不知道，你有本事你说去。”凤姐听了，把头一梗，把筷子一放，腮上似笑不笑的瞅着贾琏道：“你当真的，是玩话？”贾琏笑道：“西廊下五嫂子的儿子芸儿来求了我两三遭。要个事情管管。我依了，叫他等着。好容易出来这件事，你又夺了去。”凤姐儿笑道：“你放心。园子东北角子上，娘娘说了，还叫多多的种松柏树，楼底下还叫种些花草等物。等这件事出来，我保管叫芸儿管这件工程。”贾琏道：“果然这样，也罢了。只是昨儿晚上，我不过是要改个样儿，你就扭手扭脚的。”凤姐儿听了，“嗤”的一声笑了，向贾琏啐了一口，低下头便吃饭。

贾琏一径笑着去了。到了前面，见了贾政，果然是小和尚一事。贾琏便依了凤姐主意，说道：“如今看来，芹儿倒大大的出息了，这件事竟交与他去管办。横竖照在里头的规例，每月叫芹儿支领就是了。”贾政原不大理论这些事，听贾琏如此说，便如此依了。贾琏回到房中告诉凤姐儿，凤姐即命人去告诉周氏。贾芹便来见贾琏夫妻两个，感谢不尽。凤姐又作情央贾琏先支三个月的，叫他写了领字，贾琏批票



Lady Wang passed on this proposal to her husband.

"Quite right," he agreed. "I'm glad you reminded me." He sent for Jia Lian.

Jia Lian and Xifeng were having their meal together when this summons arrived. Not knowing what he was wanted for, he put down his rice bowl at once and started out.

"Wait a minute and listen to me!" She caught hold of his arm. "If this is some other business, that's not my affair; but if it's about those little novices, you must handle it my way." She told him then exactly what to say.

Jia Lian shook his head, laughing.

"This is none of my business. If you're so clever, go and ask uncle yourself."

Xifeng threw back her head and laid down her chopsticks, staring at Jia Lian with an icy smile.

"Do you mean that, or are you joking?"

"Yun, the son of Fifth Sister-in-Law who lives in West Lane, has come several times begging me to find him a job, and I promised him I would if he would wait. Now here's a job at last, but as usual you want to snatch it away."

"Don't worry. Her Highness wants more pines and cypresses planted in the northeast corner of the Garden, as well as more flowers at the foot of the tower. When that job comes up, I promise to let Yun have it."

"All right then," he chuckled. "But why were you so uncooperative last night when all I wanted was to try something different?"

Xifeng snorted with laughter and spat at him in mock disgust, then lowered her head and went on with her meal.

Grinning broadly, Jia Lian left. When he found that his uncle had indeed sent for him about the novices, taking his cue from his wife he suggested:

"Jia Qin seems to be shaping well. We might entrust this to him. He can just draw the allowance every month in the usual way."

Since Jia Zheng never took much interest in such matters, he made no objection. As soon as Jia Lian went back to tell Xifeng, she sent a maid to notify Jia Qin's mother, and the young man came to thank them both

画了押，登时发了对牌出去。银库上按数发出三个月的供给来，白花花二三百两。贾芹随手拈一块，撂与掌平的人，叫他们吃了茶罢。于是命小厮拿回家，与母亲商议。登时雇了大叫驴，自己骑上；又雇了几辆车子，至荣国府角门，唤出二十四个人来，坐上车，一径往城外铁槛寺去了。当下无话。

如今且说贾元春，因在宫中自编大观园题咏之后，忽想起那大观园中景致，自己幸过之后，贾政必定敬谨封锁，不敢使人进去骚扰，岂不寥落。况家中现有几个能诗会赋的姊妹，何不命他们进去居住，也不使佳人落魄，花柳无颜。却又想到宝玉自幼在姊妹丛中长大，不比别的兄弟，若不命他进去，只怕他冷清了，一时不大畅快，未免贾母、王夫人愁虑，须得也命他进园居住方妙。想毕，遂命太监夏忠到荣国府来下一道谕，命宝钗等只管在园中居住，不可禁约封锢，命宝玉仍随进去读书。

贾政、王夫人接了这谕，待夏忠去后，便来回明贾母，遣人进去各处收拾打扫，安设帘幔床帐。别人听了还自犹可，惟宝玉听了这谕，喜的无可不可。正和贾母盘算，要这个，弄那个，忽见丫鬟来说：“老爷叫宝玉。”宝玉听了，好似打了个焦雷，登时扫去兴头，脸上转了颜色，便拉着贾母扭的好似扭股儿糖，杀死不敢去。贾母只得安慰他道：“好宝贝，你只管去，有我呢，他不敢委曲了你。况且你又作了那篇好文章。想是娘娘叫你进去住，他吩咐你几句，不过不教

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profusely. As a special favour Xifeng asked her husband to let him have three months' allowance in advance and made him write a receipt, to which Jia Lian put his signature. He was then given the tally to fetch from the treasury three months' allowance — two or three hundred taels of glittering silver. One piece he picked up casually and gave as a tip to the men who had weighed the silver, "For a cup of tea," as he put it. The rest he told his servant to carry home. On his mother's advice he lost no time in hiring a sturdy donkey for himself and several covered carts. Taking these round to the side gate of the Rong Mansion, he called out the twenty-four little novices and seated them in the carts. Then together they set off for Iron Threshold Temple. And there we leave them.

Now it had occurred to Yuanchun while she was editing the poems on Grand View Garden that it would be a pity if her father locked up such charming pleasure grounds after her visit in deference to her, so that nobody could go there. The more so when the girls of the family had a taste for poetizing, and if they were to move there the Garden would make a perfect setting for them while its flowers and willows would not lack admirers. Then she reflected that Baoyu was unlike other boys, having been brought up among girls, so that if he alone were excluded he would feel left out in the cold, and this might distress the Lady Dowager and Lady Wang. She had better give directions for him to move in there too.

Having reached this decision, she sent the eunuch Xia Shouzhong to the Rong Mansion with the order: "Baochai and the other young ladies are to live in the Garden, which is not to be closed. Baoyu is to move in as well to continue his studies there."

This edict was received by Jia Zheng and Lady Wang. As soon as the eunuch had left, they reported it to the Lady Dowager and sent servants to clean up the Garden and prepare the buildings, hanging up blinds, portieres and bed-curtains.

The others took the news fairly calmy, but Baoyu was beside himself with joy. He was just discussing it with his grandmother, demanding this, that and the other, when a maid announced that his father wanted him. At this bolt from the blue he turned pale, his spirits quite dashed. He clung like a limpet to the Lady Dowager, too terrified to leave her.

你在里头淘气。他说什么，你只好生答应着就是了。”一面安慰，一面唤了两个老嬷嬷来，吩咐：“好生带了宝玉去，别叫他老子唬着他。”老嬷嬷答应了。

宝玉只得前去，一步挪不了三寸，蹭到这边来。可巧贾政在王夫人房中商议事情，金钏儿、彩云、彩霞、绣鸾、绣凤等众丫鬟都在廊檐下站着呢，一见宝玉来，都抿着嘴儿笑。金钏一把拉住宝玉，悄悄的笑道：“我这嘴上才是才擦的香浸胭脂，你这会子可吃不吃了？”彩云一把推开金钏，笑道：“人家心里正不自在，你还奚落他。趁这会子喜欢，快进去罢。”宝玉只得挨进门去。原来贾政和王夫人都在里间呢。赵姨娘打起帘子，宝玉躬身进去。只见贾政和王夫人对面坐在炕上说话，地下一溜椅子，迎、探、惜并贾环四个人都坐在那里。一见他进来，惟有探春和惜春和贾环站了起来。

贾政一举目，见宝玉站在跟前，神彩飘逸，秀色夺人；看看贾环，人物委琐，举止荒疏；忽又想起贾珠来，再看看王夫人只有这一个亲生的儿子，素爱如珍，自己的胡须将已苍白：因这几件上，把素日嫌恶处分宝玉之心不觉减了八九。半晌说道：“娘娘吩咐说，你日日外头嬉游，渐次疏懒，如今叫禁管，同你姊妹在园里读书写字。你可好生用心习学，再如不守分安常，你可仔细！”宝玉连连的答应了几个“是”。王夫人便拉他在身旁坐下。他姊弟三人依旧坐下。



“Go, my treasure,” she urged him. “I won’t let him be hard on you. Besides, it’s because you wrote so well that Her Highness has said you should move into the Garden, and I dare say your father only wants to warn you to behave yourself when you’re there. Just say ‘Yes’ to whatever he tells you and you’ll be all right.”

She called two old nurses and ordered them to take Baoyu there and see that he was not frightened.

The nurses complied and Baoyu left with dragging steps. It so happened that Jia Zheng was discussing some business in his wife’s room while her maids Jinchuan, Caiyun, Caixia, Xiuluan and Xiufeng were standing outside under the eaves. At sight of Baoyu they smiled knowingly, and Jinchuan caught hold of his sleeve.

“I’ve just put some scented rouge on my lips,” she whispered. “Do you want to taste it?”

Caiyun pushed her away.

“Don’t tease him when he’s feeling low,” she scolded. “Go in quickly, while the master’s in a good mood.”

Baoyu sidled fearfully in. His parents were in the inner room. The concubine Zhao raised the portiere, and with a bow he entered. His father and mother sat facing each other on the *kang* talking, while on a row of chairs below sat Yingchun, Tanchun, Xichun and Jia Huan, all of whom except Yingchun rose to their feet at his entrance.

Jia Zheng glanced up and saw Baoyu standing before him. The boy’s striking charm and air of distinction contrasted so strongly with Jia Huan’s vulgar, common appearance that he was reminded of his dead son Zhu. He glanced at Lady Wang. She had only this one son left and she doted on him. As for him, his beard was already turning grey. Bearing all this in mind, he forgot his usual aversion to Baoyu. After a pause he said:

“Her Highness has ordered you to study and practise calligraphy with the girls in the Garden, instead of fooling around outside and neglecting your studies. Mind that you apply yourself there to your lessons. If you go on misbehaving, watch out!”

“Yes, sir,” agreed Baoyu hastily.

Then his mother drew him over to sit beside her while Jia Huan and the other two sat down again. Stroking her son’s neck fondly Lady Wang

王夫人摸挲着宝玉的脖项说道：“前儿的丸药都吃完了？”宝玉答道：“还有一丸。”王夫人道：“明儿再取十丸来，天天临睡的时候，叫袭人伏侍你吃了再睡。”宝玉道：“只从太太吩咐了，袭人天天晚上想着，打发我吃。”贾政问道：“袭人是何人？”王夫人道：“是个丫头。”贾政道：“丫头不管叫个什么罢了，是谁这样刁钻，起这样的名字？”王夫人见贾政不自在了，便替宝玉掩饰道：“是老太太起的。”贾政道：“老太太如何知道这样的话，一定是宝玉。”宝玉见瞒不过，只得起身回道：“因素日读诗，曾记古人有一句诗云：‘花气袭人知昼暖。’因这个丫头姓花，便随口起了这个名字。”王夫人忙又向宝玉道：“你回去改了罢。老爷也不用为这小事动气。”贾政道：“究竟也无碍，又何用改。只是可见宝玉不务正，专在这些浓词艳赋上作工夫”。说毕，断喝一声：“作孽的畜生，还不出去！”王夫人也忙道：“去罢，只怕老太太等你吃饭呢。”宝玉答应了，慢慢的出去，向金钏儿笑着伸伸舌头，带着两个嬷嬷一溜烟去了。

刚至穿堂门前，只见袭人倚门立在那里，一见宝玉平安回来，堆下笑来，问：“叫你作什么？”宝玉告诉他：“没有什么，不过怕我进园去淘气，吩咐吩咐。”一面说，一面回至贾母跟前，回明原委。只见林黛玉正在那里，宝玉便问他：







asked:

“Have you finished those pills prescribed for you the other day?”

“All but one.”

“You must fetch ten more tomorrow. Get Xiren to see that you take one each evening at bedtime.”

“Ever since you ordered it, madam, Xiren has been giving me one every evening.”

“Who is Xiren?” demanded Jia Zheng.

“One of the maids,” his wife told him.

“A maid can be called anything, I suppose. But who thought up such a suggestive name for her?”

To shield Baoyu from his father’s displeasure Lady Wang said, “It was the old lady’s idea. ”

“Such a name would never occur to the old lady. This must have been Baoyu’s doing.”

Since there was no hiding the truth Baoyu rose to confess: “I remembered that line of an old poem:

When the fragrance of flowers assails men  
we know the day is warm.

As this maid’s surname is Hua (Flower), I called her Xiren. ”<sup>1</sup>

“You must change it when you go back,” put in Lady Wang quickly. Then she turned to her husband. “Don’t be angry, sir, over such a little thing.”

“It doesn’t really matter, there’s no need to change it. But this shows that instead of studying properly Baoyu gives all his time to romantic trash.” Then he said sternly to Baoyu: “What are you standing there for, you unnatural monster?”

“Run along, ” urged Lady Wang. “The old lady is probably waiting for you for supper.”

Baoyu assented and slowly withdrew. Once outside he grinned and stuck out his tongue at Jinchuan before hurrying off with the two nurses. He found Xiren leaning in the doorway of the entrance hall. Her face lit up when she saw that he was back safely, and she asked what his father had wanted.

“Nothing much. Just to warn me to be on my best behaviour when I

“你住那一处好？”林黛玉正在心里盘算这事，忽见宝玉问他，便笑道：“我心里想着潇湘馆好，爱那几竿竹子隐着一道曲栏，比别的更觉幽静。”宝玉听了拍手笑道：“正和我的主意一样，我也要叫你住这里呢。我就住怡红院，咱们两个又近，又都清幽。”

二人正计较，就有贾政遣人来回贾母说：“二月二十二的日子好，哥儿、姐儿们好搬进去的。这几日内遣人进去分派收拾。”薛宝钗住了蘅芜院，林黛玉住了潇湘馆，贾迎春住了缀锦楼，探春住了秋爽斋，惜春住了蓼风轩，李氏住了稻香村，宝玉住了怡红院。每一处添两个老嬷嬷，四个丫头，除各人奶娘、亲随丫鬟不算外，另有专管收拾打扫的。至二十二日，一齐进去，登时园内花招绣带，柳拂香风，不似前番那等寂寞了。

闲言少叙。且说宝玉自进园来，心满意足，再无别项可生贪求之心。每日只和姊妹、丫头们一处，或读书，或写字，或弹琴下棋，作画吟诗，以至描鸾刺凤，斗草簪花，低吟悄唱，拆字猜枚，无所不至，倒也十分快乐。他曾有几首即事诗，虽不算好，却倒是真情真景，略记几首云：

#### 春夜即事

霞绡云幄任铺陈，隔巷蟆更听未真。  
枕上轻寒窗外雨，眼前春色梦中人。





move into the Garden.”

Having by now reached the Lady Dowager’s room he told her what had happened. Then he asked Daiyu, who was there, in which part of the Garden she would like to live.

Daiyu had been thinking this over and she answered: “My choice would be Bamboo Lodge. I love those bamboos half hiding the winding balustrade, and the place is quieter than anywhere else.”

“Just what I thought!” Baoyu clapped his hands. “That’s where I want you. With me in Happy Red Court, we shall be close together and beautifully quiet.”

At this point Jia Zheng sent a servant to report to the Lady Dowager that the twenty-second of the second month would be an auspicious day for the move into the Garden, and the young people’s quarters would be ready by then. Baochai was to have Alpinia Park, Daiyu Bamboo Lodge, Yingchun the Pavilion of Variegated Splendour, Tanchun the Studio of Autumn Freshness, Xichun Smartweed Breeze Cot, Li Wan Paddy-Sweet Cottage, and Baoyu Happy Red Court. Two old nurses and four maids were assigned to each apartment in addition to the occupant’s nanny and own attendants, and there were other servants whose sole duty was cleaning and sweeping. On the twenty-second they all moved in and at once the Garden gay with flowers and willows ruffled by a fragrant breeze from embroidered sashes lost its former air of desolation; but no need to describe this in detail.

Baoyu found life in the Garden all he could wish. He asked nothing better than to spend every day with his sisters, cousins and maids, reading, writing, strumming the lute, playing chess, painting, chanting poems, watching the girls embroider their phoenix patterns, enjoying the flowers, softly singing, guessing riddles or playing the guess-fingers game. In a word, he was blissfully happy. There he wrote the following verses on the four seasons, which although quite commonplace give some idea of his sentiments and the scenery.

#### SPRING NIGHT

The walls flaunt hangings bright as sunset clouds  
To muffle the frogs’ croaking in the lane;

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盈盈烛泪因谁泣，点点花愁为我嗔。  
自是小鬟娇懒惯，拥衾不耐笑言频。

夏夜即事

倦绣佳人幽梦长，金笼鹦鹉唤茶汤。  
窗明麝月开宫镜，室霭檀云品御香。  
琥珀杯倾荷露滑，玻璃槛纳柳风凉。  
水亭处处齐纨动，帘卷朱楼罢晚妆。

秋夜即事

绛芸轩里绝喧哗，桂魄流光浸茜纱。  
苔锁石纹容睡鹤，井飘桐露湿栖鸦。  
抱衾婢至舒金凤，倚槛人归落翠花。  
静夜不眠因酒渴，沉烟重拨索烹茶。

冬夜即事

梅魂竹梦已三更，锦罽鹑衾睡未成。





The rain outside the window chills my pillow,  
This vision of spring seems like the girl of my dreams.  
The candle sheds slow tears — for whom?  
The blossoms fall as if reproaching me;  
My maids are indolent from long indulgence;  
Wearied by their laughter and prattle, I snuggle  
down in my quilt.

#### SUMMER NIGHT

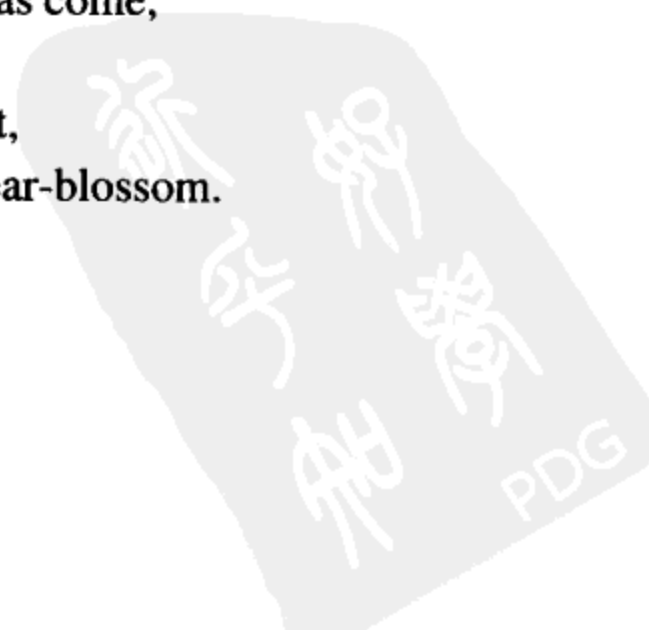
Weary of embroidery, the beauty dreams;  
In its golden cage the parrot cries, “Brew tea!”  
Bright window, moon like musk-scented palace mirror.  
Dim the chamber with fumes of sandalwood and incense.  
Clear dew from the lotus is poured from amber cups,  
Cool air from the willows wafts past crystal railings;  
In lake pavilions everywhere flutter silken fans,  
And the blinds are rolled up on the vermilion tower  
As she finishes her evening toilet.

#### AUTUMN NIGHT

The red pavilion scented with rue is hushed,  
Moonlight floods the gauze dyed with madder;  
Crows asleep by the well are wet with dew from the plane tree,  
And storks roost on mossy boulders,  
A maid spreads the gold-phoenix quilt,  
The girl coming back from the balcony drops her trinkets;  
Sleepless at night and thirsty after wine  
I relight the incense and call for fresh tea.

#### WINTER NIGHT

Plum-blossom and bamboo dream, the third watch has come,  
But sleep eludes them under silk eiderdowns.  
Only a stork can be seen in the pine-shadowed court,  
No oriole sings in the snow which has drifted like pear-blossom.  
Cold is the green-sleeved girl as she writes a poem,  
Tipsy the young lord in gold and sable gown;  
Happily the maid knows how to make good tea  
And gathers up fresh fallen snow to brew it.





松影一庭惟见鹤，梨花满地不闻莺。  
女郎翠袖诗怀冷，公子金貂酒力轻。  
却喜侍儿知试茗，扫将新雪及时烹。

因这几首诗，当时有一等势利人，见是荣国府十二三岁的公子作的，抄录出来各处称颂；再有一等轻浮子弟，爱上那风骚妖艳之句，也写在扇头壁上，不时吟哦赏赞。因此竟有人来寻诗觅字，倩画求题的。宝玉亦发得了意，镇日家作这些外务。

谁想静中生烦恼，忽一日不自在起来。这也不好，那也不好，出来进去只是闷闷的。园中那些人多半是女孩儿，正在混沌世界，天真烂漫之时，坐卧不避，嬉笑无心，那里知宝玉此时的心事。那宝玉心内不自在，便懒在园内，只在外头鬼混，却又痴痴的。茗烟见他这样，因想与他开心，左思右想，皆是宝玉玩的不耐烦了的，不能开心，惟有这件，宝玉不曾看见过。想毕，便走去到书坊内，把那古今小说并那飞燕、合德、武则天、杨贵妃的外传与那传奇脚本买了许多来，引宝玉看。宝玉何曾见过这些书，一看见了，便知得了珍宝。茗烟又吩咐他不可拿进园去，“若叫人知道了，我就吃不了兜着走呢”。宝玉那里舍的不拿进园，踌躇再三，单把那文理细密的拣了几套进去，放在床顶上，无人时自己密看。那粗俗过露的，都藏在外面书房里。





When some toadies learned that these poems were the work of a son of the Rong Mansion who was only twelve or thirteen, they copied them out and praised them far and wide, while young gallants attracted by the romantic images in them inscribed them on their fans or walls and kept chanting and admiring them. As a result, Baoyu was flattered to find himself applied to for poems, calligraphy, paintings and inscriptions; and supplying these occupied much of his time every day.

But after a while this quiet life began to pall. Baoyu became restless, dissatisfied and bored. Most of the Garden's inmates were innocent, ingenuous girls who laughed and romped all day long without any inhibitions, quite unaware of his feelings. Then, too restless to stay with them he started fooling around outside, but still went on feeling disgruntled and frustrated.

His page Mingyan tried to think of some way to distract him and decided that there was only one thing that might appeal to him as a novelty. He went to a bookshop and bought his master a pile of novels old and new, tales about imperial concubines and empresses, as well as romantic librettos. Baoyu had never read such works before. He felt he had discovered a treasure-trove.

"Don't take them into the Garden," Mingyan warned him. "If they were found I'd be in serious trouble."

But how could Baoyu agree to this? After much hesitation he picked out several volumes written in a more refined style and smuggled these in, keeping them on the canopy over his bed to read when he was alone. The cruder and more indecent he kept hidden in his study outside the Garden.

One day, about the middle of the third month, carrying a copy of *The Western Chamber* he strolled after breakfast across the bridge above Seeping Fragrance Lock. There he sat down on a rock to read under a blossoming peach-tree. He had just reached the line

Red petals fall in drifts

when a gust of wind blew down such a shower of petals that he and his book were covered with them and the ground near by was carpeted with red. Afraid to trample on the flowers if he shook them off, Baoyu gath-

那一日正当三月中浣，早饭后，宝玉携了一套《会真记》，走到沁芳闸桥边桃花底下一块石上坐着，展开《会真记》，从头细玩。正看到“落红成阵”，只见一阵风过，把树上桃花吹下一大半来，落的满身满书满地皆是。宝玉要抖将下来，恐怕脚步践踏了，只得兜了那花瓣，来至池边，抖在池内。那花瓣浮在水面，飘飘荡荡，竟流出沁芳闸去了。

回来只见地下还有许多，宝玉正踌躇间，只听背后有人说道：“你在这里作什么？”宝玉一回头，却是林黛玉来了，肩上担着花锄，锄上挂着花囊，手内拿着花帚。宝玉笑道：

“好，好，来把这个花扫起来，撻在那水里。我才撻了好些在那里呢。”林黛玉道：“撻在水里不好。你看这里的水干净，只一流出去，有人家的地方脏的臭的混倒，仍旧把花糟塌了。那畸角上我有一个花冢，如今把他扫了，装在这绢袋里，拿土埋上，日久不过随土化了，岂不干净。”

宝玉听了喜不自禁，笑道：“待我放下书，帮你来收拾。”黛玉道：“什么书？”宝玉见问，慌的藏之不迭，便说道：“不过是《中庸》《大学》。”黛玉笑道：“你又在我跟前弄鬼。趁早儿给我瞧，好多着呢。”宝玉道：“好妹妹，若论你，我是不怕的。你看了，好歹别告诉别人去。真真这是好文章！你要看了，连饭也不想吃呢。”一面说，一面递与了林黛玉。黛玉把花具且都放下，接书来瞧，从头看去，越看越





ered them into the skirt of his gown and carried them to the water's edge where he shook them into the brook. They floated and circled there for a while, then drifted down the River of Seeping Fragrance.

Going back, he found the ground still strewn with blossoms and was wondering how to dispose of these when a voice behind him asked:

"What are you doing here?"

He turned and saw Daiyu, a hoe over one shoulder, a gauze bag hanging from the hoe, and a broom in her hand.

"You're just in time to sweep up these petals and throw them into the water," cried Baoyu. "I've just thrown in a pile."

"Not into the water," objected Daiyu. "It may be clean here, but once it flows out of these grounds people empty all sorts of dirt and filth into it. The flowers would still be spoiled. I've a grave for flowers in that corner over there. I'm sweeping them up and putting them in this silk bag to bury them there. In time they'll turn back into soil. Wouldn't that be cleaner?"

Baoyu was delighted by this idea.

"Just let me put this book somewhere and I'll help," he offered.

"What book's that?"

He hastily tucked it out of sight.

"Just the *Doctrine of the Mean* and *The Great Learning*."<sup>2</sup>

"You're trying to fool me again. You'd have done better to show me in the first place."

"I don't mind showing *you*, dear cousin, but you mustn't tell anyone else. It's a real masterpiece. You won't be able to give a thought to eating once you start reading it." He passed her the book.

Daiyu laid down her gardening tools to read, and the more she read the more enthralled she was. In less time than it takes for a meal she had read all the sixteen scenes. The sheer beauty of the language left a sweet taste in her mouth. After finishing reading she sat there entranced, recalling some of the lines.

"Well, don't you think it's wonderful?" he asked.

She smiled.

"It's certainly fascinating."

"I'm the one 'sick with longing,'" he joked. "And yours is the beauty which caused 'cities and kingdoms to fall.'"<sup>3</sup>

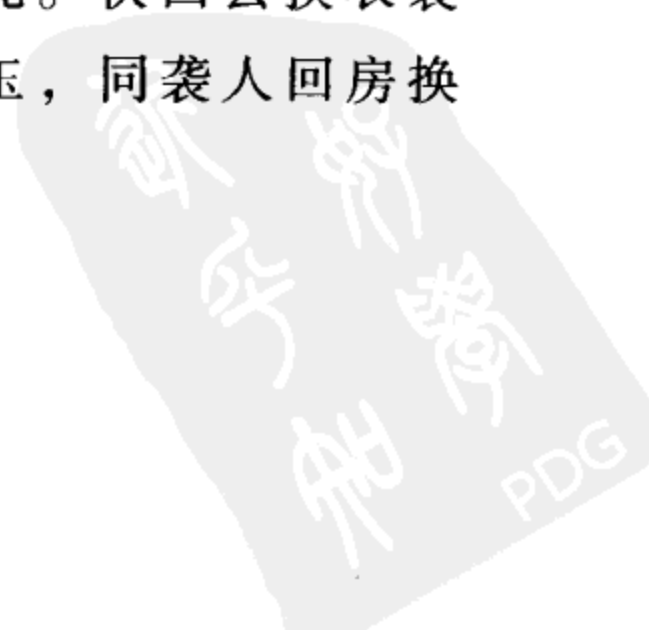




爱，不到一顿饭工夫，将十六出俱已看完，自觉词藻警人，余香满口。虽看完了书，却只管出神，心内还默默记词。

宝玉笑道：“妹妹，你说好不好？”林黛玉笑道：“果然有趣。”宝玉笑道：“我就是个‘多愁多病身’，你就是那‘倾国倾城貌’。”林黛玉听了，不觉带腮连耳通红，登时直竖起两道似蹙非蹙的眉，瞪了两只似睁非睁的眼，微腮带怒，薄面含嗔，指宝玉道：“你这该死的胡说！好好的把这淫词艳曲弄了来，还学了这些混话来欺负我。我告诉舅舅、舅母去。”说到“欺负”两个字上，早又把眼睛圈儿红了，转身就走。宝玉着了急，向前拦住说道：“好妹妹，千万饶我这一遭，原是我说错了。若有心欺负你，明儿我掉在池子里，教个癞头鼋吞了去，变个大忘八，等你明儿做了‘一品夫人’病老归西的时候，我往你坟上替你驮一辈子的碑去。”说的林黛玉“嗤”一声笑了，揉着眼睛，一面笑道：“一般也唬的这个调儿，还只管胡说。‘呸，原来是苗而不秀，是个银样镞枪头。’”宝玉听了，笑道：“你这个呢？我也告诉去。”林黛玉笑道：“你说你会过目成诵，难道我就不能一目十行么？”

宝玉一面收书，一面笑道：“正经快把花埋了罢，别提那个了。”二人便收拾落花，正才掩埋妥协，只见袭人走来，说道：“那里没找到，摸在这里来。那边大老爷身上不好，姑娘们都过去请安，老太太叫打发你去呢。快回去换衣裳去罢。”宝玉听了，忙拿了书，别了黛玉，同袭人回房换衣不提。





Daiyu flushed to the tips of her ears. Knitting her sulky brows, her eyes flashing with anger beneath half-drooping lids, she pointed a finger at Baoyu in accusal.

“You really are the limit! Bringing such licentious songs in here and, what’s more, insulting me with nasty quotations from them.” Her eyes brimmed with tears. “I’m going to tell uncle and aunt.”

She turned to go.

In dismay Baoyu barred her way.

“Forgive me this once, dear cousin! I shouldn’t have said that. But if I meant to insult you, I’ll fall into the pond tomorrow and let the scabby-headed tortoise swallow me, so that I change into a big turtle myself. Then when you become a lady of the first rank and go at last to your paradise in the west, I shall bear the stone tablet at your grave on my back for ever.”

Daiyu burst out laughing at this and wiped her eyes.

“You’re so easy to scare, yet still you indulge in talking such nonsense,” she teased. “Why, you’re nothing but ‘a flowerless sprout,’ ‘a lead spearhead that looks like silver.’”

It was Baoyu’s turn to laugh.

“Now listen to *you*! I’ll tell on you too.”

“You boast that you can ‘memorize a passage with one reading.’ Why can’t I ‘learn ten lines at a glance’?”

Laughing he put the book away.

“Never mind that. Let’s get on with burying the flowers.”

No sooner had they buried the blossom than Xiren appeared.

“So here you are,” she said. “I’ve been looking all over for you. The Elder Master is unwell and all the young ladies have gone to inquire after his health. The old lady wants you to go too. Come back quickly and change.”

Then Baoyu, taking his book, took leave of Daiyu and went back to his own room with Xiren.

With Baoyu gone and the other girls all out too, Daiyu did not know what to do and decided to go back to her own room. As she rounded the corner of Pear Fragrance Court where the twelve actresses were rehearsing, she heard sweet fluting and singing over the wall. Normally the

这里林黛玉见宝玉去了，又听见众姊妹也不在房，自己闷闷的。正欲回房，刚走到梨香院墙角上，只听墙内笛韵悠扬，歌声婉转。林黛玉便知是那十二个女孩子演习戏文呢。只是林黛玉素习不大喜看戏文，便不留心，只管往前走。偶然两句只吹到耳内，明明白白，一字不落，唱道是：“原来姹紫嫣红开遍，似这般都付与断井颓垣。”林黛玉听了，倒也十分感慨缠绵，便止住步侧耳细听，又听唱道是：“良辰美景奈何天，赏心乐事谁家院。”听了这两句，不觉点头自叹，心下自思道：“原来戏上也有好文章。可惜世人只知看戏，未必能领略这其中的趣味。”想毕，又后悔不该胡想，耽误了听曲子。又侧耳时，只听唱道：“则为你如花美眷，似水流年……”林黛玉听了这两句，不觉心动神摇。又听道：“你在幽闺自怜”等句，亦发如醉如痴，站立不住，便一蹲身，坐在一块山子石上，细嚼“如花美眷，似水流年”八个字的滋味。忽又想起前日见古人诗中有“水流花谢两无情”之句，再又有词中有“流水落花春去也，天上人间”之句，又兼方



words of operas made little appeal to her, so she did not listen carefully; but now as she proceeded on her way two lines carried to her distinctly:

What a riot of brilliant purple and tender crimson,  
Among the ruined wells and crumbling walls.

Strangely touched by this, she stopped to listen. The singer went on:

What an enchanting sight on this fine morning,  
But who is there that takes delight in the spring?

Daiyu nodded and sighed.

“So there are fine lines in these operas,” she thought. “What a pity that people just care for the spectacle without understanding the meaning.”

Then, sorry to have missed a stanza through her preoccupation, she listened again and heard:

For you are as fair as a flower  
And youth is slipping away like flowing water.

Daiyu’s heart missed a beat. And the next line  
Alone you sit in your secluded chamber  
affected her so much that she sank down on a rock to ponder the words.

For you are as fair as a flower  
And youth is slipping away like flowing water.

They reminded her of a line in an old poem:

Water flows and flowers fall, knowing no pity....

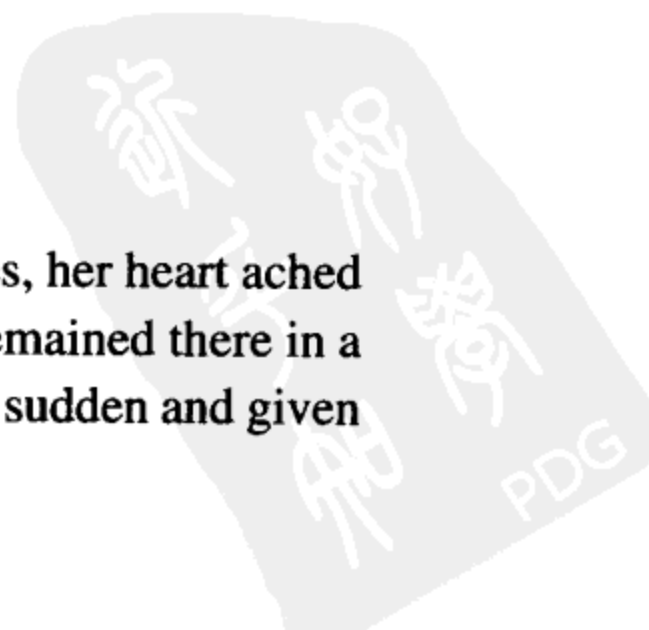
and the lines from another poem:

Spring departs with the flowing water and fallen blossom,  
Far, far away as heaven from the world of men.

She compared this with the lines she had just read in *The Western Chamber*:

Flowers fall, the water flows red,  
Grief is infinite....

As she brooded over the meaning of all these verses, her heart ached and tears coursed down her cheeks. She might have remained there in a quandary had not someone come up behind her all of a sudden and given her a shove in the back. She turned to look.



才所见《西厢记》中“花落水流红，闲愁万种”之句，都一时想起来，凑聚在一处。仔细忖度，不觉心痛神驰，眼中落泪。正没个开交，忽觉背上击了一下，及回头看时，原来是……且听下回分解。

正是：

妆晨绣夜心无矣，对月临风恨有之。



But to know who it was, you must read the next chapter.

Truly:

She minds not her morning toilet, her embroidery at night;  
Facing the moon, cooling off in the breeze, she feels grief.



## 第二十四回

醉金刚轻财尚义侠 痴女儿遗帕惹相思

话说林黛玉正自情思萦逗、缠绵固结之时，忽有人从背后击了他一掌，说道：“你作什么一个人在这里？”林黛玉倒唬了一跳，回头看时，不是别人，却是香菱。林黛玉道：“你这个傻丫头，唬我这么一跳好的。你这会子打那里来？”香菱嘻嘻的笑道：“我来寻我们姑娘的，总找他不着。你们紫鹃也找你呢，说琏二奶奶送了什么茶叶来给你的。走罢，回家去坐着。”一面说着，一面拉着黛玉的手回潇湘馆来了。果然凤姐儿送了两小瓶上用新茶来。林黛玉和香菱坐了。况他们有何正事谈讲，不过说些这一个绣的好，那一个刺的精，又下一回棋，看两句书，香菱便走了。不在话下。

如今且说宝玉因被袭人找回房去，果见鸳鸯歪在床上看袭人的针线呢，见宝玉来了，便说道：“你往那里去了？老太太等着你呢，叫你过那边请大老爷的安去。还不快换了衣服走呢。”袭人便进房去取衣服。宝玉坐在床沿上，褪了鞋等靴子穿的工夫，回头见鸳鸯穿着水红绫子袄儿，青缎子背心，束着白绉绸汗巾儿，脸向那边低着头看针线，脖子上戴着花领子。宝玉便把脸凑在他脖项上，闻那香油气，不住用



## Chapter 24

### The Drunken Diamond Proves Himself Generous and Gallant An Ambitious Girl Loses Her Handkerchief as an Enticement

Daiyu's heart was touched, her thoughts were in a whirl, when someone came up from behind and shoved her in the back asking:

"What are you doing here all on your own?"

Startled, she looked round. It was Xiangling.

"You stupid creature to frighten me so," cried Daiyu. "Where have you sprung from?"

Xiangling giggled.

"I can't find our young lady anywhere. Your Zijuan is looking for you too. She says the Second Mistress has sent you some tea. Let's go back to your place, shall we?"

She took Daiyu by the hand and they went back to Bamboo Lodge, where they found two small flasks of new tea from the Palace sent over by Xifeng. The two girls sat down. If you ask what serious matters they discussed, these were merely the relative merits of different pieces of embroidery and tapestry. They also played a game of chess and read some passages from a book together before Xiangling took her leave.

But let us return to Baoyu. When Xiren fetched him back he discovered Yuanyang leaning over the couch in his outer room examining some of Xiren's needlework.

"Where have you been?" she asked him. "The old lady is waiting for you. She wants you to go over to the other house to inquire after the Elder Master's health. You had better change quickly and go."

As Xiren went into the next room to fetch his clothes and boots, Baoyu sat on the edge of the couch and kicked off his shoes, waiting. He turned and noticed that Yuanyang was wearing a pink silk jacket, a sleeveless black satin jacket and a white silk sash. Her head, turned away from him, was bent over the needlework, and there was a flowered collar around



手摩挲，其白腻不在袭人之下，便猴上身去，涎皮笑道：“好姐姐，把你嘴上的胭脂赏我吃了罢。”一面说，一面扭股糖似的粘在身上。鸳鸯便叫道：“袭人，你出来瞧瞧。你跟他一辈子，也不劝劝，还是这么着。”袭人抱了衣服出来，向宝玉道：“左劝也不改，右劝也不改，你到底是怎么样？你再这么着，这个地方可就难住了。”一边说，一边催他穿了衣服，同鸳鸯往前面来。

见过贾母，出至外面，人马俱已齐备。刚欲上马，只见贾琏请安回来了，正下马，二人对面，彼此问了两句话。只见旁边转出一个人来请宝玉安。宝玉看时，只见这人俊容长脸，长挑身材，年纪只好十八九岁，生得着实斯文清秀，倒也十分面善，只是想不起是那一房的，叫什么名字。贾琏笑道：“你怎么发呆，连他也不认得？他是后廊上住的五嫂子的儿子芸儿。”宝玉笑道：“是了，是了，我怎么就忘了。”因问他母亲好，这会子什么勾当。贾芸指贾琏道：“找二叔说句话。”宝玉笑道：“你倒比先越发出挑了，倒像我的儿子。”贾琏笑道：“好不害臊！人家比你大四五岁呢，就替你作儿子了？”宝玉笑道：“你今年十几岁？”贾芸道：“十八了。”

原来这贾芸最伶俐乖觉，听宝玉这样说，便笑道：“俗语说的，‘摇车里的爷爷，拄拐的孙孙’。虽然岁数大，山高不过太阳。只从我父亲没了，这几年也无人照管教导。如



her neck. Laying his cheek against the nape of the neck he inhaled her scent and could not resist stroking her, for her skin was just as white and smooth as Xiren's. He mischievously nestled close to her.

"Good sister, let me taste the rouge on your lips!"

With this smiling appeal he clung to her like sticky toffee.

"Xiren!" called Yuanyang. "Come and look at this. All these years you've been with him, yet you still haven't taught him how to behave."

Xiren, walking in with her arms full of clothes, protested to Baoyu: "I wear out my tongue talking, but you still carry on like this. What's to become of you? If you go on in this way, you'll make it impossible for us to stay here."

She made him change quickly and go with Yuanyang to the front apartment. After seeing the Lady Dowager he went out to where his pages and horse were waiting; but just as he was about to mount, Jia Lian arrived back from his father's house and, dismounting in front of Baoyu, exchanged a few words with him. At this point someone else came over to greet Baoyu too. This was a tall youth in his late teens with an oval face and intelligent, handsome appearance. But familiar though his face was, Baoyu could not remember his name or which branch of the clan he belonged to.

"Why are you staring at him like that?" asked Jia Lian. "Don't you know Yun, the son of Fifth Sister-in-law who lives in the back lane?"

"Of course. I can't think how I forgot." Baoyu asked after Yun's mother and inquired his business.

Indicating Jia Lian, the young man said, "I've come to have a word with Second Uncle."

"You've grown very handsome since I saw you last." Baoyu grinned. "You could almost be my son."

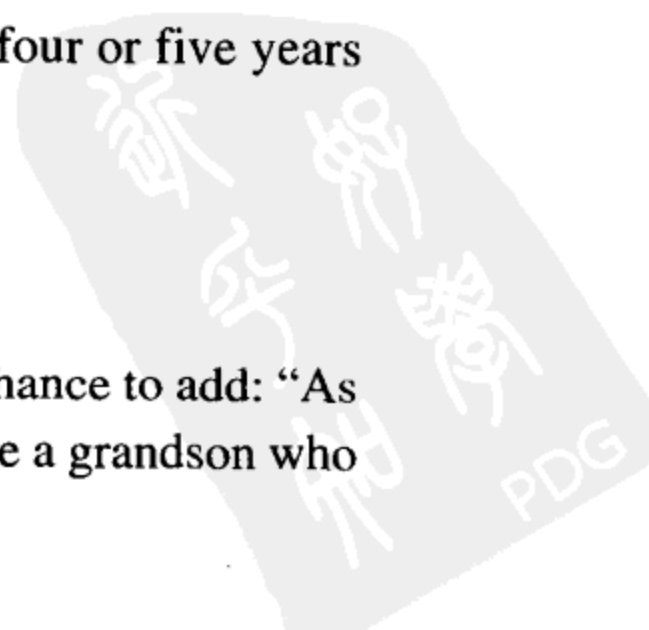
"For shame!" Jia Lian chortled. "Your son? He's four or five years older than you."

Baoyu smiled.

"What age *are* you?"

"Eighteen."

Jia Yun had all his wits about him. He seized this chance to add: "As the proverb says. 'A grandfather in the cradle may have a grandson who



若宝叔不嫌侄儿蠢笨，认作儿子，就是我的造化了。”贾琏笑道：“你听见了？认儿子不是好开交的呢。”说着，就进去了。宝玉笑道：“明儿你闲了，只管来找我，别和他们鬼鬼祟祟的。这会子我不得闲儿。明儿你到书房里来，和你说天话儿，我带你园里玩耍去。”说着扳鞍上马，众小厮围随，往贾赦这边来。

见了贾赦，不过是偶感些风寒，先述了贾母问的话，然后自己请了安。贾赦先站起来回了贾母话，次后便唤人来：“带哥儿进去，太太屋里坐着。”宝玉退出，来至后面，进入上房。邢夫人见了他来，先倒站了起来，请过贾母的安，宝玉方请安。邢夫人拉他上炕坐了，方问别人，又命人倒茶来。一钟茶未吃完，只见那贾琮来问宝玉好。邢夫人道：“那里找活猴子去！你那奶妈子死绝了，也不收拾收拾你，弄的黑眉乌嘴，那里像大家子念书的孩子！”

正说着，只见贾环、贾兰小叔侄两个也来了，请过安，邢夫人便叫他两个椅子上坐了。贾环见宝玉同邢夫人坐在一个坐褥上，邢夫人又百般摩挲抚弄他，早已心中不自在了，坐不多时，便和贾兰使眼色儿要走。贾兰只得依他，一同起身告辞。宝玉见他们要走，自己也就起身，要一同回去。邢夫人笑道：“你且坐着，我还和你说话呢。”宝玉只得坐了。邢夫人向他两个道：“你们回去，各人替我问你们各人母亲好。你们姑娘、姐姐、妹妹都在这里呢，闹的我头晕，今儿不留你们吃饭了。”贾环等答应着，便出来回家去了。

宝玉笑道：“可是姐姐们都过来了，怎么不见？”邢夫人



leans on a stick.' I may be older than you but 'The highest mountain can't shut out the sun.' These last few years since my father died I've had no one to instruct me properly. If you don't think me too stupid to be your adopted son, Uncle Bao, that would be my great good fortune."

"Hear that?" Jia Lian laughed. "It's no joke adopting a son." With that he went inside.

"If you're free tomorrow," said Baoyu to Yun, "just drop in and see me. Don't learn *their* sneaky ways. I'm busy now but come to my study tomorrow. We can have a good talk and I'll show you round the Garden."

He swung himself into the saddle then and his pages escorted him to Jia She's house, where he found that his uncle had nothing worse than a cold. Having delivered his grandmother's message he paid his own respects. Jia She stood up to reply to the Lady Dowager's inquiries after his health, then ordered a servant to take Baoyu to his wife.

Baoyu went to the back, to Lady Xing's apartment, and when she had risen to convey her respects to his grandmother he bowed on his own account. She made him sit beside her on the *kang* and asked after the rest of the family. While they sipped the tea she had ordered, Jia Cong came in to greet Baoyu.

"Did you ever see such a monkey?" asked Lady Xing. "Is that nanny of yours dead that she doesn't tidy you up? With that grubby face you look a regular dunce, not like the son of a cultured family."

Just then Jia Huan and his nephew Jia Lan arrived together to pay their respects, and Lady Xing offered them chairs to sit on. But Huan so resented the sight of Baoyu sharing the same cushion with his aunt, who was fonding him and making much of him, that before long he signalled to Lan that they should leave. Lan had to comply, so they both got up to beg leave. Baoyu rose to go too, but Lady Xing stopped him with a smile.

"Just sit where you are. I've something else to say to you."

He had to resume his seat. She then told the two others:

"When you get back, give my regards to your mothers. I'm so dizzy from the rumpus the girls have raised here that I won't keep you to dinner."

The two boys promised to do as she said and left.

道：“他们坐了一会子，都往后头不知那屋里去了。”宝玉道：“大娘方才说有话说，不知是什么话？”邢夫人笑道：“那里什么话，不过叫你等着，同你姊妹们吃了饭去。还有一个好玩的东西给你带回去玩。”娘儿两个说话，不觉早又晚饭时节。调开桌椅，罗列杯盘，母女姊妹们吃毕了饭。宝玉去辞别了贾赦，同姊妹们一同回家，见过贾母、王夫人等，各自回房安息。不在话下。

且说贾芸进去见了贾琏，因打听可有什么事情。贾琏告诉他：“前儿倒有一件事情出来，偏生你婶子再三的求了我，给了贾芹了。他许了我，说明儿园里还有几处要栽花木的地方，等这个工程出来，一定给你就是了。”贾芸听了，半晌说道：“既是这样，我就等着罢。叔叔也不必先在婶子跟前提我今儿来打听的话，到跟前再说也不迟。”贾琏道：“提他作什么，我那里有这些工夫说闲话儿呢，明儿一个五更，还要到兴邑去走一趟，须得当日赶回来才好。你先去等着，后日起更以后你来讨信儿。早了，我不得闲。”说着，便回后面换衣服去了。

贾芸出了荣国府回家，一路思量，想出一个主意来，便一径往他母舅卜世仁家来。原来卜世仁现开香料铺，方才从铺子里回来，忽见贾芸进来，彼此见过了，因问他这早晚什么事跑了来。贾芸道：“有件事求舅舅帮衬帮衬。我有一件事，用些冰片麝香使用，好歹舅舅每样赊四两给我，八月里按数送了银子来。”卜世仁冷笑道：“再休提赊欠一事。前儿



“Did all the girls come?” asked Baoyu. “Where are they now?”

“After sitting here for a while they went off. They’re at the back somewhere or other.”

“You said you had something to tell me, aunt. What is it?”

“What have I got to say to you! It was only to ask you to stay for dinner with the girls. And I’ve something amusing to give you to take back.”

They chatted until it was time for the meal. A table and chairs were arranged, the table laid, and they had dinner with the girls. Then Baoyu took his leave of Jia She and went home with his sister and cousins. After bidding goodnight to the Lady Dowager and Lady Wang they dispersed to their own rooms to rest.

But let us return to Jia Yun, who had gone in to see Jia Lian. He asked him:

“Have you any job for me yet?”

“Something did turn up the other day, but your aunt begged me to let Jia Qin have it. However, she said there’s soon to be a lot of planting of flowers and trees in the Garden. As soon as that job comes up, she promises you can have it.”

After a short silence Jia Yun said: “I’ll just have to wait in that case. Please don’t tell my aunt that I came today to ask. I’ll mention it to her myself next time I see her.”

“Why should I mention it? What time do I have to gossip? Tomorrow I’ve got to set off at the fifth watch to make the trip to Xingyi and back on the same day. Wait until the day after to come back for news — but not before the first watch, I shan’t be free till then.” With that Jia Lian went inside to change his clothes.

On his way home from the Rong Mansion a scheme occurred to Jia Yun. He called on his maternal uncle Bu Shiren,<sup>1</sup> who kept a perfumery from which he had just returned.

“What brings you here at such a late hour?” asked Bu after exchanging greetings with his nephew.

“I’ve a favour to ask you, uncle. I need some Borneo camphor and musk. Could you possibly let me have four ounces of each on credit? I’ll pay you by the Moon Festival without fail.”

也是我们铺子里一个伙计，替他的亲戚赊了几两银子的货，至今总未还上。因此我们大家赔上，立了合同，再不许替亲友赊欠。谁要赊欠，就要罚他二十两银子的东道。况且如今这个货也短，你就拿现银子到我们这不三不四的铺子里来买，也还没有这些，只好倒扁儿去。这是一。二则你那里有正经事，不过赊了去又是胡闹。你只说舅舅见你一遭儿就派你一遭儿不是。你小人儿家很不知好歹，也到底立个主意，赚几个钱，弄得吃的是吃的，穿的是穿的，我看着也喜欢。”

贾芸笑道：“舅舅说的倒干净。我父亲没的时节，我偏又小，不知事。后来听见我母亲说，都还亏舅舅们在我们家中出主意，料理的丧事。难道舅舅就不知道的，还是有一亩田，两间房子，如今在我手里花了不成？巧媳妇做不出没米的粥来，叫我怎么样呢？还亏是我呢，要是别个，死皮赖脸、三日两头儿来缠着舅舅，要三升米、二升豆子的，舅舅也就没有法呢。”

卜世仁道：“我的儿，舅舅要有，还不是该的。我天天和你舅母说，只愁你没个算计儿。你但凡立的起来，到你大房里，就是他们爷儿们见不着，便下个气，和他们的管家或者管事的人们嬉和嬉和，也弄个事儿管管。前儿我出城去，撞见了你们三房里的老四，骑着大叫驴，带着五辆车，有四五十和尚道士，往家庙去了。他那不亏能干，此事如何轮到他呢！”贾芸听他唠叨不堪，便起身告辞。卜世仁道：“怎么急的这样，吃了饭再去罢。”一句未说完，只见他娘子说道：





“Don’t talk to me about credit.” His uncle smiled coldly. “Some time ago one of my assistants gave goods worth several taels of silver on credit to a relative, who still hasn’t paid up. We had to make good the loss between us. So we agreed never again to give credit to relatives or friends under pain of a twenty taels’ fine.

“In any case, those spices are in short supply. Even if you brought ready cash, a little shop like ours couldn’t let you have so much. We’d have to try to get you some elsewhere. That’s one thing.

“In the second place, you’re obviously up to no good but want these things to do something foolish with them. Now don’t go complaining that your uncle finds fault with you each time we meet! You young people have simply no sense. If you’d just think up some way to earn a few cash to keep yourself well fed and decently dressed, how pleased I should be!”

“You’re quite right,” uncle replied Jia Yun amiably. “When my father died I was too small to understand, but later my mother told me how grateful we should be to you for coming over to take things in hand and managing the funeral. And you know better than anyone else, uncle, that I didn’t have any property or land left after my father’s death which I squandered. Even the cleverest housewife can’t cook a meal without rice. What do you expect *me* to do? You’re lucky I’m not one of those thick-skinned people, for then I’d keep pestering you for three pecks of rice today, two pecks of beans tomorrow. What could you have done then, uncle?”

“Whatever your uncle has is yours for the asking, my boy. But as I keep telling your aunt, what worries me is that you won’t use your head. Your best bet is to go to the big mansion. If you can’t get to see the masters, pocket your pride and get on good terms with their stewards, and they may put some business in your way. The other day, out of town, I ran into the fourth son of your third uncle riding on a donkey with five carts behind him, taking forty of fifty novices to your family temple. His head is screwed on the right way, to get such a job.”

This lecture was too much for Jia Yun, who rose to leave.

“What’s the hurry?” asked his uncle. “Have a bite with us before you go.”



“你又糊涂了。说道没有米，这里买了半斤面来下给你吃，这会子还装胖呢。留下外甥挨饿不成？”卜世仁道：“再买半斤来添上就是了。”他娘子便叫女孩儿：“银姐，往对门王奶奶家去问，有钱借三二十个，明儿就送过来。”夫妻两个说话，那贾芸早说了几个“不用费事”，去的无影无踪了。

不言卜家夫妻，且说贾芸赌气离了母舅家门，一径回归旧路，心下正自烦恼，一边想，一边低头只管走。不想一头就碰在一个醉汉身上，把贾芸唬了一跳。听那醉汉骂道：“臊你娘的！瞎了眼睛，碰起我来了。”贾芸忙要躲了，早被那醉汉一把抓住，对面一看，不是别人，却是紧邻倪二。原来这倪二是个泼皮，专放重利债，在赌场吃闲钱，专管打降吃酒。如今正从欠钱人家索了利钱，吃醉回来，不想被贾芸碰了一头，正没好气，抡拳就要打。只听那人叫道：“老二住手！是我冲撞了你。”倪二听见是熟人的语音，将醉眼睁开看时，见是贾芸，忙把手松了，趑趄着笑道：“原来是贾二爷，我该死！这会子往那里去？”贾芸道：“告诉不得你，平白地又讨了个没趣儿。”倪二道：“不妨不妨。有什么不平的事，告诉我，替你出气。这三街六巷，凭他是谁，有人得罪了我醉金刚倪二的街坊，管叫他人离家散！”

贾芸道：“老二，你且别气，听我告诉你这原故。”说着，便把卜世仁一段事告诉了倪二。倪二听了大怒，“要不是令舅，我便骂不出好话来，真真气死我倪二。也罢，你也不用愁烦，我这里现有几两银子，你若用什么东西，只管拿去买办。但只一件，你我作了这些年的街坊，我在外头有名



“Are you crazy?” put in his wife before he had half finished. “I told you we’ve no rice left. All I’ve got for you is half a catty of noodles which I’m cooking for you now. Why pretend to be rich? If he stays he’ll only go hungry.”

“Just buy another half catty then,” said Bu.

“Yinjie!” his wife called to her daughter. “Go and ask Mrs. Wang across the road to lend us twenty or thirty cash — we’ll pay her back tomorrow.”

But by this time Jia Yun, murmuring “Don’t trouble,” had already made himself scarce.

He left his uncle’s house in a temper and was trudging home with lowered head, fuming over such shabby treatment, when he bumped into a drunkard. As Jia Yun started, the fellow swore:

“Are you blind, fuck you, charging into me like that?”

Before Jia Yun could get out of the way, the drunkard grabbed hold of him. Looking closer he saw that it was his neighbour Ni Er, a rowdy who lived on usury and his winnings in gambling-dens. He was always drinking and getting into fights. Having just collected some interest from one of his creditors, he was lurching drunkenly home when he bumped into Jia Yun. Spoiling for a fight, he raised a menacing fist.

“Hold on, old chap! It’s me.”

The voice sounded familiar. Peering with bleary eyes, Ni Er recognized Jia Yun and let go of him. Staggering, he said with a smile:

“So it’s Master Jia. Strike me dead! Where are you off to?”

“Don’t ask me. I’ve never been so snubbed in my life!”

“Never mind. Tell me who’s been bullying you. I’ll settle accounts with him for you. If anyone in the three streets or six lanes near by, no matter who he is, offends a neighbour of the Drunken Diamond, I’ll see to it that his relatives are scattered and his home destroyed.”

“Take it easy, old chap. Listen to me.” Jia Yun described how Bu had cold-shouldered him.

Ni Er was highly incensed.

“If he weren’t your uncle, wouldn’t I just blast him! How maddening! Now don’t worry. I’ve a few taels of silver here. If you want to buy something, just take it. On one condition though. All these years we’ve



放帐，你却从没有和我张过口。也不知你厌恶我是个泼皮，怕低了你的身分；也不知是你怕我难缠，利钱重？若说怕利钱重，这银子我是不要利钱的，也不用写文约；若说怕低了你的身分，我就不敢借给你了，各自走开。”一面说，一面果然从搭包里掏出一卷银子来。

贾芸心下自思：“素日倪二虽然是泼皮无赖，却因人而施，颇颇的有义侠之名。若今日不领他这情，怕他臊了，倒恐生事。不如借了他的，改日加倍还他也倒罢了。”想毕，笑道：“老二，你果然是个好汉，我何曾不想着你，和你张口。但只是我见你所相与交结的，都是些有胆量的、有作为的人，似我们这等无能无为的你倒不理。我若和你张口，你岂肯借给我。今日既蒙高情，我怎敢不领，回家按例写了文约过来便是了。”倪二大笑道：“好会说话的人。我却听不上这话。既说‘相与交结’四个字，如何放账给他，使他的利钱！既把银子借与他，图他的利钱，便不是相与交结了。闲话也不必讲。既肯青目，这是十五两三钱有零的银子，便拿去治买东西。你要写什么文契，趁早把银子还我，让我放给那些有指望的人使去。”贾芸听了，一面接了银子，一面笑道：“我便不写罢了，有何着急的。”倪二笑道：“这不是话。天色黑了，也不让茶让酒，我还到那边有点事情去，你竟请回去。还烦你带个信儿与舍下，叫他们早些关门睡罢，我不回家去了；倘或有甚么要紧的事，叫我们女儿明儿一早到马贩子王短腿家来找我。”一面说，一面趑趄着脚儿去了，不在话下。

且说贾芸偶然碰了这件事，心下也十分希罕。想那倪二



been neighbours, and everybody knows I'm a money-lender, yet you've never once asked for a loan. I don't know whether you don't want to dirty your hands having any dealings with a racketeer, or whether you're afraid of getting involved, thinking my interest too high. If so, I'm not asking now for *any* interest on this loan. Not for an I. O. U. either. But if you're afraid you'll be lowering yourself, I won't presume to lend it. We can just go our different ways."

With that he produced a packet of silver from his pouch.

Jia Yun thought, "Ni Er may be a rascal but he's open-handed and has the name of standing up boldly for his friends. It would be a mistake to annoy him by refusing. I'll take his silver and later pay him back double."

He said, "I know you're a real sport, old chap. I *did* think of approaching you, but was afraid you might ignore someone so useless, as all your friends are such bold and capable people. I thought if I asked for a loan you'd be bound to turn me down. But now since you're so generous I can't refuse. I'll send you an I. O. U. when I get home."

Ni Er bellowed with laughter.

"How you talk! But I won't hear of it," he declared. "You spoke of 'friends.' Well then, how can I charge you interest? If I did, that wouldn't be the act of a friend. Let's cut the cackle. As you don't look down on me and this is only a paltry sum — a mere fifteen taels thirty cents — take it to buy what you need. If you insist on writing an I. O. U. I won't give you the silver but lend it to others whom I expect to pay interest."

"All right," said Jia Yun, accepting the silver. "I'll not write any I. O. U. So don't blaze up!"

"What you'd just said wasn't right," Ni Er chuckled. "It's dark now so I won't invite you to have a drink. I have some business to see to. You'd better go back. I'll trouble you to tell my family to lock up early and turn in, as I shan't be home tonight. If they want me for anything urgent, our daughter can come and fetch me tomorrow morning. They'll find me with the horse-dealer, Short-Legged Wang." So saying, he reeled away.

Marvelling at this stroke of luck Jia Yun reflected, "Ni Er is certainly a character! But what if he's only generous in his cups? Suppose he asks for a hundred per cent interest tomorrow?" This worried him for a while.



倒果然有些意思，只是还怕他一时醉中慷慨，到明日加倍的要起来便怎处，心内犹豫不决。忽又想道：“不妨，等那件事成了，也可加倍还他。”想毕，一直走到个钱铺里，将那银子称一称，十五两三钱四分二厘。贾芸见倪二不撒谎，心下越发喜欢，收了银子，来至家门，先到隔壁将倪二的信捎与他娘子，方回家来见他母亲。自在炕上拈线，见他进来，便问那去了一日。贾芸恐他母亲生气，便不说起卜世仁的事来，只说在西府里等琏二叔的。问他母亲吃了饭不曾，他母亲已吃过了，说留的饭在那里。小丫头拿过来与他吃。

那天已是掌灯时候，贾芸吃了饭收拾歇息，一宿无话。次日一早起来，洗了脸，便出南门，大香铺里买了冰麝，便往荣国府来。打听贾琏出了门，贾芸便往后面来。到贾琏院门前，只见几个小厮拿着大高笤帚在那里扫院子呢。忽见周瑞家的从门里出来叫小厮们：“先别扫，奶奶出来了。”贾芸忙上前笑问：“二婶婶那去？”周瑞家的道：“老太太叫，想必是裁什么尺头。”

正说着，只见一群人簇着凤姐出来了。贾芸深知凤姐是喜奉承、尚排场的，忙把手逼着，恭恭敬敬抢上来请安。凤姐连正眼也不看，仍往前走，只问他母亲好，“怎么不来我们这里逛逛？”贾芸道：“只是身上不大好，倒时常记挂着要来瞧瞧，又不能来。”凤姐笑道：“可是你会撒谎，不是我提起他，你就不说他想我了。”贾芸笑道：“侄儿不怕雷打了，就敢在长辈前撒谎。昨儿晚上还提起婶婶来，说婶婶身子生的单弱，事情又多，亏婶婶好大精神，竟料理的周周全全；要是差一个儿的，累的不知怎么样呢。”



Then he decided, "Never mind, once that job comes my way I can pay him back double."

He took the silver to a money shop to be weighed and was delighted to find that Ni Er was honest and it was indeed fifteen taels and 34.2 cents. He first went next-door and gave Ni Er's message to his wife before going home. His mother, who was rolling thread on the *kang*, asked where he had been all day. For fear of vexing her he made no mention of going to see her brother.

"I was waiting for Uncle Lian in the west mansion," he said. "Have you had your meal?"

"Yes, and I've kept you yours."

She told the maid to fetch it. It was already time to light the lamp, and after supper Jia Yun went straight to bed.

As soon as he was up and dressed the next morning, he went to a large perfumery outside the South Gate and bought camphor and musk, which he took to the Rong Mansion. Having first made sure that Jia Lian had indeed left, he went to the gate of his courtyard at the back. Some pages were sweeping the yard with long-handled brooms. Presently Zhou Rui's wife came out.

"Stop sweeping," she told them. "The mistress is coming out."

Jia Yun swiftly stepped forward to ask:

"Where is Second Aunt going?"

"The old lady has sent for her," said Mrs. Zhou. "To cut out some clothes, I fancy."

That same moment Xifeng emerged with a throng of attendants. Knowing her weakness for flattery and ceremonial, Jia Yun stepped forward respectfully, saluted her with great deference, and inquired after her health.

Xifeng hardly glanced at him, however, merely asking as she walked on how his mother was and why she never called.

"She is not too well, aunt," he replied. "She often thinks of you and would like to come, but she can't get away."

Xifeng laughed.

"What a liar you are! You wouldn't have said that if I hadn't asked about her."

"May lightning strike me if I dare to lie to my seniors!" protested Jia



凤姐听了满脸是笑，不由的便止住了步，问道：“怎么好好的，你娘儿们背地里嚼起我来？”贾芸道：“有个缘故，只因我有个极好的朋友，家里有几个钱，现开香铺。只因他身上捐着个通判，前儿选了云南不知那一处，连家眷一齐去，把这香铺也不在这里开了。便把账物攒了一攒，该给人的给人，该贱发的贱发了。像这细贵的货，都分着送与亲朋。他就一共送了我些冰片、麝香。我就和我母亲商量，若要转卖，不但卖不出原价来，而且谁家拿这些银子买这个作什么，便是很有钱的大家子，也不过使个几分就挺折腰了；若说送人，也没个人配使这些，倒叫他一文不值半文转卖了。因此我就想起婶婶来。往年间，我还见婶婶大包的银子买这些东西呢，别说今年贵妃宫中，就是这个端午节下，不用说这些香料自然比往常加上十倍去的。因此想来想去，只孝顺婶婶一个人才合式，方不算糟蹋这东西。”一边说，一边将一个锦匣举起来。

凤姐正是要办端阳的节礼，采买香料药饵的时节，忽见贾芸如此一来，听这篇话，心下又是得意又是欢喜，便命丰儿：“接过芸哥儿的来，送了家去，交给平儿。”因又说道：“看着你这样知好歹的，怪道你叔叔常提你，说你说话儿也明白，心里有见识。”贾芸听这话入了港，便打进一步来，







Yun. "Only last night she was speaking of you, aunt. She said, 'Your aunt's delicate yet look at all she has on her hands. I don't know where she finds the energy to manage everything so well. Anyone less efficient would be quite worn out.'"

Xifeng beamed at this and involuntarily halted.

"Why pray, should you and your mother gossip about me like that behind my back?"

"The fact is that a very good friend of mine, who owns a perfumery, has bought the rank of an assistant sub-prefect and was recently appointed to a post somewhere in Yunnan. Since he is taking the whole family with him, he's decided to close the shop. He's been going through his stock, giving some things away, selling others cheap, and presenting the more valuable stuff to relatives and friends. That's how I acquired some Borneo camphor and musk. My mother and I agreed that if we tried to sell it we wouldn't be able to get the proper price, because who is there willing to spend so much on such things? Even the richest families would only want a few grams at the most. And even if we gave the stuff away, we couldn't think of anyone who deserves to use so much valuable perfume as these — in fact he may sell the stuff to someone else for next to nothing. Then I thought of you, aunt, and remembered the packets of money you've spent in the past on such things. This year, what with the Imperial Consort in the Palace and the Dragon-Boat Festival coming, I'm sure you'll be needing ten times the usual amount. So after thinking it over we decided the most appropriate thing to do was to make a present of it to you, aunt, as a token of esteem. This way it won't be wasted."

He took out a brocade-covered box and respectfully raised it in both hands to present it.

Xifeng, as it so happened, needed some festival gifts and had been thinking of buying some spices and aromatic herbs. Gratified and delighted by this unexpected gift and Jia Yun's little speech, she told Fenger:

"Take my nephew's present home and give it to Pinger."

Then to Jia Yun she said, "I see you have good sense. No wonder your uncle is always telling me how sensibly you talk and what tact you have."

故意问道：“原来叔叔也曾提我的？”凤姐见问，才要告诉他与他事情管的那话，便忙又止住。心下想道：“我如今要告诉他那话，倒叫他看着我见不得东西似的，为得了这点子香，就混许他管事了。今儿先别提起这事。”想毕，便把派他监种花木工程的事都隐瞒的一字不提，随口说了两句闲话，便往贾母那里去了。贾芸也不好提的，只得回来。

因昨日见了宝玉，叫他到外书房等着，贾芸吃了饭便又进来，到贾母那边仪门外绮霁斋书房里来。只见焙茗、锄药两个小厮下象棋，为夺“车”正拌嘴；还有引泉、扫花、挑云、伴鹤四五个，又在房檐上掏小雀儿顽。贾芸进入院内，把脚一跺，说道：“猴头们淘气，我来了。”众小厮看见贾芸进来，都才散了。贾芸进入房内，便坐在椅子上问：“宝二爷没下来？”焙茗道：“今儿总没下来。二爷说什么，我替你哨探哨探去。”说着，便出去了。

这里贾芸便看字画古玩，有一顿饭工夫还不见来，再看看别的小厮，都玩去了。正是烦闷，只听门前娇声嫩语的叫了一声“哥哥”。贾芸往外瞧时，却是一个十六七岁的丫头，生的倒也细巧干净。那丫头见了贾芸，便抽身躲了过去。恰值焙茗走来，见那丫头在门前，便说道：“好，好，正抓不着个信儿。”贾芸见了焙茗，也就赶了出来，问怎么样。焙茗道：“等了这一日，也没个人儿过来，这就是宝二爷房里的。好姑娘，你进去带个信儿，就说廊下的二爷来了。”





Jia Yun, hearing this, felt he was getting somewhere. He stepped closer. "Has uncle been talking to you about me then?" he asked significantly.

Xifeng was tempted to tell him about the job of supervising tree-planting which they had in mind for him, but was afraid he might take it the wrong way and imagine she was offering it in return for a few aromatics. So she refrained, saying not a word about it. And after a few casual remarks she went on to see the Lady Dowager. Jia Yun had to go home without having broached the subject.

As Baoyu had invited him the previous day to call on him in his study, after lunch he went back and made his way to Luminous Clouds Studio outside the ceremonial gate leading to the Lady Dowager's apartments. He found Beiming having a game of chess with Chuyao and squabbling over a move. Four other pages, Yingchuan, Saohua, Tiaoyun and Banhe, were up on the roof robbing a bird's nest. As Jia Yun entered the courtyard he stamped his foot.

"Up to your monkey-tricks again! Can't you see a visitor's come?"

Hearing this, all the pages scampered off. Jia Yun went into the study and took a seat.

"Has Master Bao been here today?" he asked.

"No, he hasn't. If you want to talk to him, I'll scout round and find out his whereabouts for you." Beiming went out.

For the time it takes for a meal Jia Yun inspected the calligraphy, paintings and curios. Then, as Beiming had not returned, he looked round for the other pages; but they had all gone off to amuse themselves. He was feeling put out and bored when a sweet voice just outside the door called:

"Brother!"

Looking out he discovered a maid of sixteen or seventeen, a slender, neat, clever-looking girl. She was shrinking back at sight of Jia Yun when Beiming returned.

"Good," he said. "I was looking for a messenger."

Jia Yun walked out to question the page, who told him:

"I waited for a long time, but nobody came out. This is one of the girls from Happy Red Court." He turned to her. "Be a good girl and tell him,



那丫头听说，方知是本家的爷们，便不似先前那等回避，下死眼把贾芸钉了两眼。听那贾芸说：“什么是廊上廊下的，你只说是芸儿就是了。”半晌，那丫头冷笑了一笑：“依我说，二爷竟请回去，有什么话明儿再来。今儿晚上得空儿我回他。”焙茗道：“这是怎么说？”那丫头道：“他今儿也没睡中觉，自然吃的晚饭早，晚上他又不下来。难道只是耍的二爷在这里等着挨饿不成！不如家去，明儿来是正经。就便回来有人带信，那都是不中用。他不过口里应着，他倒给带信呢！”贾芸听这丫头说话简便俏丽，待要问他的名字，因是宝玉房里的，又不便问，只得说道：“这话倒是，我明儿再来。”说着，便往外走。焙茗道：“我倒茶去，二爷吃了茶再去。”贾芸一面走，一面回头说：“不吃茶，我还有事呢。”口里说话，眼睛瞧那丫头还站在那里呢。

那贾芸一径回家。至次日来至大门前，可巧遇见凤姐往那边去请安，才上了车。见贾芸来，便命人唤住，隔窗子笑道：“芸儿，你竟有胆子在我的跟前弄鬼。怪道你送东西给我，原来你有事求我。昨儿你叔叔才告诉我，说你求他。”贾芸笑道：“求叔叔这事，婶婶休提，我昨儿正后悔呢。早知这样，我竟一起头求婶婶，这会子也早完了。谁承望叔叔竟不能的。”凤姐笑道：“怪道你那里没成儿，昨儿又来寻





will you, that the Second Master from the back lane has called.”

On learning that Jia Yun belonged to her masters' clan, the maid did not avoid him as she had before but shot him one or two penetrating glances.

“Never mind about the back lane,” he joked. “Just tell him Yun has come.”

The girl gave a faint smile.

“If you please, sir, I think you'd better go home and come back tomorrow, I'll tell him this evening if I have a chance.”

“What do you mean?” asked Beiming.

“He missed his nap this afternoon, so he's sure to dine early and won't be coming here this evening. Are you going to make this gentleman wait and go hungry? He'd much better go home now and come back tomorrow. Because even if someone promised to take a message, he mightn't deliver it.”

The girl spoke so concisely and prettily that Jia Yun wanted to ask her name. But as she worked for Baoyu he thought better of it, simply remarking:

“Right you are. I'll come tomorrow.”

Beiming urged him to have a cup of tea before leaving.

“No thanks,” said Jia Yun. “I have some other business.” Walking off as he spoke, he looked back at the girl still standing there, and then made his way home.

The next day Jia Yun went back. In front of the main gate he ran into Xifeng on her way to the other house to pay her respects. She had just got into her carriage, but at sight of Jia Yun she ordered a servant to stop him and called to him with a smile through the carriage window:

“You've got a nerve, Yun, playing that trick on me! I see now why you gave me that present. You had a favour to ask. Yesterday your uncle told me you'd already approached him.”

“Please don't bring that up, aunt,” he pleaded, smiling. “I'm sorry I ever asked him. If I'd know how things stood I'd have come to you in the first place, and it would all have been settled long ago. I didn't know it was no use appealing to uncle.”

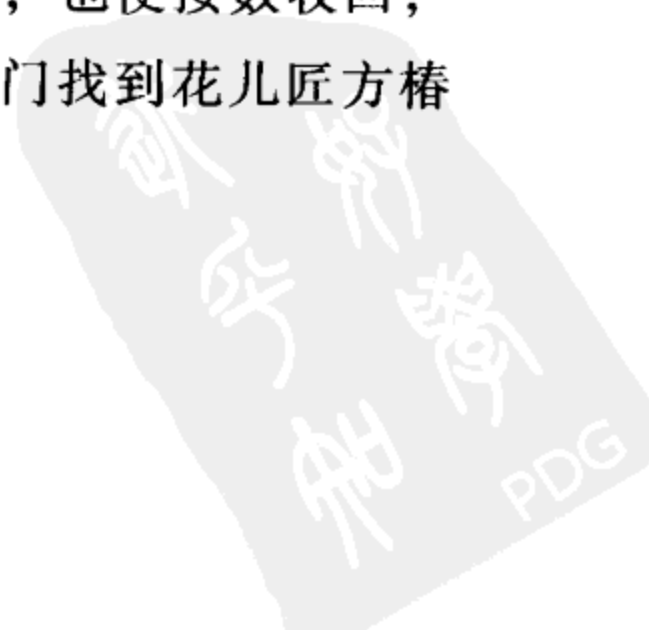
Xifeng laughed.



我。”贾芸道：“婶婶辜负了我的孝心，我并没有这个意思。若有这意思，昨儿还不求婶婶。如今婶婶既知道了，我倒要把叔叔丢下，少不得求婶婶好歹疼我一点儿。”

凤姐冷笑道：“你们要拣远路儿走，叫我也难说。早告诉我一声儿，什么不成了。多大点子事，耽误到这会子。那园子里还要种花，我只想不出一个人来，你早来不早完了。”贾芸笑道：“既这样，婶婶明儿就派我罢。”凤姐半晌道：“这个我看着不大好。等明年正月里烟火灯烛那个大宗儿下来，再派你罢。”贾芸道：“好婶婶，先把这个派了我罢。果然这个办的好，再派我那个。”凤姐笑道：“你倒会拉长线儿。罢了，若不是你叔叔说，我不管你的事。我也不过吃了饭就过来，你到午错的时候来领银子，后儿就进去种树。”说毕，令人驾起香车，一径去了。

贾芸喜不自禁，来至绮霁斋打听宝玉，谁知宝玉一早便往北静王府里去了。贾芸便呆呆的坐到晌午，打听凤姐回来，便写个领票来领对牌。至院外，命人通报了，彩明走了出来，单要了领票进去，批了银数年月，一并连对牌交与贾芸。贾芸接了，看那批上银数批了二百两，心中喜不自禁。翻身走到银库上，交与收牌票的，领了银子。回家告诉母亲，自是母子俱各欢喜。次日一个五鼓，贾芸先找了倪二，将前银按数还他。那倪二见贾芸有了银子，也便按数收回，不在话下。这里贾芸又拿了五十两，出西门找到花儿匠方椿家里去买树，不在话下。





“No wonder! So it was after failing with him that you came to me yesterday.”

“That’s not fair, aunt. I had no such idea in my mind. If I had, wouldn’t I have appealed to you yesterday? But since you know about it now, I’ll bypass uncle and beg you, aunt, to show me some kindness.”

“What a roundabout way of doing things!” She smiled sarcastically. “You make it hard for me. If you’d told me earlier, this little business wouldn’t have taken so long. Some trees and flowers are to be planted in the Garden, and I was looking for someone to put in charge. If you’d spoken before, it could have been fixed up some time ago.”

“Well, you can put me in charge, aunt.”

Xifeng thought for a moment.

“I think better not. Suppose we wait until next New Year and give you the bigger job of buying fireworks and lanterns?”

“Let me have this job first, dear aunt. If I do all right in this, you can give me the other later.”

“You do look ahead, don’t you?” She chuckled. “All right. But I wouldn’t have bothered if your uncle hadn’t put in a word for you. I shall be back after breakfast, so come about noon for the money and you can start your planting the day after tomorrow.”

She ordered the servants to start the carriage and left.

Overjoyed, Jia Yun went to Luminous Clouds Studio and asked for Baoyu, only to find he had gone out early that morning to call on the Prince of Beijing. He sat quietly there till noon when he heard that Xifeng was back, and then wrote a receipt and went to get the tally. He waited outside the courtyard while a servant announced him. Then Caiming came out and took his receipt. When the amount to be drawn and the date had been filled in, the page returned it to him with the tally. He saw to his delight that the sum entered was two hundred taels and went straight to the treasury to get the silver, then home to inform his mother, who rejoiced with him.

At the fifth watch the next morning, he sought out Ni Er to return his loan, and seeing that he was in funds Ni Er took the money.

Then Jia Yun took fifty taels to the house of Fang Chun, a gardener who lived outside the West Gate, from whom he bought trees.



如今且说宝玉，自那日见了贾芸，曾说明日着他进来说话儿。如此说了之后，他原是富贵公子的口角，那里还把这个放在心上，因而便忘怀了。这日晚上，从北静王府里回来，见过贾母、王夫人等，回至园内，换了衣服，正要洗澡。袭人因被薛宝钗烦了去打结子；秋纹、碧痕两个去催水；檀云又因他母亲的生日接了回去；麝月又现在家中养病；虽还有几个作粗活听唤的丫头，估量着叫不着他们，都出去寻伙觅伴的玩去了。不想这一刻的工夫，只剩了宝玉在房内。偏生的宝玉要吃茶，一连叫了两三声，方见两三个老嬷嬷走进来。宝玉见了他们，连忙摇手儿说：“罢，罢，不用你们了。”老婆子们只得退出。

宝玉见没丫头们，只得自己下来，拿了碗向茶壶去倒茶。只听背后说道：“二爷仔细烫了手，让我们来倒。”一面说，一面走上来，早接了碗过去。宝玉倒吓了一跳，问：“你在那里的？忽然来了，吓我一跳。”那丫头一面递茶，一面回说：“我在后院子里，才从里间的后门进来，难道二爷就没听见脚步响？”宝玉一面吃茶，一面仔细打量那丫头：穿着几件半新不旧的衣裳，倒是一头黑鬢鬢的好头发，挽着个鬢，容长脸面，细巧身材，却十分俏丽干净。

宝玉看了，便笑问道：“你也是我这屋里的人么？”那丫头道：“是的。”宝玉道：“既是这屋里的，我怎么不认得？”那丫头听说，便冷笑了一声道：“认不得的也多，岂只我一个。从来我又不递茶递水，拿东拿西，眼见的事一点儿不作，那里认得呢。”宝玉道：“你为什么不作那眼见的事？”那丫头道：“这话我也难说。只是有一句话回二爷：昨儿有个





To revert now to Baoyu. His invitation to Jia Yun that day had been no more than a rich lordling's way of talking, and not being seriously meant was soon forgotten. Upon his return from the palace of the Prince of Beijing in the evening, he paid his respects to his grandmother and mother before going back to the Garden, where he took off his formal clothes and waited for his bath.

It so happened that Xiren had been asked over by Baochai to help braid some knot-buttons; Qiuwen and Bihen had gone to hurry the servants bringing water; Tanyun had asked leave for her mother's birthday; and Sheyue was ill at home. The other maids who did the rougher work, not expecting to be summoned, had gone off in search of their friends. Thus for a short while Baoyu was all alone. And precisely at this moment he wanted some tea. He called several times before two or three old nannies came in. These he hastily waved away saying:

"It's all right. I don't need you."

Then the old women had to withdraw.

As none of the girls were about, Baoyu fetched a bowl himself and went to get the teapot.

"Don't scald yourself, Master Bao. Let me do that," called a voice from behind. A girl stepped forward and took the bowl from him.

Baoyu started.

"Where did *you* spring from?" he asked. "What a fright you gave me!"

Handing him the tea she answered: "I was in the back yard. Didn't you hear me come in by the back door, Master Bao?"

Baoyu sized her up as he sipped his tea. Her clothes were by no means new, but with her fine black hair gathered in a knot, her oval face and her trim, slender figure, she looked altogether a most sweet, pretty girl.

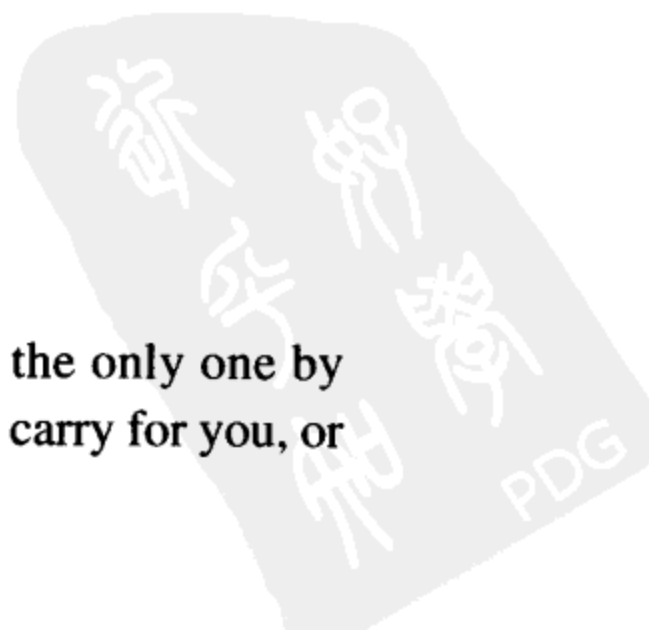
"Do you work here?" he asked with a smile.

"Yes," she answered.

"How is it, in that case, I've never seen you?"

The maid laughed mockingly.

"There are plenty of us you haven't seen. I'm not the only one by any means. How could you know me? I don't fetch and carry for you, or



什么芸儿来找二爷。我想二爷不得空儿，便叫焙茗回他，叫他今日早起来，不想二爷又往北府里去了。”

刚说到这句话，只见秋纹、碧痕嘻嘻哈哈的说笑着进来，两个人共提着一桶水，一手撩着衣裳，趑趄趑趄，泼泼撒撒的。那丫头便忙迎去接。秋纹、碧痕正对抱怨，“你湿了我的裙子”，那个又说“你踹了我的鞋”。忽见走出一个人来接水，二人看时，不是别人，原来是小红。二人便都诧异，将水放下，忙进房来东瞧西望，并没个别人，只有宝玉，便心中大不自在。只得预备下洗澡之物，待宝玉脱了衣裳，二人便带上门出来。走到那边房内便找小红，问他方才在屋里说什么。小红道：“我何曾在屋里的？只因我的手帕子不见了，往后头找手帕子去。不想二爷要茶吃，叫姐姐们一个没有，是我进去了，才倒了茶，姐姐们便来了。”

秋纹听了，兜脸啐了一口，骂道：“没脸的下流东西！正经叫你催水去，你说有事故，倒叫我们去，你可等着做这个巧宗儿。一里一里的，这不上来了。难道我们倒跟不上你了？你也拿镜子照照，配递茶递水不配！”碧痕道：“明儿我说给他们，凡要茶要水，送东送西的事，咱们都别动，只叫他去便是了。”秋纹道：“这么说，还不如我们散了，单让他在这屋里呢。”二人你一句，我一句，正闹着，只见有个老嬷嬷进来传凤姐的话说：“明日有人带花儿匠进来种树，叫你们严禁些，衣服裙子别混晒混晾的。那土山上一溜都拦着帏幔呢，可别混跑。”秋纹便问：“明儿不知是谁带进匠人来监工？”那婆子道：“说什么后廊下的芸哥儿。”秋纹、碧痕听



wait on you personally.”

“Why not?”

“That’s asking! But I’ve something to report, sir. Yesterday a young gentleman called Yun came to see you. I told Beiming to send him away as I thought you were busy, and asked him to come back this morning. But by then you’d already gone to call on the prince.”

Just at this moment Qiuwen and Bihen staggered back, laughing and chatting, holding up their skirts, a bucket between them from which the water was splashing. This maid hurried to relieve them of their load.

“You’ve wet my skirt,” Qiuwen complained to Bihen.

“You trod on my shoe!” Bihen retorted.

Looking at this girl who had appeared so abruptly, they saw it was Xiaohong. Both put down the bucket in surprise and hurried in. They were very put out to find Baoyu on his own. As soon as they had prepared his bath and helped him undress, they closed the door behind them and went round again to the back to find Xiaohong.

“What were you doing in there just now?” they demanded.

“I hadn’t been in,” she said. “I couldn’t find my handkerchief, so I was looking for it at the back when Master Bao called for tea. As none of you sisters was about, I went in to pour it for him. And that’s when you turned up.”

Qiuwen spat in her face.

“Shameless slut! I told you to go and hurry them with the water, but you said you were busy and made us go instead. Then you seized this chance to wait on him here yourself. You’re making your way up, aren’t you? Think we can’t keep up with you, eh? Have a look at yourself in a mirror. Are you fit to serve Master Pao tea?”

Bihen chimed in: “Tomorrow we’ll tell the others that if he wants tea or water or anything, we needn’t stir — she’ll do it.”

“The rest of us may just as well clear off, leaving her on her own here.”

They were laying into Xiaohong in turn when an old nanny arrived with a message from Xifeng.

“Someone’s bringing gardeners tomorrow to plant trees, so you must watch out. Don’t go sunning your clothes and skirts all over the place.



了都不知道，只管混问别的话。那小红听见了，心内却明白，就知是昨儿外书房所见那人了。

原来这小红本姓林，小名红玉，只因“玉”字犯了林黛玉、宝玉，便都把这个字隐起来，便叫他“小红”。原是荣国府中世代的旧仆，他父母现在收管各处房田事务。这红玉年方十六岁，因分入在大观园的时节，把他便分在怡红院中，倒也清幽雅静。不想后来命人进来居住，偏生这一所儿又被宝玉占了。这红玉虽然是个不谙事理的丫头，却因他原有三分容貌，心内着实妄想痴心的向上攀高，每每的要在宝玉面前显弄显弄。只是宝玉身边一千人，都是灵牙利爪的，那里还能下的手去。不想今儿才有些消息，又遭秋纹等一场恶意，心内早灰了一半。正闷闷的，忽然听见老嬷嬷说起贾芸来，不觉心中一动，便闷闷的回至房中，睡在床上暗暗盘算，翻来掉去，正没个抓寻。忽听窗外低低的叫道：“红玉，你的手帕子我拾在这里呢。”红玉听了忙走出来看，不是别人，正是贾芸。红玉不觉的粉面含羞，问道：“二爷在那里拾着的？”贾芸笑道：“你过来，我告诉你。”一面说，一面就上来拉他。那红玉急回身一跑，却被门槛绊倒，吓醒方知是梦。要知端的，下回分解。





All the artificial hills will be screened off. You're not to go running wild."

"Who'll be in charge of the workmen?" asked Qiuwen.

"Some Master Yun from the back lane," was the answer.

The name meant nothing to Qiuwen and Bihen, who put some other questions; but Xiaohong knew it must be the man she had met the day before in the study outside.

Now Xiaohong's family name was Lin and her childhood name was Hongyu (Red Jade); but because "yu" (jade) came in the names Daiyu and Baoyu she was called Xiaohong instead. Her family had served the Jias for generations, and her father was now in charge of various farms and properties outside. Xiaohong was sixteen this year. When first sent into Grand View Garden she had been assigned to Happy Red Court, which was pleasantly quiet at the time. But after the girls and Baoyu were commanded to move there to live and these rooms were taken by him, simple as Xiaohong was, with her good looks she was foolishly eager to climb up in the world. She had long been looking for a chance to attract Baoyu's attention, but his other attendants were too smart to allow her to put herself forward. Today her opportunity had come, but her hopes had been dashed by the spitefulness of Qiuwen and Bihen. She was feeling most disgruntled when the old nanny mentioned that Jia Yun would be coming, and that put a new idea into her head. She went dejectedly back to her room and lay down to think it over. As she tossed and turned someone called softly through the window:

"Xiaohong! I've found your handkerchief for you."

She ran out to look. It was no other than Jia Yun. With a blush of confusion she asked:

"Where did you find it, sir?"

Jia Yun laughed.

"Come here and I'll tell you."

He grabbed for her. She turned frantically and fled, but stumbled over the threshold and woke with a start. So it was only a dream!

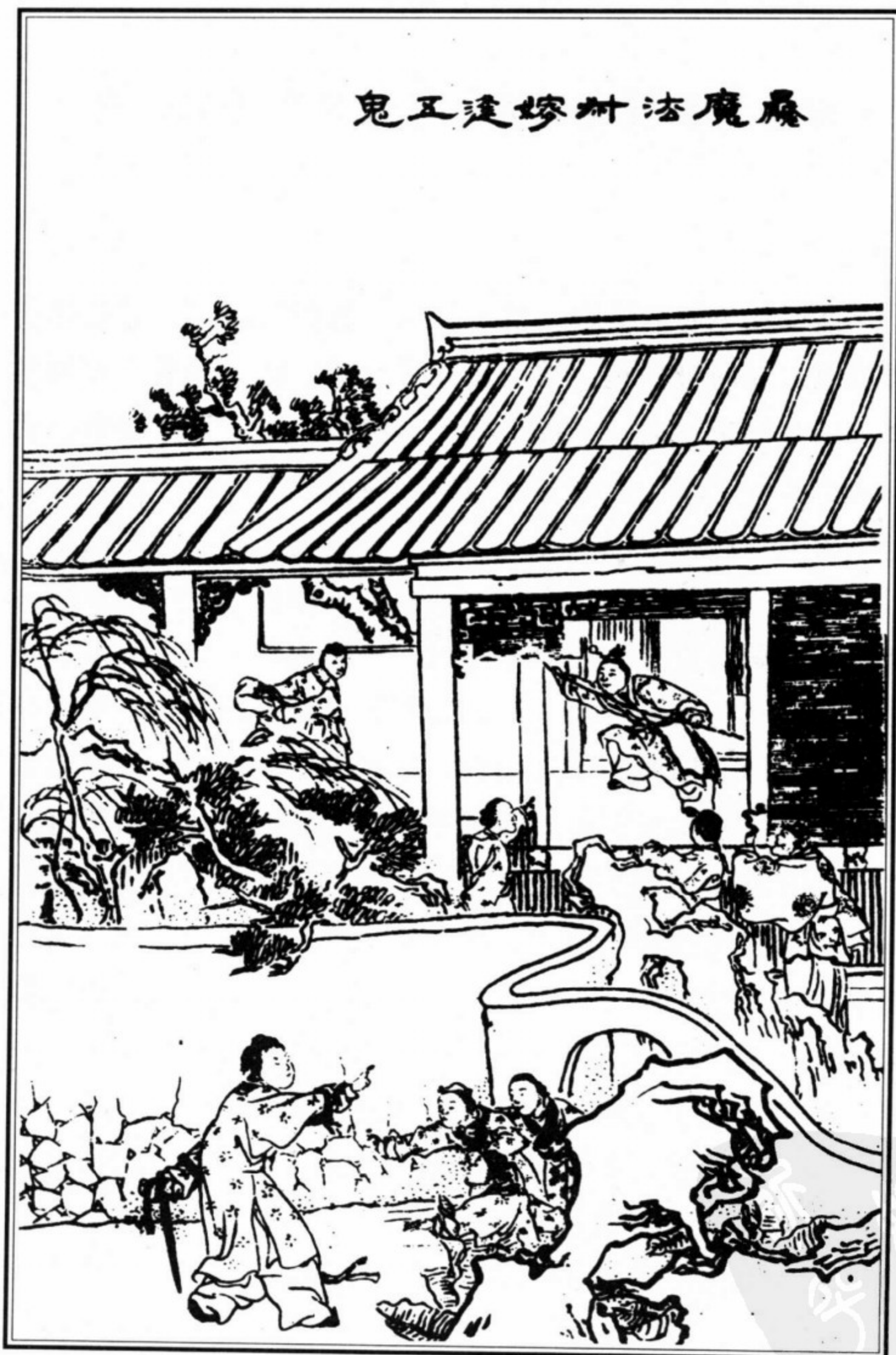
If you want to know the upshot, read the next chapter.

红楼梦  
PDG





鬼王逢姦州法魔庵

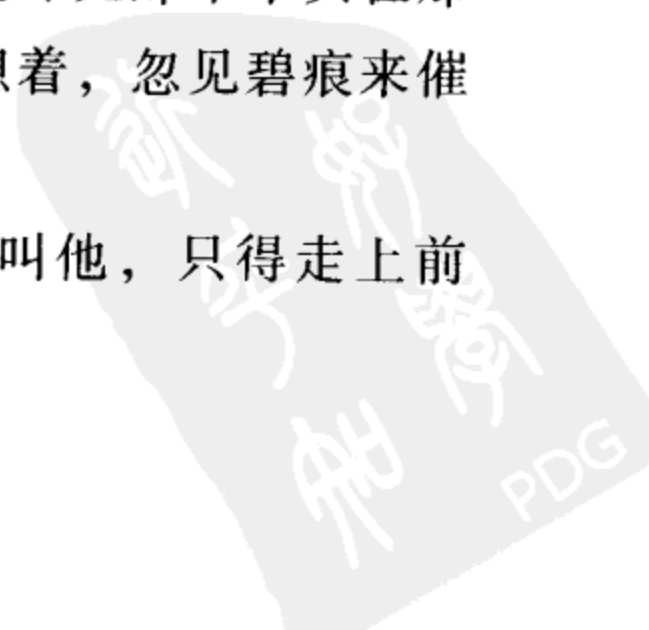


## 第二十五回

魇魔法叔嫂逢五鬼 红楼梦通灵遇双真

话说红玉心神恍惚，情思缠绵，忽朦胧睡去，遇见贾芸要拉他，却回身一跑，被门槛绊了一跤；唬醒过来，方知是梦。因此翻来复去，一夜无眠。至次日天明，方才起来，就有几个丫头子来，会他去打扫房子地面，提洗脸水。这红玉也不梳洗，向镜中胡乱挽了一挽头发，洗了洗手，腰内束了一条汗巾子，便来打扫房屋。谁知宝玉昨日见了红玉，也就留了心。若要直点名唤他来使用，一则怕袭人等寒心；二则又不知红玉是何等行为，若好还罢了，若不好起来，那时倒不好退送的。因此心下闷闷的，早起来也不梳洗，只坐着出神。一时下了窗子，隔着纱屉子，向外看的真切，只见好几个丫头在那里扫地，都擦胭抹粉，簪花插柳的，独不见昨日那一个。宝玉便鞞了鞋，晃出了房门，只装着看花儿，这里瞧瞧，那里望望。一抬头，只见西南角上游廊底下栏杆上似有一个人倚在那里，却恨面前有一株海棠花遮着，看不真切。只得又转了一步，仔细一看，可不是昨儿那个丫头在那里出神。待要迎上去，又不好去的。正想着，忽见碧痕来催他洗脸，只得进去了。不在话下。

却说红玉正自出神，忽见袭人招手叫他，只得走上前







## Chapter 25

### Five Devils Invoked by Sorcery Take Possession of Baoyu and Xifeng Two Sages See the Jade of Spiritual Understanding in the Dream of Red Mansions

Xiaohong fell into a doze, her thoughts running on love. When Jia Yun tried to seize her she turned and fled, but stumbling over the threshold woke with a start to the realization that it was only a dream. She tossed and turned sleeplessly until day dawned, when some other maids called her to help them sweep and fetch water. Without washing her face or putting on any make-up, she casually smoothed her hair in front of the mirror and hastily rinsed her hands, after which she tied a sash round her waist and set about her work.

Now Baoyu had been so struck by Xiaohong the previous day that he would have liked to have her wait on him, but he feared this might upset Xiren and the others; besides, there was no saying how the girl would turn out. If she proved satisfactory, well and good; if not, sending her away again would be awkward. So he got up moodily and sat there brooding, not even troubling to comb his hair or wash.

Presently the shutters were taken down and through the gauze window he had a clear view of the maids sweeping the courtyard. All of them were powdered and rouged, with flowers or willow shoots in their hair, but he saw no sign of Xiaohong. He slipped on his shoes and strolled out, ostensibly to look at the flowers, gazing this way and that until he glimpsed, half-hidden by a crab-apple tree, a figure leaning over the balustrade in the southwest corner of the covered walk. He strolled round the tree and looked more closely. Yes, it was the girl of the day before, apparently lost in thought. He was wondering whether to accost her when Bihen fetched him in again to wash. He had no choice but to go back.

And now Xiaohong was aroused from her abstraction by the sight of Xiren beckoning. She went to see what was wanted.

“Our watering-can’s broken and hasn’t been mended yet,” said Xiren.

来。袭人笑道：“我们这里的喷壶还没有收拾了来呢，你到林姑娘那里去，把他们的借来使使。”红玉答应了，便走出来往潇湘馆去。正走上翠烟桥，抬头一望，只见山坡上高处都是拦着帏幔，方想起今儿有匠人在里头种树。因转身一望，只见那边远远一簇人在那里掘土，贾芸正坐在那山子石上。红玉待要过去，又不敢过去，只得闷闷的向潇湘馆取了喷壶回来，无精打彩自回房内倒着。众人只说他一时身上不爽快，都不理论。

展眼过了一日，原来次日就是王子腾夫人的寿诞，那里原打发人来请贾母、王夫人的，王夫人见贾母不自在，也便不去了。倒是薛姨妈同凤姐儿并贾家三个姊妹、宝钗、宝玉一齐都去了，至晚方回。

可巧王夫人见贾环下了学，便命他来抄个《金刚咒》唸诵。那贾环正在王夫人炕上坐着，命人点上灯，拿腔作势的抄写。一时又叫彩云倒杯茶来，一时又叫玉钏儿来剪剪蜡花，一时又说金钏儿挡了灯影。众丫鬟们素日厌恶他，都不答理。只有彩霞还和他合的来，倒了一杯茶递与他。因见王夫人和人说话，他便悄悄的向贾环说道：“你安些分罢，何苦讨这个厌那个厌的。”贾环道：“我也知道了，你别哄我。如今你和宝玉好，把我不答理，我也看出来了。”彩霞咬着嘴唇，向贾环头上戳了一指头，说道：“没良心的！狗咬吕洞宾，不识好人心。”

两人正说着，只见凤姐来了，拜见过王夫人。王夫人便一长一短的问他，今儿是那几位堂客，戏文好歹，酒席如何



“I want you to go and borrow one of Miss Lin’s.”

The girl set off on this errand to Bamboo Lodge. As she crossed Green Mist Bridge the sight of the artificial hills screened off reminded her that this was the day for tree-planting. Some distance away a band of men could be seen digging under the supervision of Jia Yun, seated on a nearby boulder. Not having the courage to approach him, she proceeded quietly to Bamboo Lodge, borrowed a watering-can and took it back, then lay down in her room in low spirits. The others, assuming that she was feeling unwell, paid no attention. And the day dragged by, uneventful.

The day after that was the birthday of Wang Ziteng’s wife, and the Lady Dowager and Lady Wang had been invited to the celebrations. Since her mother-in-law did not go, neither did Lady Wang; but Aunt Xue, Xifeng, the three Jia girls, Baochai and Baoyu went along, not returning till the evening.

It so happened that when Jia Huan came back from school Lady Wang had told him to copy out for her some incantations invoking the Buddhist guardian deities, the dvarapalas. The boy took a seat on the *kang* in her room, ordered candles to be lighted, and set about writing with a great show of importance. Now he called Caiyun to pour him tea, now told Yuchuan to trim the wicks of his candles, now complained that Jinchuan was standing in his light. As all the maids disliked him they took no notice — all except Caixia who still kept in with him. She poured him some tea and, noticing that Lady Wang was chatting with some other people, she whispered:

“Be quiet. Don’t be such a nuisance. Yon’re only making yourself unpopular.”

“Don’t try to fool me,” he retorted. “I can see what’s happening. Now you’re friendly with Baoyu, you mean to ignore me.”

Caixia bit her lips and with one finger rapped him on the forehead.

“You ungrateful thing! Like the dog that bit Lü Dongbin — you bite the hand that feeds you.”

Just then Xifeng came in to pay her respects, and Lady Wang wanted a detailed account of the party — the other guests, the operas and the feast. Before long Baoyu, too, arrived. Having greeted his mother and



等语。说了不多几句话，宝玉也来了，进门见了王夫人，不过规规矩矩说了几句，便命人除去抹额，脱了袍服，拉了靴子，便一头滚在王夫人怀里。王夫人便用手满身满脸去摩挲抚弄他，宝玉也搬着王夫人的脖子说长说短的。王夫人道：“我的儿，你又吃多了酒，脸上滚热。你还只是揉搓，一会闹上酒来。还不在那里静静的倒一会子呢。”说着，便叫人拿个枕头来。宝玉听说下来，在王夫人身后倒下，又叫彩霞来替他拍着。宝玉便和彩霞说笑，只见彩霞淡淡的，不大答理，两眼睛只向贾环处看。宝玉便拉他的手笑道：“好姐姐，你也理我理儿呢。”一面说，一面拉他的手，彩霞夺手不肯，便说：“再闹，我就嚷了。”

二人正闹着，原来贾环听的见，素日原恨宝玉，如今又见他和彩霞厮闹，心中越发按不下这口毒气。虽不敢明言，却每每暗中算计，只是不得下手，今见相离甚近，便要用热油烫瞎他眼睛。因而故意装作失手，把那一盏油汪汪的蜡灯向宝玉脸上只一推。只听宝玉“嗷哟”了一声，满屋里众人都吓了一跳。连忙将地下的戳灯挪过来，又将里外间屋里的灯拿了三四盏看时，只见宝玉满脸满头都是油。王夫人又急又气，一面命人来替宝玉擦洗，一面又骂贾环。凤姐三步两步的上炕去，替宝玉收拾着，一面笑道：“老三还这么慌脚鸡似的，我说你上不得高台盘。赵姨娘时常也该教导教导他。”一句话提醒了王夫人，那王夫人不骂贾环，便叫过赵姨娘来，骂道：“养出这样黑心不知道理下流种子来，也不管管！几番几次我都不理论，你们得了意了，越发上来了！”

那赵姨娘素日虽然常怀嫉妒之心，不忿凤姐宝玉两个，也不敢露出来；如今贾环又生了事，受这场恶气，不但吞声



made some polite conversation, he told the maids to help him off with his chaplet, gown and boots, then nestled up to his mother. As she stroked and caressed him he put his arms round her neck and chattered.

“You’ve had too much to drink again, my son,” scolded Lady Wang. “How hot your face is! If you go on tossing about like this, the wine may go up to your head. Why not lie down and rest a while.”

She called for a pillow and Baoyu, lying down behind her, asked Caixia to come and massage him. But when he joked with her she cold-shouldered him and kept her eyes on Jia Huan. Baoyu took her hand.

“Do be nice to me, sister!” he begged.

Caixia snatched her hand away.

“If you do that again, I’ll shout,” she warned him.

This was overheard by Jia Huan, who had always hated Baoyu. At the sight of him teasing Caixia, he felt ready to explode with jealousy. He dared not protest outright, but he had mulled over a plan and now that they were so close he saw his chance to put it into action. He would blind Baoyu with burning candle-wax! Deliberately knocking over the candlestick, he splashed the hot melted wax on his half-brother’s face. Baoyu’s cry of pain made everyone jump for fright. They hastily brought over the standard lamp as well as several lamps from other rooms, and saw with consternation that Baoyu’s face was covered with wax. Frantic and furious, Lady Wang ordered the servants to wipe it off, and then rounded on Jia Huan.

“What a dunderhead!” scolded Xifeng with a smile on her face, as she scrambled on to the *kang* to attend to Baoyu. “Huan’s not fit to mix in decent company. His mother really ought to bring him up better.”

This remark was the cue for Lady Wang to stop abusing Jia Huan and to send for the concubine Zhao.

“Why don’t you teach that spiteful brat of yours to behave himself?” she fumed. “Time and again I’ve overlooked this sort of thing, but it only makes you worse. Conceited creature!”

Although the concubine was eaten up by jealousy of Xifeng and Baoyu, she dared not show it either. Now that Jia Huan had made such trouble, she had no alternative but to accept these taunts meekly and show concern for Baoyu. His left cheek was badly blistered, but luckily no damage



承受，而且还要走去替宝玉收拾。只见宝玉左边脸上烫了一溜燎泡出来，幸而眼睛竟没动。王夫人看了，又是心疼，又怕贾母明日问，怎样回答，急的又把赵姨娘数落一顿。然后又安慰了宝玉一回，又命取败毒消肿药来敷上。宝玉道：“有些疼，还不妨事。明日老太太问，就说是我自己烫的罢了。”凤姐笑道：“便说是自己烫的，也要骂人为什么不小心看着，叫你烫了！横竖有一场气生的，到明日凭你怎么说去罢。”王夫人命人好生送去。宝玉回房去后，袭人等见了，都慌的了不得。

林黛玉见宝玉出了一天门，就觉闷闷的，没个可说话的人。至晚打发人来问了两三遍回来不曾，这遍方才回来，又偏生烫了。林黛玉便赶着来瞧，只见宝玉正拿镜子照呢，左边脸上满满的敷了一脸的药。林黛玉只当烫的十分利害，忙上来问怎么烫了，要瞧瞧。宝玉见他来了，忙把脸遮着，摇手叫他出去，不肯叫他看。——知道他的癖性喜洁，见不得这些东西。林黛玉自己也知道自己也在这件癖性，知道宝玉的心内怕他嫌脏，因笑道：“我瞧瞧烫了那里了，有什么遮着藏着的。”一面说，一面就凑上来，强搬着脖子瞧了一瞧。问他疼的怎么样，宝玉道：“也不很疼，养一两日就好了。”林黛玉坐了一回，闷闷的回房去了。一宿无话。次日，宝玉见了贾母，虽然自己承认是自己烫的，不与别人相干，免不得那贾母又把跟从的人骂一顿。

过了一日，就有宝玉寄名的干娘马道婆进荣国府来请安。见了宝玉，吓了一跳。问其缘由，说是烫的，便点头叹惜一回，向宝玉脸上用指头画了一画，口内嘟嘟囔囔的又持诵了一回，说道：“包管就好了，这不过是一时飞灾。”又



had been done to his eyes. Lady Wang's heart ached for him even as she wondered how she was to answer for this to her mother-in-law tomorrow. She vented her anger again on the concubine, then went on soothing Baoyu and dabbing his cheeks with a disinfectant ointment.

"It stings a bit but it's nothing serious," Baoyu assured her. "Tomorrow if grandmother asks, I'll say I scalded myself."

"She'll scold us all the same for our negligence," retorted Xifeng smiling. "There'll be a row anyway, no matter what you say."

Lady Wang then had Baoyu escorted back to his rooms, where Xiren and the others were horrified by his appearance.

Daiyu had been lonely all day in Baoyu's absence, and sent several times that evening to ask whether he was back. When she learned of his accident she hurried over to find him in front of the mirror, his left cheek daubed with ointment. Imagining that the burn was serious, she approached to have a look; but Baoyu, knowing how fastidious she was, covered his cheek with one hand and waved her away. Daiyu knew her own weakness; she also knew that Baoyu was afraid of disgusting her.

"I just wanted to see where the burn is," she said gently. "Why do you have to hide it?"

She then came closer and turned his head to have a look.

"Does it hurt much?" she asked.

"Not really. I'll be all right in a couple of days."

After keeping him company for a while she left, feeling rather depressed.

The next day when Baoyu saw the Lady Dowager, although he took the blame for the burn on himself, sure enough she reprimanded all his attendants.

Another day went by and they had a visit from Priestess Ma, Baoyu's Buddhist godmother. The sight of him gave her a shock and she asked with concern what had happened. Learning that he had been scalded she nodded and sighed, then passed her fingers over his face with some muttered incantations.

"He'll be all right now," she declared. "This was just a chance misfortune. You don't know, Old Ancestress, all the solemn warnings there are in the Buddhist sutras about the sons born into noble families, who are



向贾母道：“祖宗老菩萨那里知道，那经典佛法上说的利害，大凡那王公卿相人家的子弟，只一生长下来，暗里便有许多促狭鬼跟着他，得空便拧他一下，或掐他一下，或吃饭时打下他的饭碗来，或走着推他一跤，所以往往的那些大家子孙多有长不大的。”贾母听如此说，便赶着问：“这有个什么佛法解释没有呢？”马道婆道：“这个容易，只是替他多作些因果善事也就罢了。再那经上还说，西方有位大光明普照菩萨，专管照耀阴暗邪祟，若有善男子、善女子虔心供奉者，可以永佑儿孙康宁安静，再无惊恐邪祟撞客之灾。”贾母道：“倒不知怎么个供奉这位菩萨？”马道婆道：“也不值些什么，不过除香烛供养之处，一天多添几斤香油，点上个大海灯。这海灯，便是菩萨现身法像，昼夜不敢息的。”贾母道：“一天一夜也得多少油？明白告诉我，我也好作这件功德的。”马道婆听如此说，便笑道：“这也不拘，随施主菩萨们随心愿舍罢了。像在我家，就有好几处的王妃诰命供奉的：南安郡王府里的太妃，他许的愿心大，一天是四十八斤油，一斤灯草，那海灯也比缸略小些；锦田侯的诰命次一等，一天不过二十四斤油；再还有几家也有五斤的、三斤的、一斤的，都不拘数。那小家子穷人家舍不起这些，就是四两半斤，也少不得替他点。”贾母听了，点头思忖，马道婆又道：“还有一件，若是为父母尊亲长上的，多舍些不妨；若是像老祖宗如今为宝玉，若舍多了倒不好，还怕哥儿禁不起，倒折了福。也不当家花花的，要舍，大则七斤，小则五斤，也就是了。”贾母说：“既是这样说，你便一日五斤合准了，每月来打趸关了去。”马道婆念了一声“阿弥陀佛慈悲大菩萨”。贾母又命人来吩咐：“以后大凡宝玉出门的日子，拿几串钱交给他小子们带着，遇见僧道穷苦，好施舍。”





always dogged by evil spirits who pinch them, nip them, knock their rice-bowls out of their hands, or trip them up on the road. That's why so many sons of great houses die young."

"Is there no way to prevent it?" asked the Lady Dowager anxiously.

"Of course there is. Just do more good deeds on his behalf. The sutras tell us of a great Bodhisattva in the west whose glory illumines all around and whose special charge it is to bring to light the evil spirits in dark places. If faithful believers worship him devoutly, their descendants are assured of peace and health and no evil spirits can get possession of them."

"What offerings does this Bodhisattva require?"

"Nothing of any great value. Apart from incense and candles, a few catties of oil every day for the Big Lamp. For that lamp is a manifestation of the Bodhisattva. It has to be kept burning day and night."

"How much oil does it take to keep it burning for one whole day and night? If you tell me the exact amount, I should like to donate it."

"There's no fixed amount, it's up to the donor. Several of the royal consorts have presented offerings of this kind in our convent. The mother of the Prince of Nanan has made a generous donation, forty-eight catties of oil a day and another catty of lampwicks, so her lamp is almost as large as a water vat. The lady of the Marquis of Jintian comes next with twenty-four catties. Other families give anything from five to three or one — it doesn't matter. Some poor families who can't afford so much may just donate a quarter or half a catty, but we keep a lamp burning for them just the same."

The Lady Dowager nodded thoughtfully.

"Of course, more can be given for parents or elders," continued the priestess. "But if our Old Ancestress gives too much for Baoyu, it won't be good for the boy and may even spoil his luck. Five catties or seven at the most would be ample."

"Make it five catties a day then," said the Lady Dowager. "You can collect a month's donation at a time."

"May Amida Buddha the Merciful Great Bodhisattva preserve you!" cried the grateful priestess.

The old lady ordered the servants, "In future when Baoyu goes out

说毕，马道婆又坐了一回，便又往各院各房问安，闲逛了一回。一时来至赵姨娘房内，二人见过，赵姨娘命小丫头倒了茶来与他吃。马道婆因见炕上堆着些零碎绸缎湾角，赵姨娘正粘鞋呢。马道婆道：“可是我正没了鞋面子了。赵奶奶你有零碎缎子，不拘什么颜色的，弄一双鞋面给我。”赵姨娘听说，便叹口气说道：“你瞧瞧那里头，还有那一块是成样的？成了样的东西，也到不了我手里来！有的没的都在这里，你不嫌，就挑两块子去。”马道婆见说，果真便挑了两块袖将起来。

赵姨娘问道：“前日我送了五百钱去，在药王跟前上供，你可收了没有？”马道婆道：“早已替你上了供了。”赵姨娘叹口气道：“阿弥陀佛！我手里但凡从容些，也时常的上个供，只是心有余力量不足。”马道婆道：“你只管放心，将来熬的环哥儿大了，得个一官半职，那时你要做多大的功德也不难。”赵姨娘听说，鼻子里笑了一声，说道：“罢，罢，再别说起。如今就是个样儿，我们娘儿们跟的上这屋里那一个儿！也不是有了宝玉，竟是得了个活龙。他还是小孩子家，长的得人意儿，大人偏疼他些也还罢了；我只不伏这个主儿。”一面说，一面伸出两个指头儿来。马道婆会意，便问道：“可是琏二奶奶？”赵姨娘唬的忙摇手儿，走到门前，掀帘子向外看看无一个人，方进来向马道婆悄悄说道：“了不得，了不得！提起这个主儿，这一分家私要不都叫他搬送到娘家去，我也不是个人。”

马道婆见他如此说，便探他口气说道：“我还用你说，难道都看不出来。也亏你们心里也不理论，只凭他去。倒也妙。”赵姨娘道：“我的娘，不凭他去，难道谁还敢把他怎么



give his pages a few strings of cash to distribute as alms to bonzes, Taoists and the poor.”

The priestess sat with them there a little longer, then made the rounds of different apartments, coming presently to that of the concubine Zhao who, after exchanging greetings, ordered tea. It was clear from a heap of satin remnants on the *kang* that she had been making slippers.

“I could do with some silk for uppers myself,” remarked Ma. “Can you spare me a few odd pieces? I don’t mind what colour.”

“You won’t find anything good in that lot,” said the concubine with a sigh. “Good things don’t come *my* way. That’s all there is. But if you don’t think them too bad you’re welcome to choose a couple.”

The priestess picked out several pieces and tucked them in her sleeves.

“The other day,” the concubine went on, “I sent over five hundred cash. Did you sacrifice to the God of Medicine for me?”

“Yes, days ago.”

“Amida Buddha!” She sighed again. “If I’d only more in hand I’d be giving oftener. I just haven’t the means.”

“Don’t worry. Just hold out till Master Huan grows up and gets an official post. Then you can do all the good works you want.”

“Well, well, don’t talk about that!” The concubine snorted. “You can see how things are. My son and I are the least and lowest in this household. Of course Baoyu is the precious dragon of the house. Mind you, he’s still just a child with winning ways, so I’ve nothing to say if his elders dote on him. But I refuse to crawl to her.” She held up two fingers.

“You mean the second young mistress, Madam Lian?”

The concubine hastily signed to her to be quiet. Having raised the portière to make sure that no one was there, she came back and whispered:

“She’s a terror, a real terror! If she doesn’t end by shifting all the property here to her mother’s house, I’m not a human being!”

The priestess, hearing this, decided to sound her out further.

“You don’t have to tell me, it’s plain enough,” she said. “It’s kind of you to put up with it and let her have her own way. That’s fine.”

“What else can we do, for goodness’ sake? Who would have the nerve to say a word against her?”



样呢？”马道婆听说，鼻子里一笑，半晌说道：“不是我说句造孽的话，你们没有本事！——也难怪别人。明不敢怎样，暗里也就算计了，还等到这如今！”赵姨娘闻听这话里有道理，心内暗暗的欢喜，便说道：“怎么暗里算计？我倒有这个心，只是没这样的能干人。你若教给我这法子，我大大的谢你。”马道婆听说这话打拢了一处，便又故意说道：“阿弥陀佛！你快休问我，我那里知道这些事。罪过，罪过。”赵姨娘道：“你又来了。你是最肯济困扶危的人，难道就眼睁睁的看人家来摆布死了我们娘儿两个不成？难道还怕我不谢你？”马道婆听说如此，便笑道：“若说我不忍叫你娘儿们受人委曲还犹可，若说‘谢’的这个字，可是你错打算盘了。就便是我希图你谢，靠你有些什么东西能打动我？”赵姨娘听这话口气松动了，便说道：“你这么个明白人，怎么糊涂起来了。你若果然法子灵验，把他两人绝了，明日这家私不怕不是我环儿的。那时你要什么不得？”马道婆听了，低了头，半晌说道：“那时候事情妥当了，又无凭据，你还理我呢！”赵姨娘道：“这又何难。如今我虽手里没什么，也零碎攒了几两梯己，还有几件衣服簪子，你先拿些去。下剩的，我写个欠银子文契给你，你要什么保人也有，那时我照数给你。”马道婆道：“果然这样？”赵姨娘道：“这如何还撒得谎。”说着，便叫过一个心腹婆子来，耳根底下嘁嘁喳喳说了几句话。那





The priestess gave a short laugh. After a moment's pause she said: "I don't want to talk like a trouble-maker, but I do think if you don't stick up for yourselves you can't very well blame others. Even if you dare not tackle her openly you could have done something in secret, instead of letting things drag on like this."

Sensing something behind this, the concubine brightened up.

"In secret? Do explain how," she cried. "I've thought of that, but there's no one capable of doing it. If you'll show me some way, I'll make it well worth your while."

"Amida Buddha, don't ask me that," protested the priestess, although well aware that they both had the same thing in mind. "What do I know about such matters? No, that would be a sin, a wicked sin."

"Come on, you're always good to those in trouble. Are you going to stand by and watch that woman trample us, mother and child, to death? Or are you afraid I shan't be able to pay you?"

Ma smiled.

"It's right to say that I'm sorry to see you and your son bullied, but it's wrong of you to talk about *paying* me. Why, even if I hoped for some reward, what have you got that could tempt me?"

The concubine felt that Ma was yielding.

"How can a smart woman like you be so dense?" she asked. "If you know some good magic to get rid of those two, the family property's bound to come to my son. When that happens you can have anything you want."

The priestess lowered her head for a while.

"When that happens," she said at last, "and everything's in the bag, unless I've something in writing you'll just ignore me."

"That's no problem," said the concubine. "Though I haven't got much at the moment, I've saved a few taels of silver and I have some clothes and trinkets too. You can take some of them to be going on with. And I can write you a promissory note and, if you like, find a witness too, so that you can be sure I'll pay you in full later on."

"Do you really mean that?"

"How could I lie to you on such a matter?"

The concubine then called in a trusted old servant to whom she whis-

婆子出去了，一时回来，果然写了个五百两银子欠契来。赵姨娘便印了手模，走到厨柜里将梯己拿了出来，与马道婆看看，道：“这个你先拿去做个香烛供养使费，可好不好？”马道婆看看白花花的堆银子，又有欠契，并不顾青红皂白，满口里应着，伸手先去抓了银子掖起来，然后收了欠契。又向裤腰里掏了半晌，掏出十个纸铰的青面白发的鬼来，并两个纸人，递与赵姨娘，又悄悄地教他道：“把他两个的年庚八字写在这两个纸人身上，一并五个鬼都掖在他们各人的床上就完了。我只在家里作法，自有效验。千万小心，不要害怕！”正才说着，只见王夫人的丫鬟进来找道：“奶奶可在这里，太太等你呢。”二人方散了，不在话下。

却说林黛玉因见宝玉近日烫了脸，总不出门，倒时常在一处说说话儿。这日饭后，看了两篇书，自觉无趣，便同紫鹃、雪雁做了一回针线，更觉烦闷，便倚着房门出了一回神，信步出来，看阶下新进出的稚笋，不觉出了院门。一望园中，四顾无人，惟见花光柳影，鸟语溪声。林黛玉信步便往怡红院中来，只见几个丫头舀水，都在回廊上围着看画眉洗澡呢。听见房内有笑声，林黛玉便进入了房中看时，原来是李宫裁、凤姐、宝钗都在这里呢。一见他进来，都笑道：“这不又来了一个。”林黛玉笑道：“今日齐全，谁下帖子请来的？”凤姐道：“前日我打发了丫头送了两瓶茶叶去，你往那去了？”林黛玉笑道：“哦，我可是倒忘了，多谢多谢。”



pered certain instructions. The woman went out, returning after a while with a promissory note for five hundred taels. Concubine Zhao pressed her fingerprints on this, then opened her chest and took out some loose silver. This she showed to the priestess.

“Take this first to spend on offerings. How’s that?”

At the sight of this gleaming pile of silver and the promissory note, the priestess did not scruple to assent with alacrity. First she put away the silver and then the note. Next she rummaged in her waistband for a while and fished out twelve paper figures — two of human beings and ten of devils with white hair and blue faces — which she gave to the concubine.

“Write the eight characters of their horoscopes on these two figures,” she whispered. “Then put them, with five devils each, in their beds. That’s all you have to do. I shall do my magic at home. It’s sure to work. Mind you’re very careful, and don’t look alarmed.”

They were interrupted by the arrival of a maid from Lady Wang.

“So here you are,” she said to the concubine. “Her Ladyship’s waiting for you.”

Then the two women parted company.

But let us return to Daiyu. Now that Baoyu’s burn kept him indoors, she often dropped in for a chat. Today after lunch she did some reading but soon became bored with the book; then she did a little needlework with Zijuan and Xueyan, but found this even more tedious. So she stood for a while leaning against the doorway in a brown study, before stepping out to look at the bamboo shoots sprouting below the steps. And then, hardly knowing what she did, she stepped out of the courtyard. There was no one in sight in the Garden, nothing to be seen but the brightness of flowers and the shadows of willows, nothing to be heard but birdsong and gurgling streams. And so she made her way to Happy Red Court. Some maids on the terrace there, having just fetched water, were watching the thrushes have their bath. Inside there was laughter and going in she found Li Wan, Xifeng and Baochai assembled there. At sight of her they smiled.

“Here comes another!”

“Were invitations sent out that you’re here in force?” asked Daiyu jokingly.



凤姐儿又道：“你尝了可还好不好？”没有说完，宝玉便说：

“论理可倒罢了，只是我说不大甚好，也不知别人尝着怎么样。”宝钗道：“味倒轻，只是颜色不大好些。”凤姐道：“那是暹罗进贡来的。我尝着也没什么趣味儿，还不如我每日吃的呢。”林黛玉道：“我吃着好，不知你们的脾胃是怎样？”宝玉道：“你果然爱吃，把我这个你拿了去吃罢。”凤姐笑道：“你要爱吃，我那里还有呢。”林黛玉道：“果真的，我就打发丫头取去了。”凤姐道：“不用取去，我打发人送来就是了。我明日还有一件事求你，一同打发人送来。”

林黛玉听了笑道：“你们听听，这是吃了他们家一点子茶叶，便来使唤人了。”凤姐笑道：“倒求你，你倒说这些闲话，吃茶吃水的。你既吃了我们家的茶，怎么还不给我们家作媳妇？”众人听了，一齐都笑起来，林黛玉红了脸，一声儿不言语，便回过面去了。李宫裁笑向宝钗道：“真真我们二婶子的诙谐是好的。”林黛玉道：“什么诙谐，不过是贫嘴贱舌讨人厌恶罢了。”说着便啐了一口。凤姐笑道：“你别作梦！你给我们家作了媳妇，少什么？”指宝玉道：“你瞧瞧，人物儿、门第配不上？根基配不上？模样儿配不上？家私配不上？那一点还玷辱了谁呢？”

林黛玉抬身就走。宝钗便叫：“颦儿急了，还不回来坐着。走了倒没意思。”说着，便站起来拉住。刚至房门前，只见赵姨娘和周姨娘两个人进来瞧宝玉。李宫裁、宝钗、宝玉等都让他两个坐，独凤姐只和林黛玉说笑，正眼也不看他





"I sent you two canisters of tea the other day," interposed Xifeng. "Where were you?"

"Oh, it had slipped my mind. Thank you very much."

"How did you like it?" Xifeng asked.

"It's all right but I didn't care for it much," put in Baoyu. "I don't know how the rest of you found it."

"The flavour was quite delicate, but the colour wasn't too good," remarked Baochai.

"That was tribute tea from Siam," Xifeng told them. "Personally, I didn't find it as good as the kind we drink every day."

"I liked it," retorted Daiyu. "Different people have different tastes."

"In that case you can have mine," offered Baoyu.

"If you really like it I've plenty more," said Xifeng.

"Fine. I'll send a maid to fetch it," Daiyu promised.

"No need," rejoined Xifeng. "I'll have it sent round. I was going to send over to you tomorrow anyway to ask a favour."

"Listen to her!" cried Daiyu. "Just take a little tea from her and she starts ordering you about."

Xifeng chuckled.

"Asked a favour, you make such a fuss! Over drinking tea too. 'Drink our family's tea, a daughter-in-law to be!'"

As the whole party burst out laughing, Daiyu blushed and turned her head away, saying nothing.

Li Wan observed with a smile to Baochai, "Our second sister-in-law will have her joke."

"Joke?" Daiyu spat. "I call it disgustingly vulgar."

"Are you dreaming? What's wrong with being our daughter-in-law?" teased Xifeng, then pointed at Baoyu. "Look, isn't he handsome enough for you? Isn't his status good enough for you? Isn't his family rich enough for you? Who could think it a bad match in any respect?"

Daiyu rose at once to go.

"You're offended," cried Baochai. "Come back, Daiyu! It'll spoil the fun if you go."

She ran after Daiyu to stop her. But at the doorway they were intercepted by the concubines Zhao and Zhou, who had come to inquire after



们。宝钗方欲说话时，只见王夫人房内的丫头来说：“舅太太来了，请奶奶、姑娘出去呢。”李宫裁听了，连忙叫着凤姐等走了。赵、周两个也忙辞了宝玉出去。宝玉道：“我也不能出去，你们好歹别叫舅母进来。”又道：“林妹妹，你先略站一站，我说一句话。”凤姐听了，回头向林黛玉笑道：“有人叫你说话呢。”说着，便把林黛玉往里一推，和李纨一同去了。

这里宝玉拉着林黛玉的袖子，只是嘻嘻的笑，心里有话，只是口里说不出来。此时林黛玉只是禁不住把脸红涨起来，挣着要走。宝玉道：“暖哟！好头疼！”林黛玉道：“该，阿弥陀佛！”只见宝玉大叫一声：“我要死！”将身一纵，离地跳有三四尺高，口内乱嚷乱叫，说起胡话来了。林黛玉并丫头们都唬慌了，忙去报知王夫人、贾母等。此时王子腾的夫人也在这里，都一齐来时，宝玉益发拿刀弄杖，寻死觅活的，闹得天翻地覆。贾母、王夫人见了，吓的抖衣而颤，且“儿”一声“肉”一声放声恸哭。于是惊动诸人，连贾赦、邢夫人、贾珍、贾政、贾琏、贾蓉、贾芸、贾萍、薛姨妈、薛蟠并周瑞家的、一千家中上上下下里里外外众媳妇、丫头等，都来园内看视。登时园内乱麻一般。正没个主见，只见凤姐手持一把明晃晃钢刀砍进园来，见鸡杀鸡，见狗杀狗，见人就要杀人。众人一发慌了。周瑞媳妇忙带着几个有力量的胆壮的婆娘上去抱住，夺下刀来，抬回房去。平儿、丰儿等哭的泪天泪地。贾政等心中也有些烦难，顾了这里，丢不下那里。



Baoyu. Li Wan, Baochai and Baoyu invited them to sit down. Xifeng, however, went on talking with Daiyu and ignored them. Baochai was just about to speak when a maid sent by Lady Wang announced that Wang Ziteng's wife had called and would like to see the young ladies. Li Wan at once urged Xifeng and the girls to go over, and the two concubines also took a hasty leave of Baoyu.

"I can't go out," said Baoyu. "Whatever happens, don't let my aunt come over here! Do wait a bit, Cousin Lin. I've something to tell you."

Xifeng, hearing this, turned to Daiyu with a smile.

"You'd better stay. You're wanted."

She pushed the girl back into the room and went off with Li Wan.

Baoyu, left alone with Daiyu, clasped her sleeve and smiled but could not get a word out. She could not help blushing and tried to break away.

"Aiya!" he cried suddenly. "How my head aches!"

"Serves you right. Buddha be praised."

The next moment he let out a piercing cry.

"I'm dying!"

He leapt several feet into the air, babbling and raving. Daiyu and the maids rushed in panic to tell the Lady Dowager and Lady Wang; and as Wang Ziteng's wife was with them, the whole party hurried over. By now Baoyu had turned the whole place upside down in search of a sword or stick to kill himself with. His grandmother and mother shook with terror, bursting into loud lamentations for their darling. At once the whole household was thrown into confusion as everyone flocked to the Garden — from Jia She, Lady Xing, Jia Zheng, Jia Lian, Jia Huan, Jia Rong, Jia Yun, Jia Ping, Aunt Xue and Xue Pan down to Zhou Rui's wife and all the other female servants.

They were all in a great commotion and wondering what to do when in rushed Xifeng, brandishing a bright steel sword, with which she was trying to cut down all the chickens, dogs and people in her way. This was even more staggering! Zhou Rui's wife, aided by some of the stronger and braver maids, managed to overpower her and disarm her. They then carried her back to her room where Pinger and Fenger gave way to a storm of weeping.

Even Jia Zheng was quite distracted, trying to attend to both Baoyu

别人慌张自不必讲，独有薛蟠更比诸人忙到十分去：又恐薛姨妈被人挤倒，又恐薛宝钗被人瞧见，又恐香菱被人臊皮，——知道贾珍等是在女人身上做功夫的，因此忙的不堪。忽一眼瞥见了林黛玉风流婉转，已酥倒在那里。

当下众人七言八语，有的说请端公送祟的，有的说请巫婆跳神的，有的又荐玉皇阁的张真人，种种喧腾不一。也曾百般医治祈祷，问卜求神，总无效验。看看的日落。王子腾夫人告辞去后，次日王子腾也来瞧问。接着小史侯家、邢夫人弟兄辈并各亲戚眷属都来瞧望，也有送符水的，也有荐僧道的，总不见效。他叔嫂二人愈发糊涂，不省人事，睡在床上，浑身火炭一般，口内无般不说。到夜晚间，那些婆娘、媳妇、丫头们都不敢上前。因此把他二人都抬到王夫人的上房内，夜晚派了贾芸带着小厮们捱次轮班看守。贾母、王夫人、邢夫人、薛姨妈等寸地不离，只围着干哭。

此时贾赦、贾政又恐哭坏了贾母，日夜熬油费火，闹的人口不安，也都没有主意。贾赦还各处去寻僧觅道。贾政见不灵效，着实懊恼，因阻贾赦道：“儿女之数，皆由天命，非人力可强者。他二人之病出于不意，百般医治不效，想天意该如此，也只好由他们去罢。”贾赦也不理此话，仍是百般忙乱，那里见些效验。看看三日光阴，那凤姐和宝玉躺在床上，亦发连气都将没了。合家人口无不心慌，都说没了指



and Xifeng at once. The others, it goes without saying, were still more distraught. But of them all Xue Pan was the most frantic, being afraid that in the crush his mother might be knocked over, Baochai stared at, or Xiangling exposed to indignities — for he knew what libertines Jia Zhen and the rest were. Then, his eye suddenly falling on Daiyu, he was so enraptured by her charms that he almost melted on the spot.

By now proposals of all kinds were being made. Some suggested calling in exorcists to drive out evil spirits; some, getting a witch to lure them out by dancing; others recommended the Taoist Zhang from the Jade Emperor's Temple.... Pandemonium reigned as they tried all conceivable remedies together with incantations, divination and prayers. But all to no avail. And at sunset Wang Ziteng's wife took her leave.

Next day Wang Ziteng came in person to make inquiries. This was followed by visits from young Marquis Shi's wife, the brothers and relations of Lady Xing, and the wives of other family connections. Some brought charm water. Others sent round bonzes and Taoists. Still nothing proved of any use.

Baoyu and Xifeng had fallen into a coma. They lay on their beds burning with fever and babbling deliriously. As the night wore on, because none of the maids or nannies dared go near them, they were carried to Lady Wang's quarters where some pages in the charge of Jia Yun kept watch in turn. The Lady Dowager, Lady Wang, Lady Xing and Aunt Xue, racked by sobs, refused to stir from their side.

Afraid that their mother might fall ill of grief, Jia She and Jia Zheng bestirred themselves so frantically day and night that no one, high or low, had any rest or could offer any advice. Jia She kept summoning more bonzes and Taoists, but because these could do no good Jia Zheng lost patience and tried to dissuade him.

"Their fate rests with Heaven," he said. "Human beings are powerless. Since their disorder is quite unforeseen and no drugs can cure it, it must be the will of Heaven. We shall just have to leave them to their fate."

His counsel fell on deaf ears. Jia She would not relax his exertions. But still there was no improvement.

By the third day the patients were lying at death's door and the whole



望，忙着将他二人的后事衣履都治备下了。贾母、王夫人、贾琏、平儿、袭人这几个人更比诸人哭的忘餐废寝，觅死寻活。赵姨娘、贾环等自是称愿。

到了第四日早晨，贾母等正围着宝玉哭时，只见宝玉睁开眼，说道：“从今以后，我可不在你家了！快收拾了，打发我走罢。”贾母听了这话，如同摘心去肝一般。赵姨娘在旁劝道：“老太太也不必过于悲痛。哥儿已是不中用了，不如把哥儿的衣服穿好，让他早些回去，也免些苦；只管舍不得他，这口气不断，他在那世也受罪不安生。”这些话没说完，被贾母照脸啐了一口唾沫，骂道：“烂了舌头的混帐老婆，谁叫你来多嘴多舌的！你怎么知道他在那世里受罪不安生？怎么见得不中用了？你愿他死了，有什么好处？你别做梦！他死了，我只和你们要命。素日都不是你们调唆着逼他写字念书，把胆子吓破了，见了他老子不像个避猫鼠儿？都不是你们这起淫妇调唆的！这会子逼死了，你们遂了心，我饶那一个！”一面骂，一面哭。贾政在旁听见这些话，心里越发难过，便喝退赵姨娘，自己上来委婉解劝。一时又有人来回话：“两口棺椁都做齐了，请老爷出去看。”贾母听了，如火上烧油一般，便骂：“是谁做了棺材？”一叠声只叫把做棺材的拉来打死。

正闹的天翻地覆，没个开交，只闻得隐隐的木鱼声响，念了一句：“南无解冤孽菩萨。有那人口不利，家宅颠倾，或逢凶险，或中邪祟者，我们善能医治。”贾母、王夫人听见这些话，那里还耐得住，便命人去快请进来。贾政虽不自在，奈贾母之言如何违拗；想如此深宅，何得听的这样真

household despaired. Then, as all hope was relinquished, preparations were started for the funeral. The Lady Dowager, Lady Wang, Jia Lian, Pinger and Xiren wept even more bitterly than the rest, unable to take food or sleep. Only the concubine Zhao and Jia Huan were secretly exulting.

On the morning of the fourth day Baoyu opened his eyes.

"I am going to leave you now," he told his weeping grandmother. "You must make haste and get me ready to go."

These words made her feel as if he had wrenched out her heart.

"Don't take it too hard, madam," urged the concubine. "The boy's as good as gone. Better lay him out and let him make an end of his misery. If you insist on holding him back, he'll not be able to breathe his last and will only suffer for it in the next world...."

Before she could finish the old lady spat in her face.

"May your tongue rot, you bitch!" she swore. "Who asked for your opinion? How do *you* know he'll suffer in the next world? Why say he's as good as gone? What good will it do *you* if he dies? You're dreaming! If he does die, I'll make you pay for it. You're the ones to blame for this, forcing the child to study and breaking his spirit so that the sight of his father made him as scared as a mouse chased by a cat. It's you bitches who have hounded him to his death. But don't gloat too soon — you've still me to reckon with."

Quite beside himself to hear her curses and sobs, Jia Zheng hastily ordered his concubine away and tried to calm his mother. But just then a servant came in to announce that the two coffins were ready for his inspection. This added fuel to the fire of the old lady's anger.

"Who ordered coffins?" she screamed. "Fetch the coffin-makers here! Have them beaten to death!"

She was storming fit to convulse heaven and earth when the faint sound of a monk's wooden clapper reached their ears.

"Put your trust in Buddha who absolves sins," the monk chanted. "All those afflicted, distressed, imperilled or possessed by evil spirits, we can cure."

At once the Lady Dowager and Lady Wang asked to have the monk brought in. Though Jia Zheng disapproved, he could not disregard his





切，心中亦希罕，命人请了进来。众人举目看时，原来是一个癞头和尚与一个跛足道人。见那和尚是怎生模样：

鼻如悬胆两眉长，目似明星蓄宝光，  
破衲芒鞋无住迹，腌脏更有满头疮。

那道人又是怎生模样，

一足高来一足低，浑身带水又拖泥。  
相逢若问家何处，却在蓬莱弱水西。

贾政问道：“你道友二人在那庙焚修？”那僧笑道：“长官不须多话。因闻得府上人口不利，故特来医治。”贾政道：“倒有两个人中邪，不知你们有何符水？”那道人笑道：“你家现有希世奇珍，如何还问我们有符水？”贾政听这话有意思，心中便动了。因说道：“小儿落草时虽带了一块宝玉下来，上面说能除邪祟，谁知竟不灵验。”那僧道：“长官你那里知道那物的妙用？只因他如今被声色货利所迷，故不灵验了。你今且取他出来，待我们持诵持诵，只怕就好了。”

贾政听说，便向宝玉项上取下那玉来，递与他二人。那和尚接了过来，擎在掌上，长叹一声道：“青埂峰一别，转眼已过十三载矣！人世光阴，如此迅速，尘缘满目，若似弹指！可羨你当时的那段好处：

天不拘兮地不羈，心头无喜亦无悲；  
却因锻炼通灵后，便向人间觅是非。







mother's wishes. He was marvelling, too, that the voice carried so clearly right into the house. So he gave the order to the servants. Then in came a scabby-headed bonze and a lame Taoist. What was he like, this bonze?

His nose was bulbous and his eyebrows long,  
His two eyes glittered with a starry light;  
Ragged, in shoes of straw, with scabby head,  
This vagrant monk was an obnoxious sight.

As for the Taoist:

With one leg short and one leg long,  
All soaked with rain and caked with mud was he;  
If asked from whence he came he would reply:  
"West of the Penglai Isles in Weightless Sea."

Jia Zheng asked this pair which monastery they were from.

"There is no need to inquire into that, sir," replied the bonze with a smile. "We hear there is illness in your house and have come to cure it."

"Yes, two members of the family are bewitched. Have you perhaps some miraculous remedy?"

"Why ask us for a remedy?" retorted the Taoist. "You already have in your house a rare treasure capable of curing them."

With a start Jia Zheng grasped the significance of this remark.

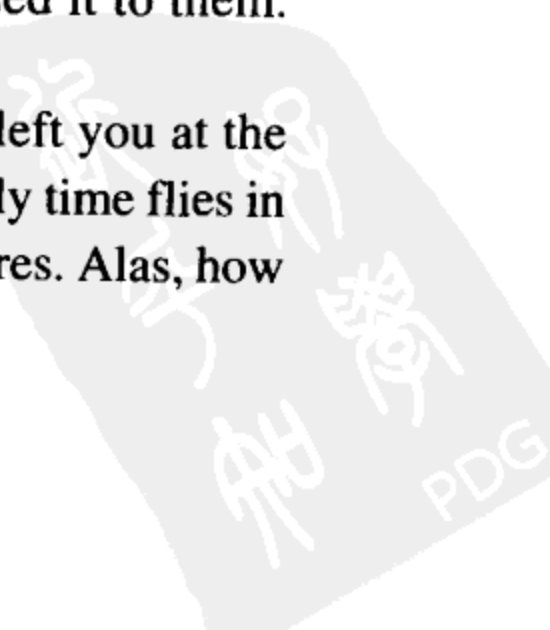
"It is true that my son was born with a piece of jade in his mouth," he replied. "And the inscription on it claims that it can ward off evil. But it has proved ineffective."

"You do not understand the miraculous powers of that precious jade, sir. It has not proved efficacious because it is confused by music, beauty, riches and lust for gain. Just bring it to me and I think we can restore its powers by incantation."

Jia Zheng took the jade from Baoyu's neck and passed it to them. The monk laid it reverently on the palm of one hand.

"Thirteen years have passed in a twinkling since we left you at the foot of Blue Ridge Peak," he said with a sigh. "How quickly time flies in this human world! Yet already you are full of worldly desires. Alas, how much better off you were before!

Untrammelled by heaven and earth,  
From joy and grief alike your heart was free;



可叹你今日这番经历：

粉渍脂痕污宝光，绮枕昼夜困鸳鸯。

沉酣一梦终须醒，冤孽偿清好散场！”

念毕，又摩弄一回，说了些疯话。递与贾政道：“此物已灵，不可褻渎。悬于卧室上槛，将他二人安在一室之内，除亲身妻母外，不可使阴人冲犯。三十三日之后，包管身安病退，复旧如初。”说着，回头便走了。贾政赶着还说话，让二人坐了吃茶，要送谢礼，他二人早已出去了。贾母等还只管着人去赶，那里有个踪迹。少不得依言将他二人就安放在王夫人卧室之内，将玉悬在门上。王夫人亲身守着，不许别个人进来。

至晚间，他二人竟渐渐醒来，说腹中饥饿。贾母、王夫人如得珍宝一般，旋熬了米汤来，与他二人吃了。精神渐长，邪祟稍退，一家子才把心放下来。李宫裁并贾府三艳、薛宝钗、林黛玉、平儿、袭人等在外间听信息。闻得吃了米汤，省了人事，别人未开口，林黛玉先就念了一声“阿弥陀佛”。薛宝钗便回头看了他半日，“嗤”的一声笑。众人不会意，惟惜春道：“宝姐姐，好好的笑什么？”宝钗笑道：“我笑如来佛比人还忙：又要讲经说法，又要普渡众生；这





Then smelting gave you spiritual perception,  
And you came to this world in search of misery.

What a deplorable state you are in now!

Powder and rouge have dulled your precious lustre;  
Days and nights within silk chambers entrap your heart;  
But you must wake at last from your sweet dream;  
Poor lovers, when all debts are paid, must part."

Having chanted this he rubbed the jade again and muttered some gibberish over it, then handed it back to Jia Zheng.

"Its power has now been restored," he said. "But it must not be profaned. Keep the two patients in one room; hang it over the door of that room, and let no women apart from your wife and mother go inside. In thirty-three days' time, I guarantee they will have recovered completely."

With that he and the Taoist turned and left.

Jia Zheng hurried after them, urging them to sit down and have some tea, for he wanted to offer them some remuneration; but the two men had gone. And when the Lady Dowager sent servants to overtake them, no trace of them could be found.

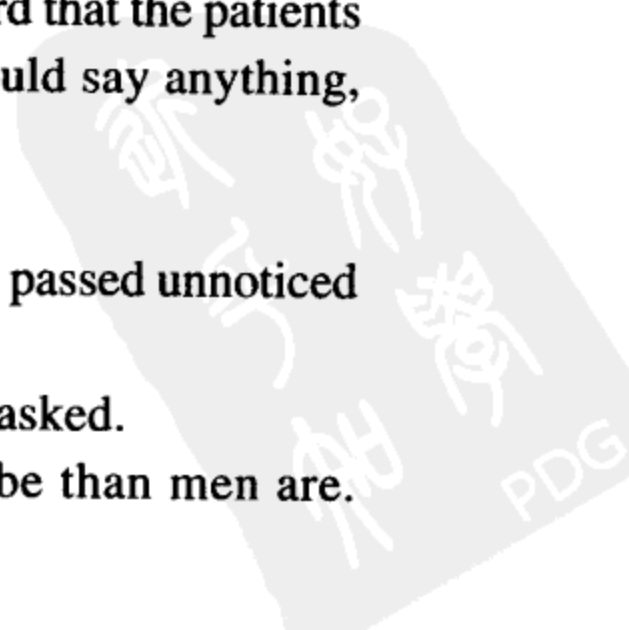
Then, following the monk's instructions, the jade was hung over the doorway of Lady Wang's bedroom where the two patients were lying; and she herself kept watch there to prevent anyone else from entering. By evening both patients had slowly regained consciousness and said they were hungry. The Lady Dowager and Lady Wang were overjoyed. Some rice gruel was prepared and after eating it they felt better, the evil spirits which had possessed them retreating. At last everyone was able to breathe again. Li Wan, the Jia girls, Baochai and Daiyu were waiting with Pinger and Xiren in the outer room when they heard that the patients had come to and eaten some gruel. Before the rest could say anything, Daiyu exclaimed:

"Buddha be praised!"

Baochai turned to look at her and gave a laugh. This passed unnoticed by all but Xichun.

"What are you laughing at, Cousin Baochai?" she asked.

"I was thinking how much busier Buddha must be than men are.





如今宝玉、凤姐姐病了，又烧香还愿，赐福消灾；今日才好些，又管林姑娘的姻缘了。你说忙的可笑不可笑？”林黛玉不觉的红了脸，啐了一口道：“你们这起人不是好人，不知怎么死！再不跟着好人学，只跟着凤姐贫嘴烂舌的学。”一面说，一面摔帘子出去了。不知端详，且听下回分解。



Apart from expounding the truth and saving all living creatures, he has to preserve the sick and restore them to health, as he has done with Baoyu and Xifeng who are on the mend today. And he'll have to take care of Miss Lin's marriage as well. Just think how busy he must be! Don't you find it amusing?"

Daiyu flushed and spat in disgust.

"How horrid you all are! I can't think what end you'll come to. Instead of following the example of good people, you're learning from Xifeng to make vulgar jokes."

She swept aside the portière and went out.

To learn what followed, turn to the next chapter.



## 第二十六回

### 蜂腰桥设言传心事 潇湘馆春困发幽情

话说宝玉养过了三十三天之后，不但身体强壮，亦且连脸上疮痕平服，仍回大观园内去。这也不在话下。

且说近日宝玉病的时节，贾芸带着家下小厮坐更看守，昼夜在这里，那红玉同众丫鬟也在这里守着宝玉，彼此相见多日，都渐渐混熟了。那红玉见贾芸手里拿着手帕子，倒像是自己从前丢的，待要问他，又不好问的。不料那和尚、道士来过，用不着一切男人，贾芸仍种树去了。这件事待要放下，心内又放不下；待要问去，又怕人猜疑。正是犹豫不决、神魂不定之际，忽听窗外问道：“姐姐在屋里没有？”红玉闻听，在窗眼内望外一看，原来是本院的个小丫头名叫佳蕙的，因答说：“在这里，你进来罢。”佳蕙听了，跑进来，就坐在床上，笑道：“我好造化！才刚在院子里洗东西，宝玉叫往林姑娘那里送茶叶，花大姐姐交给我送去。可巧老太太那里给林姑娘送钱来，正分给他们的丫头们呢。见我去了，林姑娘就抓了两把给我，也不知多少。你替我收着。”便把手帕子打开，把钱倒了出来。红玉替他一五一十的数了收起。

佳蕙道：“你这一程子，心里到底觉怎么样？依我说，你

## Chapter 26

### On Wasp-Waist Bridge, Xiaohong Hints at Her Feelings In Bamboo Lodge, Drowsy in Spring, Daiyu Bares Her Heart

After thirty-three days' convalescence, when Baoyu had completely recovered his strength and the burns on his face had healed, he moved back into the Garden.

During his illness, Jia Yun had taken in pages to watch day and night beside him and had seen so much of Xiaohong and the other maids there that they were now on a familiar footing. Xiaohong noticed that Jia Yun had a handkerchief very like the one she had lost. She nearly asked him about it, but was too shy. After the visit of the monk and the Taoist, however, there was no further need for male attendants and Jia Yun resumed his tree-planting. Though Xiaohong did not want to drop the matter, neither did she want to arouse the suspicions of others by questioning the young man. She was wondering what to do when a voice called through her window:

"Are you there, sister?"

Peeping out she saw that it was Jiahui, another maid who belonged to the same court. She asked her in. Jiahui promptly entered and took a seat on the bed.

"I'm in luck!" she crowed. "I was washing clothes in the court just now when Baoyu decided to send some tea to Miss Lin, and Xiren gave me the errand. As it happened, the old lady had just sent Miss Lin some money which she was sharing out among the maids. When she saw me she gave me two handfuls of cash — how much it is I don't know. Will you look after it for me?"

She unwrapped her handkerchief and poured out the coins, which Xiaohong counted for her: "Five, ten, fifteen..." and then put away.

"How have you been feeling recently?" continued Jiahui. "Take my

竟家去住两日，请一个大夫来瞧瞧，吃两剂药就好了。”红玉道：“那里的话，好好的，家去作什么！”佳蕙道：“我想起来了，林姑娘生的弱，时常他吃药，你就和他要些来吃，也是一样。”红玉道：“胡说！药也是混吃的。”佳蕙道：“你这也并不是个长法儿，又懒吃懒喝的，终久怎么样？”红玉道：“怕什么，还不如早些儿死了倒干净！”佳蕙道：“好好的，怎么说这些话？”红玉道：“你那里知道我心里的事！”

佳蕙点头想了一会，道：“可也怨不得，这个地方难站。就像昨儿老太太因宝玉病了这些日子，说跟着伏侍的这些人辛苦，如今身上好了，各处还完了愿，叫把跟着的人都按着等儿赏他们。我们算年纪小，上不去，不得，我也不抱怨；像你怎么也不算在里头？我心里就不服。袭人那怕他得十分儿，也不恼他，原该的。说良心话，谁还敢比他呢？别说他素日殷勤小心，便是不殷勤小心，也拼不得。可气晴雯、绮霰他们这几个，都算在上等里去，仗着老子娘的脸面，众人倒捧着他去。你说可气不可气？”红玉道：“也不犯着气他们。俗话说的好‘千里搭长棚，没有个不散的筵席’，谁守谁一辈子呢？不过三年五载，各人干各人的去了。那时谁还管谁呢？”这两句话，不觉感动了佳蕙的心肠，由不得眼睛红了，又不好意思好端端的哭，只得勉强笑道：“你这话说的却是。昨儿宝玉还说，明儿怎么样收拾房子，怎么样做衣裳，倒像有几百年的熬煎。”

红玉听了，冷笑了两声，方要说话，只见一个未留头的





advice and go home for a couple of days. Get a doctor to see you and prescribe some medicine, and that should set you right."

"What an idea!" countered Xiaohong. "I'm perfectly all right. Why should I go home?"

"I know what, then. Miss Lin's so delicate, she's always taking medicine. Ask *her* for some. That would do just as well."

"Nonsense. You don't take medicine at random like that."

"Well, you can't go on like this. All your appetite's gone — what's to become of you?"

"What does it matter? The sooner I die the better."

"How can you say such things?"

"You don't understand how I feel."

Jiahui nodded thoughtfully.

"Well, I don't blame you," she said. "Things *are* difficult here. Just take yesterday, for example. The old lady said everyone worked so hard while Baoyu was ill that, now he's better and all the vows have been paid, each one would be rewarded according to grade. I don't mind if the young ones like myself are left out, but why should *you* be left out? It isn't fair. I wouldn't have begrudged Xiren ten times as much either — she deserves it. After all, to be honest, which of us can compare with her? Look how careful and conscientious she always is. And even if she weren't, she couldn't be passed over. What annoys me is having people like Qingwen and Yixian counted as top grade and boosted up just because their parents are senior servants here. Don't you call it maddening?"

"It's hardly worth being angry with them," retorted Xiaohong. "The proverb says 'Even the longest feast must break up at last.' Who's going to stay here for life? A few more years and we'll all go our different ways. When that time comes who will worry about anyone else?"

These words brought tears to Jiahui's eyes, but not wanting to cry for no reason she forced a smile.

"That's true, of course," she agreed. "Yet only yesterday Baoyu was talking about how he's going to rearrange the rooms and the clothes he means to have made, as if we had hundreds of years to put up with here."

Xiaohong laughed sarcastically. Before she could say any more in came a little maid who had not yet let her hair grow, to deliver two sheets

小丫头子走进来，手里拿着些花样子并两张纸，说道：“这是两个样子，叫你描出来呢。”说着，向红玉掷下，回身就跑了。红玉向外问道：“倒是谁的？也等不得说完就跑，谁蒸下馒头等着你，怕冷了不成！”那小丫头在窗外只说得一声：“是绮大姐姐的。”抬起脚来，“咕咚”“咕咚”又跑了。红玉便赌气把那样子掷在一边，向抽屉内找笔，找了半天都是秃了的，因说道：“前儿一枝新笔，放在那里了？怎么一时想不起来。”一面说着，一面出神，想了一会，方笑道：“是了，前儿晚上莺儿拿了去了。”便向佳蕙道：“你替我取了来。”佳蕙道：“花大姐姐还等着我替他抬箱子呢，你自取去罢。”红玉道：“他等着你，你还坐着闲打牙儿？我不叫你取去，他也不等着你了。坏透了的小蹄子！”说着，自己便出房来。出了怡红院，一径往宝钗院内来。

刚至沁芳亭畔，只见宝玉的奶娘李嬷嬷从那边走来。红玉立住笑问道：“李奶奶，你老人家那去了？怎打这里来？”李嬷嬷站住，将手一拍道：“你说说，好好的又看上了那个种树的什么云哥儿雨哥儿的，这会子逼着我叫了他来。明儿叫上房里听见，可又是不好。”红玉笑道：“你老人家当真的就依着他去叫了？”李嬷嬷道：“可怎么样呢？”红玉笑道：“那一个要是知道好歹，就回不进来才是。”李嬷嬷道：“他又不痴，为什么不进来？”红玉道：“既是进来，你老人家该同他一齐来，回来叫他一个人乱碰，可是不好呢。”李嬷嬷道：“我有那样工夫和他走？不过告诉了他，回来打发个小丫头子或是老婆子，带他进来就完了。”说着，拄着拐一径去了。红玉



of paper and some patterns.

"Here are two patterns for you to trace," she said, tossing them at Xiaohong.

"Who are they from?" called Xiaohong as the child scampered off. "Can't you finish what you have to say before running away? Have you steamed wheatcakes waiting which may get cold?"

"They're from Yixian," cried the little girl through the window, then quickly galloped away.

Xiaohong crossly threw the patterns aside and rummaged in her drawer for a brush, but could not find any with a pointed tip.

"Where did I put that new brush the other day?" she muttered. "I can't remember.... Oh, of course, Yixian borrowed it the evening before last." She turned to Jiahui. "Do you mind fetching it for me?"

"Fetch it yourself. Xiren is waiting for me to lift some cases for her."

"If she were, could you stay here chatting? You only say she's waiting because I asked you a favour, you little beast!"

Xiaohong set out from Happy Red Court to Baochai's apartments, but stopped at Seeping Fragrance Pavilion when she caught sight of Baoyu's old nurse, Nanny Li.

"Where are you off to, Mrs. Li?" she greeted her with a smile. "What brings you here?"

The old woman halted and clapped her hands.

"Tell me, why has he taken such a fancy to this tree-planter Yun or Yu, whatever his name is? Nothing would serve but that I go and fetch the fellow. When word of this gets to the Master, there'll be trouble."

"But do you have to give in to all his whims, nanny?"

"What else can I do?"

Xiaohong smiled.

"If that young man has any sense, he won't come."

"He's not crazy. Why shouldn't he?"

"Well, if he does come, you ought to bring him in with you. Not leave him to go blundering round on his own."

"Have I time to wait for him? I just gave him the message. I'll send one of the girls of matrons to show him the way." She hobbled off on her stick.

听说，便站着出神，且不去取笔。

一时，只见一个小丫头子跑来，见红玉站在那里，便问道：“林姐姐，你在这里作什么呢？”红玉抬头见是小丫头子坠儿。红玉道：“那去？”坠儿道：“叫我带进芸二爷来。”说着，一径跑了。这里红玉刚走至蜂腰桥门前，只见那边坠儿引着贾芸来了。那贾芸一面走，一面把眼向红玉一溜；那红玉只装着和坠儿说话，也把眼去一溜贾芸：四目却相对时，红玉不觉脸红了，一扭身往蘅芜院去了。不在话下。

这里贾芸随着坠儿，透迤来至怡红院中。坠儿先进去回明了，然后方领贾芸进去。贾芸看时，只见院内略略有几点山石，种着芭蕉，那边有两只仙鹤在松树下剔翎。一溜回廊上吊着各色笼子，各色仙禽异鸟。上面小小五间抱厦，一色雕镂新鲜花样隔扇。上面悬着一个匾额，四个大字，题道是“怡红快绿”。贾芸想道：“怪道叫‘怡红院’，原来匾上是恁样四个字。”正想着，只听里面隔着纱窗子笑说道：“快进来罢。我怎么就忘了你两三个月！”贾芸听得是宝玉的声音，连忙进入房内。抬头一看，只见金碧辉煌，文章闪烁，却看不见宝玉在那里。一回头，只见左边立着一架大穿衣镜，从镜后转出两个一般大的十五六岁的丫头来，说：“请二爷里头屋里坐。”贾芸连正眼也不敢看，连忙答应了。又进一道碧纱厨，只见小小一张填漆床上，悬着大红销金撒花帐子。宝玉穿着家常衣服，鞞着鞋，倚在床上，拿着本书。看见他进来，将书掷下，早堆着笑立起身来。贾芸忙上前请了安。宝玉让坐，便在下面一张椅子上坐了。宝玉笑道：“只从



Instead of fetching the brush, Xiaohong stood there lost in thought till a maid came up and asked what she was doing. It was Zhuier, and Xiaohong inquired where she was going.

“To fetch Master Yun,” cried Zhuier, running off.

Xiaohong had just reached the gate of Wasp-Waist Bridge by the time Zhuier returned, leading Jia Yun. He cast a sidelong glance at Xiaohong, who stole a glance at him too under cover of talking to Zhuier. When their eyes met she blushed and turned abruptly away, going on to Alpinia Park.

Jia Yun followed Zhuier by winding paths to Happy Red Court. She went in first to announce him, then ushered him in. The young man had time to scrutinize the courtyard. There were a few scattered artificial rocks with plantains growing between, and two storks were preening their feathers under a pine. In the gallery surrounding the courtyard hung cages of every description containing all manner of rare exotic birds. The five-frame apartment before him had lattice-work carved with ingenious designs, while above its door hung a tablet inscribed with the words: Happy Red and Delightful Green.

“So that’s why it’s called Happy Red Court,” he thought. “The name comes from that inscription.”

He heard a laugh from behind one gauze-covered window and someone cried, “Come on in. Imagine my forgetting you for two or three months!”

Recognizing Baoyu’s voice Jia Yun hurried in. He was dazzled by the glittering gold and emerald and the elegance of all the furnishings, but could see no sign of Baoyu. Turning to the left he noticed a large mirror from behind which emerged two girls in their mid-teens, of about the same build and height, who invited him into the inner room. Assenting without venturing to look at them, he stepped into a chamber screened with green gauze. On a small inlaid lacquer bed there with red curtains embroidered in gold lay Baoyu, informally dressed, in his slippers. At sight of the visitor he threw down the book in his hand and stood up, smiling. Jia Yun advanced to fall upon one knee, and was offered a chair opposite his host.

“After I saw you that month and invited you to my study,” remarked



那个月见了你，我叫你往书房里来，谁知接接连连许多事情，就把你忘了。”贾芸笑道：“总是我没福，偏偏又遇着叔叔身上欠安。叔叔如今可大安了？”宝玉道：“大好了。我倒听见说你辛苦了好几天。”贾芸道：“辛苦也是该当的。叔叔大安了，也是我们一家子的造化。”

说着，只见有个丫鬟端了茶来与他。那贾芸口里和宝玉说着话，眼睛却溜瞅那丫鬟：细挑身材，容长脸面，穿着银红袄儿，青缎背心，白绫细折裙。——不是别个，却是袭人。那贾芸自从宝玉病了几天，他在里头混了两日，他却把那有名人口都记了一半。他也知道袭人在宝玉房中比别个不同，今见他端了茶来，宝玉又在旁边坐着，便忙站起来，笑道：“姐姐怎么替我倒起茶来？我来到叔叔这里，又不是客，让我自己倒罢。”宝玉道：“你只管坐着罢。丫头们跟前也是这样。”贾芸笑道：“虽如此说，叔叔房里姐姐们，我怎么敢放肆呢。”一面说，一面坐下吃茶。

那宝玉便和他说了些没要紧的散话。又说道谁家的戏子好，谁家的花园好，又告诉他谁家的丫头标致，谁家的酒席丰盛，又是谁家有奇货，又是谁家有异物。那贾芸口里只得顺着他说，说了一会，见宝玉有些懒懒的了，便起身告辞。宝玉也不甚留，只说：“你明儿闲了，只管来。”仍命小丫头子坠儿送他出去。

出了怡红院，贾芸见四顾无人，便把脚慢慢停着些走，口里一长一短和坠儿说话。先问他：“几岁了？名字叫什么？你父母在那一行上？在宝叔房内几年了？一个月多少钱？共总宝叔房内有几个女孩子？”那坠儿见问，便一桩桩的都告诉他



Baoyu, "a whole lot of things happened to make it slip my mind."

"That was my misfortune," replied Jia Yun with a smile. "And then you fell ill, uncle. Have you recovered completely?"

"Yes, thank you. I heard you were quite worn out after all those days' hard work."

"That's just as it should be. Your recovery, uncle, is a blessing to our whole family."

A maid had come in to offer him tea, and while talking with Baoyu he glanced surreptitiously at her. Slim with an oval face, she was dressed in a silver-red jacket, black satin sleeveless jacket and pleated white silk damask skirt. Having been in the mansion all through Baoyu's illness, Jia Yun remembered most of the people of any importance there and knew that this was no other than Xiren, who enjoyed a special status in Happy Red Court. As Baoyu was sitting there while she served tea, Jia Yun rose to his feet with a smile.

"How can I trouble you to pour the tea for me, sister?" he protested. "Don't treat me as a guest in my uncle's rooms. Let me pour tea myself."

"Sit down, sit down," said Baoyu. "Why stand on ceremony with the maids?"

"I mustn't forget my manners before the sisters in your apartments, uncle."

He sat down to sip tea while Baoyu chatted idly with him, telling him which families had the best actors, the finest gardens, the prettiest maids, the most sumptuous feasts, and the best collections of curios. Jia Yun did his best to respond in the same vein. But when he noticed that his host looked tired, he rose to take his leave and was not pressed to stay.

"Drop in any time you're free," said Baoyu, before telling Zhuier to see the visitor out.

As no one else was about outside Happy Red Court, Jia Yun slowed down to chat with the maid, asking her age, her name and her father's trade. How long had she been working for Baoyu? How much did she earn a month? How many other girls worked there? She answered each question in turn readily enough.

"That girl who spoke to you on our way in," he said, "isn't she called Xiaohong?"

了。贾芸又道：“才刚那个与你说话的，他可是叫小红？”坠儿笑道：“他倒叫小红。你问他作什么？”贾芸道：“方才他问你什么手帕子，我倒拣了一块。”坠儿听了笑道：“他问了我好几遍，可看见他的帕子。我有那么大工夫管这些事！今儿他又问我，他说替他找着了，他还谢我呢。才在蘅芜院门口说的，二爷也听见了，不是我撒谎。好二爷，你既拣了，给我罢。我看他拿什么谢我。”

原来上月贾芸进来种树之时，便拣了一块罗帕，便知是在园内的人失落的，但不知是那一个人的，故不敢造次。今听见红玉问坠儿，便知是红玉的，心内不胜喜幸。又见坠儿追索，心中早已得了主意，便向袖内将自己的一块取了出来，向坠儿笑道：“我给是给你，你若得了他的谢礼，可不许瞒着我。”坠儿满口里答应了，接了手帕子，送出贾芸，回来找红玉。不在话下。

如今且说宝玉打发了贾芸去后，意思懒懒的歪在床上，似有朦胧之态。袭人便走上来，坐在床沿上推他，说道：“怎么又要睡觉？闷的很，你出去逛逛不是？”宝玉见说，便拉他的手笑道：“我要去，只是舍不得你。”袭人笑道：“快起来罢！”一面说，一面拉了宝玉起来。宝玉道：“可往那里去呢？怪腻腻烦烦的。”袭人道：“你出去了就好了。只管这么蕨蕨，越发心里烦腻。”

宝玉无精打采的，只得依他。晃出了房门，在回廊上调弄了一回雀儿；出至院外，顺着沁芳溪看了一回金鱼。只见那边山坡上两只小鹿箭也似的跑来，宝玉不解其意。正自纳





Zhuier laughed.

“That’s right. Why do you ask?”

“She said something to you about a handkerchief. As it happens, I’ve picked one up.”

At this Zhuier smiled.

“She’s asked me several times whether I’ve seen her handkerchief. As if I had time to bother about such things! She asked me again today and promised to give me something if I found it. I’m not making this up — you heard her for yourself in front of Alpinia Park. If you’ve found it, sir, do give it to me and we’ll see what thanks I get.”

The fact is that the month before when supervising the planting of trees, Jia Yun had picked up a silk handkerchief in the Garden. He knew it must have been dropped by one of the girls there, but not knowing which had not ventured to take any action. When Xiaohong questioned Zhuier about it, he was delighted to learn that it was Xiaohong’s. And now that Zhuier gave him this opening, he had his plan ready worked out. He took a handkerchief of his own from his sleeve, and handed it her with a smile.

“All right, here you are,” he told her. “But mind you let me know what reward you get. No cheating!”

Zhuier readily took the handkerchief on these conditions and, having seen Jia Yun out, went off to look for Xiaohong.

But let us return to Baoyu, who felt so lackadaisical after Jia Yun left that he curled up as if for a nap. Xiren seated herself on the edge of his bed and nudged him.

“You mustn’t fall asleep again,” she said. “If you’re feeling bored, why not go out for a stroll?”

“I would.” Baoyu took her hand. “But I can’t bear to leave you.”

“Get up, quick!” she answered laughingly, pulling him up.

“But where shall I go? I’m thoroughly fed up.”

“You’ll feel better once you’re out. If you just stay moping here, you’ll only get more fed up.”

Baoyu listlessly took her advice and pattered out. After playing for a while with the birds in the gallery, he strolled beside the River of Seeping



闷，只见贾兰在后面拿着一张小弓追了下来。一见宝玉在前面，便站住了，笑道：“二叔叔在家里呢，我只当出门去了。”宝玉道：“你又淘气了。好好的射他作什么？”贾兰笑道：“这会子不念书，闲着作什么？所以演习演习骑射。”宝玉道：“把牙栽了，那时才不演呢。”

说着，顺着脚一径来至一个院门前，只见凤尾森森，龙吟细细。举目望门上一看，只见匾上写着“潇湘馆”三字。宝玉信步走入，只见湘帘垂地，悄无人声。走至窗前，觉得一缕幽香从碧纱窗中暗暗透出。宝玉便将脸贴在纱窗上，往里看时，耳内忽听得细细的长叹了一声道：“‘每日家情思昏昏。’”宝玉听了，不觉心内痒将起来。再看时，只见黛玉在床上伸懒腰。宝玉在窗外笑道：“为甚么‘每日家情思昏昏’？”一面说，一面掀帘子进来了。

林黛玉自觉忘情，不觉红了脸，拿袖子遮了脸，翻身向里装睡着了。宝玉才走上前来要扳他的身子，只见黛玉的奶娘并两个婆子却跟了进来，说：“妹妹睡觉呢，等醒了再请来。”刚说着，黛玉便翻身坐了起来，笑道：“谁睡觉呢。”那两三个婆子见黛玉起来，便笑道：“我们只当姑娘睡着了。”说着，便叫紫鹃说：“姑娘醒了，进来伺候。”一面说，一面都去了。

黛玉坐在床上，一面抬手整理鬓发，一面笑向宝玉道：



Fragrance to have a look at the goldfish. As he did so, two fawns came bolting from the hillside opposite, and he was wondering what could have frightened them when he saw Jia Lan give chase, a small bow in his hand. Seeing Baoyu ahead of him, the boy stopped short.

“So you’re at home, uncle,” he said cheerfully. “I thought you’d gone out.”

“What mischief are you up to now?” asked Baoyu. “Why shoot at those harmless creatures?”

“I’ve finished my lessons and I’ve nothing to do. I thought I’d practise archery.”

“I suppose you won’t stop,” said Baoyu, “till you’ve knocked out your teeth.”

His feet carried him on then to the gate of a courtyard. Bamboos dense as phoenix plumage there made a rustling music. And the board above the gate bore the inscription: Bamboo Lodge. Strolling in he found the bamboo portière down. Not a voice could be heard. As he approached the window a subtle fragrance drifted through the green gauze. He pressed his face against the gauze and heard a long faint sigh, followed by the words:

Day after day a drowsy dream of love.<sup>1</sup>

Baoyu felt his heart strangely stirred. And looking more closely, he could make out Daiyu, who was stretching herself on her bed.

He laughed.

“Why ‘Day after day a drowsy dream of love’?” he called, then raising the portière walked in.

Blushing to think she had given herself away, Daiyu hid her face with her sleeve and turned towards the wall, pretending to be asleep. As Baoyu went up to her to turn her over, her nurse and two other old women followed him in.

“Your cousin’s asleep, sir. We shall ask you in when she wakes up.”

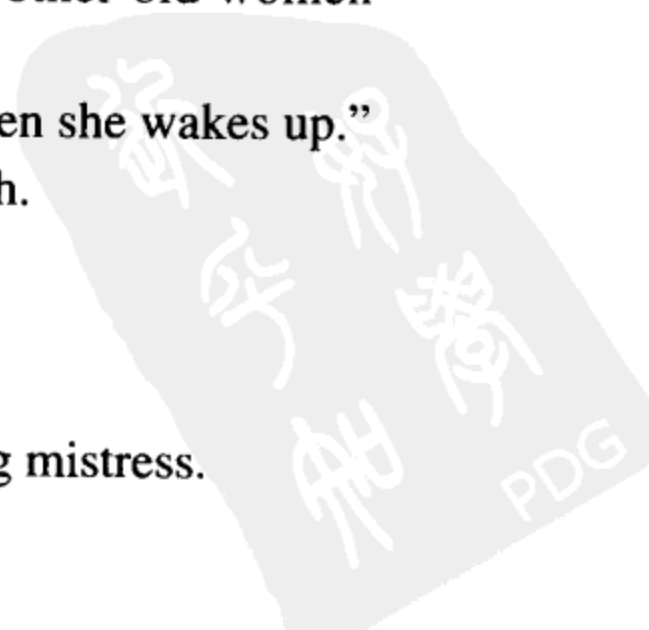
Daiyu promptly turned over and sat up with a laugh.

“Who’s asleep?”

The three old women smiled.

“Our mistake, miss.”

They left after calling Zijuan to attend to her young mistress.



“人家睡觉，你进来作什么？”宝玉见他星眼微伤，香腮带赤，不觉神魂早荡。一歪身坐在椅子上，笑道：“你才说什么？”黛玉道：“我没说什么。”宝玉笑道：“给你个榧子吃！我都听见了。”

二人正说话，只见紫鹃进来。宝玉笑道：“紫鹃，把你们的好茶倒碗我吃。”紫鹃道：“那里是好的呢？要好的，只是等袭人来。”黛玉道：“别理他，你先给我舀水去罢。”紫鹃笑道：“他是客，自然先倒了茶来再舀水去。”说着，倒茶去了。宝玉笑道：“好丫头，‘若共你多情小姐同鸳帐，怎舍得叠被铺床？’”林黛玉登时撂下脸来，说道：“二哥哥，你说什么？”宝玉笑道：“我何尝说什么”黛玉便哭道：“如今新兴的，外头听了村话来，也说给我听；看了混账书，也来拿我取笑儿。我成了爷们解闷的。”一面哭着，一面下床来，往外就走。宝玉不知要怎样，心下慌了，忙赶上来，“好妹妹，我一时该死，你别告诉去。我再要敢，嘴上就长个疔，烂了舌头。”



“What do you mean by coming in when people are asleep?” Daiyu challenged Baoyu with a smile as, sitting on the bed, she smoothed her hair.

The sight of her soft flushed cheeks, and her starry eyes now faintly misted over, enraptured Baoyu. He sank smiling into a chair.

“What was that you were saying just now?”

“I didn’t say anything.”

“Yes, you did. I heard you.”

Zijuan appeared at this point.

“Zijuan,” said Baoyu, “Pour a cup of that good tea of yours for me, will you?”

“What good tea have we got?” she retorted. “If you want good tea, better wait till Xiren comes.”

“Pay no attention to him,” said Daiyu. “First go and get me some water.”

Zijuan laughed.

“He’s a guest, so of course I must get him tea before I fetch you water.”

As she left to do this Baoyu exclaimed, “Good girl!

Should I share the bridal curtains with your sweet mistress,  
How could I give you the task of preparing the bed?”

At once Daiyu’s face clouded over.

“What’s that you said?” she demanded.

“I didn’t say anything, did I?” Baoyu chuckled.

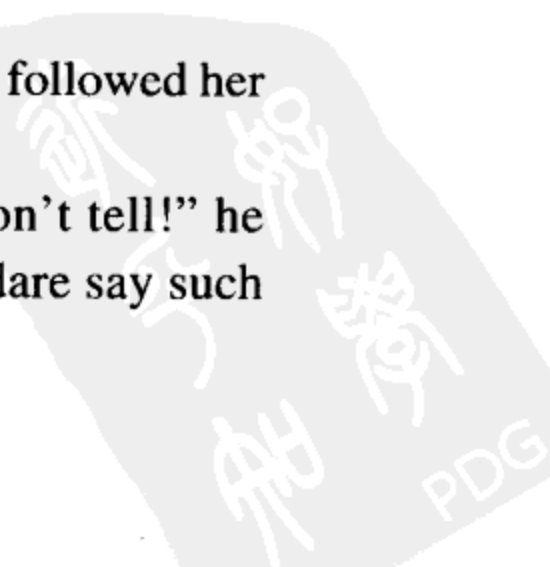
Daiyu began to cry.

“So this is your latest diversion,” she sobbed. “All the dirty talk you hear outside, you repeat to me; and any disgusting books you read, you quote to make fun of me. A laughing-stock for you gentlemen, that’s what I’ve become!”

Scrambling off the bed she walked away in tears. Baoyu followed her in alarm.

“Dear cousin, it was very wrong of me, but please don’t tell!” he begged. “May it blister my mouth and rot my tongue if I dare say such things again.”

Just then Xiren came in.





正说着，只见袭人走来说道：“快回去穿衣服，老爷叫你呢。”宝玉听了，不觉打了个雷的一般，也顾不得别的，疾忙回来穿衣服。出园来，只见焙茗在二门前等着。宝玉问道：“你可知道叫我是为什么？”焙茗道：“爷快出来罢，横竖是见去的，到那里就知道了。”一面说，一面催着宝玉。

转过大厅，宝玉心里还自狐疑。只听墙角边一阵哈哈大笑，回头只见薛蟠拍着手跳了出来，笑道：“要不说姨夫叫你，你那里出来的这么快。”焙茗也笑着跪下了。宝玉怔了半天，方解过来，是哄他。薛蟠连忙打恭作揖陪不是，又求“不要难为了小子，都是我逼他去的。”宝玉也无法了，只好笑问道：“你哄我也罢了，怎么说我父亲呢？我告诉姨妈去，评评这个理，可使得么？”薛蟠忙道：“好兄弟，我原为求你快些出来，就忘了忌讳这句话。改日你也哄我，说我的父亲就完了。”宝玉道：“噯，噯，越发该死了。”又向焙茗道：“反叛爷的，还跪着做什么！”焙茗连忙叩头起来。薛蟠道：“要不是我也不敢惊动，只因明儿五月初三日是我的生日，谁知古董行的程日兴，他不知那里寻了来的这么粗、这么长粉脆的鲜藕，这么大的大西瓜，这么长一尾新鲜的鲟鱼，这么大的一个暹罗国进贡的灵柏香熏的暹猪。你说，他这四样礼可难得不难得？那鱼、猪不过贵而难得，这藕和瓜





“Quick,” she said. “Come back and change. The master wants you.”

This summons fell on his ears like a clap of thunder. Forgetting all else he rushed back to change, and hurried out of the Garden. Beiming was waiting for him at the inner gate.

“Do you know why my father wants me?” asked Baoyu.

“Hurry up, sir,” said the page. “At any rate you’ll have to go. You’ll find out why when you get there.”

He hustled his master off.

They passed the main hall, Baoyu with a sinking heart, when a bellow of laughter sounded just round the corner. Out sprang Xue Pan, clapping his hands.

“If I hadn’t said your father wanted you, you’d never have come so quickly,” he declared.

Beiming, laughing too, fell on his knees.

It took some moments for Baoyu to realize he had been tricked.

Xue Pan bowed in apology, raising clasped hands.

“Don’t blame this young rascal,” he said. “I put him up to it.”

Baoyu had no alternative but to smile.

“I don’t mind your fooling me,” he said, “but why pretend to be my father? Shall I go and ask your mother what she thinks of your conduct?”

“My dear cousin, I was in such a hurry to see you that I forgot that taboo. Another day you can get even with me by pretending that *my* father wants to see *me*.”

“You wretch!” exclaimed Baoyu. “You deserve to drop dead.” He rounded on Beiming. “What are you still kneeling there for, you treacherous dog?”

The page promptly kowtowed and got up.

“I wouldn’t have disturbed you,” Xue Pan explained, “but the third of the fifth month will be my birthday. And Cheng Rixing the curio dealer managed — goodness only knows where — to get hold of a fresh, crisp lotus root this thick and this long, a huge melon this size, a fresh sturgeon this long and a whopping great Siamese pig smoked with fragrant cedar which came as tribute from Siam. They must have been hard to come by, such presents, eh? The fish and the pig are just expensive rarities, but heaven knows how they managed to grow a lotus-root and



亏他怎么种出来的。我连忙孝敬了母亲，赶着给你们老太太、姨父、姨母送了些去。如今留了些，我要自己吃，恐怕折福；左思右想，除我之外，惟有你还配吃，所以特请你来。可巧唱曲儿的小么儿又才来了，我同你乐一日何如？”

一面说，一面来至他书房里。只见詹光、程日兴、胡斯来、单聘仁等并唱曲儿的都在这里，见他进来，请安的，问好的，都彼此见过了。吃了茶，薛蟠即命人摆酒来。说犹未了，众小厮七手八脚摆了半天，方才停当归坐。宝玉果见瓜、藕新异，因笑道：“我的寿礼还未送来，倒先扰了。”薛蟠道：“可是呢，明儿你送我什么？”宝玉道：“我可有什么可送的？若论银钱吃的穿的东西，究竟还不是我的；惟有我写一张字，画一张画，才算是我的。”

薛蟠笑道：“你提画儿，我才想起来。昨儿我看人家一张春宫，画的着实好。上面还有许多的字，也没细看，只看落的款，是‘庚黄’画的。真真的好的不了得！”宝玉听说，心下猜疑道：“古今字画也都见过些，那里有个‘庚黄’？”想了半天，不觉笑将起来。命人取过笔来，在手心里写了两个字，又问薛蟠道：“你看真了是‘庚黄’？”薛蟠道：“怎么看不真！”宝玉将手一撒，与他看道：“别是这两字罢？其实与‘庚黄’相去不远。”众人都看时，原来是“唐寅”两个字，都笑道：“想必是这两字，大爷一时眼花了也未可知。”薛蟠只觉没意思，笑道：“谁知他‘糖银’‘果银’的。”







melon of that size. I gave some at once to my mother, then sent portions to your old lady and your parents; but I've still quite a bit left. To hog it all myself might bring me bad luck; and after thinking it over I decided you were the only one fit to share it. So I came over specially to invite you. Luckily a singing-boy has just turned up too. Why don't we make a day of it together?"

By now they had reached his study where they found Zhan Guang, Cheng Rixing, Hu Silai and Shan Pinren as well as the singing-boy. When greetings had been exchanged and tea drunk, Xue Pan ordered the feast to be served. At once his pages bustled about to lay the table, and when all was finally ready the party took their seats.

Baoyu saw that the melon and lotus-root were quite phenomenal.

"I haven't yet sent you over a birthday present, but here I am enjoying myself at your expense," he remarked with a smile.

"That's right," said Xue Pan. "What are you planning to send me?"

"I haven't anything really. The money, clothes, food and stuff like that in my place aren't mine to give. The only thing I could give you of my *own* would be a scroll of my calligraphy or painting."

"Talking of painting," put in Xue Pan with a grin, "reminds me of an erotic picture I saw in someone's house the other day. Really superb it was. I didn't read all the inscriptions carefully, just noticed the artist's name: Geng Huang. The picture was marvellous."

Baoyu was puzzled. He knew the work of many calligraphers and painters past and present, but had never heard of an artist called Geng Huang. After a little thought he burst out laughing. He called for a brush and wrote two characters on the palm of his left hand.

"Are you sure the name was Geng Huang?" he asked Xue Pan.

"Of course."

Baoyu held out his hand.

"It wasn't these two characters? They're not very different."

When they saw he had written Tang Yin<sup>2</sup>, they declared, laughing, "That must be it. Mr. Xue's eyes may have been blurred at the time."

Xue Pan grinned sheepishly.

"Who cares whether the fellow's name means 'sweet-silver' or 'nut-silver'?"<sup>3</sup> he spluttered in his embarrassment.



正说着，小厮来回“冯大爷来了”。宝玉便知是神武将军冯唐之子冯紫英来了。薛蟠等一齐都叫“快请”。说犹未了，只见冯紫英一路说笑，已进来了。众人忙起席让坐。冯紫英笑道：“好呀！也不出门了，在家里高乐罢。”宝玉、薛蟠都笑道：“一向少会，老世伯身上康健？”紫英答道：“家父倒也托庇康健。近来家母偶着些风寒，不好了两天。”薛蟠见他面上有些青伤，便笑道：“这脸上又和谁挥拳的？挂了幌子了。”冯紫英笑道：“从那一遭把仇都尉的儿子打伤了，我就记了再不恁气，如何又挥拳？这个脸上，是前日打围在铁网山，教兔鹘捎一翅膀。”宝玉道：“几时的话？”紫英道：“三月二十八日去的，前儿也就回来了。”宝玉道：“怪道前儿初三四儿，我在沈世兄家去，不见你呢。我要问，不知怎么就忘了。单你去了，还是老世伯也去了？”紫英道：“可不是家父去，我没法儿，去罢了。难道我闲疯了，咱们几个人吃酒听唱的不乐，寻那个苦恼去？这一次，大不幸之中又大幸。”

薛蟠众人见他吃完了茶，都说道：“且入席，有话慢慢的说。”冯紫英听说，便立起身来，说道：“论理，我该陪饮几杯才是。只是今儿有一件大大要紧的事，回去还要见家父面回，实不敢领。”薛蟠、宝玉众人那里肯依，死拉着不放。冯紫英笑道：“这又奇了。你我这些年，那一回有这个道理





Just then "Mr. Feng" was announced by one of the servants. Baoyu realized this must be Feng Ziyong, the son of Feng Tang, General Shenwu. All urged that he be asked in. And before the words were out of their mouths Feng Ziyong strode, chatting and laughing, into the room. They rose to offer him a seat.

"Fine!" Feng chuckled. "You don't go out, just enjoy yourselves at home."

Both Xue Pan and Baoyu smiled.

"We haven't seen you for some time," they said. "Is your father well?"

"Very well, thank you. But my mother recently contracted a chill and has been out of sorts for two days."

Xue Pan noticed some bruises on his face.

"Been fighting again?" he asked. "Who left his mark on your face?"

"Ever since I beat up Colonel Qiu's son I've made a point of keeping my temper. No more fist-fights for me. This happened the other day out hunting on Iron-Net Mountain, when my falcon caught me on the cheek with its wing."

"When was that?" asked Baoyu.

"We left on the twenty-eighth of the third month and only got back the day before yesterday."

"No wonder I didn't see you when I called on Shen on the third, or was it the fourth. I meant to ask where you were but I forgot. Did you go alone on this trip or with your father?"

"With my father, of course. I couldn't get out of it. Do you think me crazy enough to prefer roughing it to drinking with you and listening to songs? This time, though, something lucky turned up in my bad luck."

As he had now finished his tea, Xue Pan and the others asked him to join them at the table and take his time telling them just what had happened. But instead Feng rose to leave.

"You must excuse me. Really I should drink a few cups with you, but I've some very urgent business today to report to my father."

Xue Pan, Baoyu and the others would not hear of this and laid hands on him to keep him.

"Don't be ridiculous. You ought to know me better," he protested. "I

的?果然不能遵命。若必定叫我领,拿大杯来,我领两杯就是了。”众人听说,只得罢了,薛蟠执壶,宝玉把盏,斟了两大海。那冯紫英站着,一气而尽。宝玉道:“你到底把这个‘不幸之幸’说完了再走。”冯紫英笑道:“今儿说的也不尽兴。我为这个,还要特治一东,请你们去细谈一谈;一则还有可慰之处。”说着,执手就走。薛蟠道:“越发说的人热刺刺的丢不下。多早晚才请我们,告诉了,也免的人犹疑。”冯紫英道:“多则十日,少则八天。”一面说,一面出门,上马去了。众人回来,依席又饮了一回方散。

宝玉回至园中,袭人正记挂着他去见贾政,不知是祸是祸;只见宝玉醉醺醺的回来,问其原故,宝玉一一向他说了。袭人道:“人家牵肠挂肚的等着,你且高乐去,也到底打发人来给个信儿。”宝玉道:“我何尝不要送信儿,只因冯世兄来了,就混忘了。”

正说,只见宝钗走进来,笑道:“偏了我们新鲜东西了。”宝玉笑道:“姐姐家的东西,自然先偏了我们了。”宝钗摇头笑道:“昨儿哥哥倒特特的请我吃,我不吃,叫他留着送人请人罢。我知道我的命小福薄,不配吃那个。”说着,丫鬟倒了茶来,吃茶说闲话儿,不在话下。

却说那林黛玉听见贾政叫了宝玉去了,一日不回来,心





really can't stay. But if you insist, get me a big cup and I'll drain two cups with you."

They had to agree to this. Xue Pan took the pot, Baoyu held the cup, and they poured two large cupfuls which Feng Ziyong stood up and drained in a single breath.

"Do tell us before you leave what's your good luck in a stretch of bad," urged Baoyu.

Feng Ziyong only laughed.

"I can't go into the details today. But I promise to invite you all to a special party when we can have a good talk. I've a favour to ask you too." Raising his clasped hands to say goodbye he started off.

"You're just whetting our curiosity," objected Xue Pan. "When is this party to be? Tell us now so as not to leave us in suspense."

"In ten days at the latest, maybe eight."

Then Feng Ziyong went out, mounted his horse and rode off. The others returned from seeing him off to drink some more before the party dispersed.

When Baoyu went back to the Garden, Xiren was still worrying about the summons from his father, not knowing whether it meant trouble or the reverse. Seeing that Baoyu was tipsy, she asked him what had happened and he told her in detail.

"We were waiting here on tenterhooks while you had a good time," she said reproachfully. "You might at least have sent word."

"I meant to, but when Feng turned up I forgot."

Just then Baochai came in.

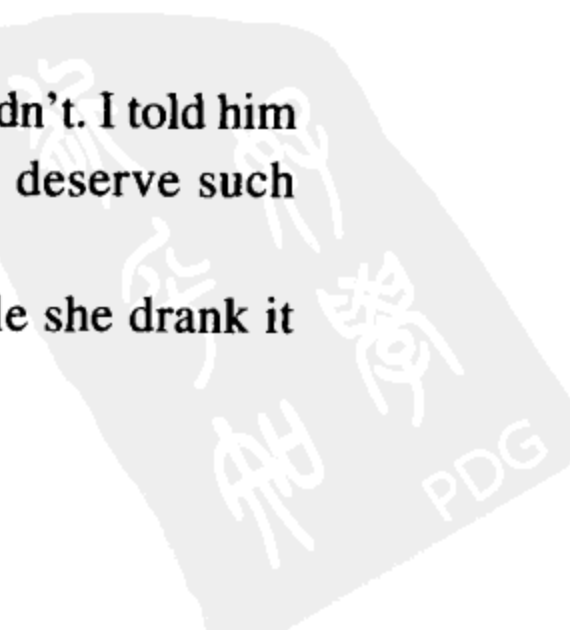
"So you've been treated to those delicacies of ours," she teased.

"Surely you and your family must have tasted them before us, cousin," he countered.

Baochai shook her head.

"Yesterday my brother did urge me to try them, but I didn't. I told him to keep them for others. I know it's not in my stars to deserve such dainties."

A maid brought her some tea as she spoke, and while she drank it they chatted. But no more of this.





中也替他忧虑。至晚饭后，闻得宝玉来了，心里要找他问问是怎么样了。一步步行来，见宝钗进宝玉的院内去了，自己即便随后走了来。刚到了沁芳桥，只见各色水禽都在池中浴水，也认不出名色来，但见一个个文彩炫耀，好看异常，因而站住看了一会。再往怡红院来，只见院门关着，黛玉便以手扣门。

谁知晴雯和碧痕正拌了嘴，没好气。忽见宝钗来了，那晴雯正把气移在宝钗身上，正在院内抱怨说：“有事没事跑了来坐着，叫我们三更半夜的不得睡觉！”忽听又有人叫门，晴雯越发动了气，也并不问是谁，便说道：“都睡下了，明儿再来罢！”林黛玉素知丫头们的情性，他们彼此玩耍惯了，恐怕院内的丫头没听真是他的声音，只当是别的丫头们了，所以不开门，因而又高声说道：“是我，还不开么？”晴雯偏生还没听出来，便使性子说道：“凭你是谁，二爷吩咐的，一概不许放人进来呢！”林黛玉听了，不觉气怔在门外。待要高声问他，逗起气来，自己又回思一番：“虽说是舅母家如同自己家一样，到底是客边。如今父母双亡，无依无靠，现在他家依栖。如今认真淘气，也觉没趣。”一面想，一面又滚下泪珠来。正是回去不是，站着不是。正没主意，只听里面一阵笑语之声，细听一听，竟是宝玉、宝钗二人。林黛玉心中益发动了气，左思右想，忽然想起早起的事来：“必竟是宝玉恼我要告他的原故。但只我何尝告你去了，你也不打听打听，就恼我到这一步田地。你今儿不叫我进来，难道明儿就不



Daiyu too had been worried on Baoyu's behalf when she heard that he had not come back all day after being sent for by his father. After dinner she learned of his return and decided to find out from him what had happened. As she strolled over she saw Baochai going into Happy Red Court before her. But noticing some unusually beautiful water-fowl of various species unknown to her splashing about in the pool by Seeping Fragrance Bridge, she stopped for a while to admire their brilliant colours. By the time she reached Happy Red Court the gate was closed and she was obliged to knock.

It so happened that Qingwen was in a bad humour, having just quarrelled with Bihen, and at Baochai's arrival she transferred her anger to the visitor. She was grumbling in the courtyard:

"She keeps coming here and sitting around for no reason, keeping us up till the third watch at night."

Now this fresh knocking on the gate only incensed her further.

"They've all gone to bed," she cried, not troubling to ask who it was. "Come back tomorrow."

Daiyu knew the maids' ways and the tricks they played on each other. Assuming that the girl in the courtyard had failed to recognize her voice and taken her for another maid, she called out again more loudly.

"It's me. Open the gate!"

Still Qingwen did not recognize her voice.

"I don't care who you are," she said crossly. "Master Bao's given orders that no one's to be admitted."

Rooted indignantly to the spot and tempted to let fly at her, Daiyu reflected, "Although my aunt's house is a second home to me, I'm after all an outsider here. With both my parents dead, I've no one to turn to except this family. It would be foolish to start a real rumpus."

As she thought thus, tears ran down her cheeks. She was wondering whether or not to go back when the sound of talk and laughter inside — she distinguished the voices of Baoyu and Baochai — upset her even more. She thought back then to the events of the morning.

"Baoyu must be angry with me, thinking I told on him," she reflected. "But I never did! You ought to investigate before flying into a temper like this. You can shut me out today, but shall we not see each other still

见面了！”越想越伤感起来，也不顾苍苔露冷，花径风寒，独立墙角边花阴之下，悲悲戚戚呜咽起来。

原来这林黛玉秉绝代姿容，具希世俊美，不期这一哭，那附近柳枝花朵上的宿鸟栖鸦一闻此声，俱忒楞楞飞起远避，不忍再听。真是：

花魂默默无情绪，鸟梦痴痴何处惊。

因有一首诗道：

颦儿才貌世应希，独抱幽芳出绣闺。

呜咽一声犹未了，落花满地鸟惊飞。

那林黛玉正自啼哭，忽听“吱喽”一声，院门开处，不知是那一个出来。要知端的，且听下回分解。





tomorrow?”

The more she thought, the more distressed she felt. Oblivious of the cold dew on the green moss and the chill wind on the path, standing under the blossom by the corner of the wall she gave way to sobs. And the sound of this beauty's weeping — for Daiyu was the loveliest creature ever seen — made the birds fly away from their roosts on the willows and flowering trees, unable to bear her distress.

Truly:

The hearts of the flowers were broken,  
The birds were woken from their senseless dreams.

The reason is told in these lines:

Peerless the beauty and talent of this girl  
Wrapped in scent from embroidered curtains come alone;  
Before her first sob dies away  
Flowers strew the ground, the affrighted birds have flown.

As Daiyu was sobbing to herself the gate creaked open. If you want to know who came out, read the next chapter.







## 第二十七回

滴翠亭杨妃戏彩蝶 埋香冢飞燕泣残红

话说林黛玉正自悲泣，忽听院门响处，只见宝钗出来了，宝玉、袭人一群人送了出来。待要上去问着宝玉，又恐当着众人问着了宝玉不便，因而闪过一旁，让宝钗去了。宝玉等进去关了门，方转过来，犹望着门洒了几点泪。自觉无味，方转身回来，无精打彩的卸了残妆。

紫鹃、雪雁素日知道林黛玉的情性：无事闷坐，不是愁眉，便是长叹；且好端端的不知为什么，常常的便自泪道不干的。先时还有人解劝，怕他思父母，想家乡，受了委曲，只得用话宽慰解劝。谁知后来一年一月的竟常常的如此，把这个样儿看惯，也都不理论了。所以也没人去理，由他去闷坐，只管睡觉去了。那林黛玉倚着床栏杆，两手抱着膝，眼睛含着泪，好似木雕泥塑的一般，直坐到二更多天，方才睡了。一宿无话。

至次日，乃是四月二十六日，原来这日未时交芒种节。尚古风俗：凡交芒种节的这日，都要设摆各色礼物，祭饯花神。言芒种一过，便是夏日了，众花皆卸，花神退位，须要饯行。然闺中更兴这件风俗，所以大观园中之人都早起来



## Chapter 27

### Baochai Chases a Butterfly to Dripping Emerald Pavilion Daiyu Weeps over Fallen Blossom by the Tomb of Flowers

As Daiyu was weeping, the gate creaked open and out came Baochai escorted by Baoyu, Xiren and other maids. Daiyu was tempted to accost Baoyu, but not wanting to embarrass him in public she stepped aside until Baochai had left and the others had gone in, when she came back and shed more tears before the closed gate. Then she went back in low spirits to her room and prepared listlessly for bed.

Zijuan and Xueyan knew their young mistress' ways. She would often sit moodily frowning or sighing over nothing or, for no apparent reason, would give way to long spells of weeping. At first they had tried to comfort her, imagining that she missed her parents and home or that someone had been unkind; but as time went by and they found this was her habit they paid little further attention. So tonight they withdrew to bed, leaving her to brood by herself.

Daiyu leaned against her bed-rail, clasping her knees. Her eyes were brimming with tears. There she stayed motionless as a statue, not lying down until after the second watch.

The next day was the twenty-sixth of the fourth month, the Festival of Grain in Ear. It was the time-honoured custom on this day to offer all manner of gifts and a farewell feast to the God of Flowers, for this festival was said to mark the beginning of summer when all the blossom had withered and the God of Flowers had to resign his throne and be seen off. As this custom is most faithfully observed by women, all the inmates of Grand View Garden rose early that day. The girls used flowers and osiers to weave small sedan-chairs and horses, or made pennants and flags of silk and gauze which they tied with gay ribbons to every tree and flower, turning the whole Garden into a blaze of colour. They decked themselves

了。那些女孩子们，或用花瓣柳枝编成轿马的，或用绫锦纱罗叠成干旄旌幢的，都用彩线系了。每一棵树、每一枝花上，都系了这些物事。满园里绣带飘飘，花枝招展，更兼这些人打扮得桃羞杏让，燕妒莺惭，一时也道不尽。

且说宝钗、迎春、探春、惜春、李纨、凤姐等并同了大姐、香菱与众丫鬟们在园内玩耍，独不见林黛玉。迎春因说道：“林妹妹怎么不见？好个懒丫头！这会子还睡觉不成？”宝钗道：“你们等着，等我去闹了他来。”说着，便丢下众人，一直往潇湘馆来。正走着，只见文官等十二个女孩子也来了，上来问了好，说了一回闲话。宝钗回身指道：“他们都在那里呢，你们找他们去。我叫林姑娘去就来。”说着，便逶迤往潇湘馆来。忽然抬头见宝玉进去了，宝钗便站住，低头想了一想：“宝玉和林黛玉是从小儿一处长大，他兄妹间多有不避嫌疑之处，嘲笑喜怒无常；况且林黛玉素习猜忌，好弄小性儿的。此刻自己也跟了进去，一则宝玉不便，二则黛玉嫌疑。罢了，倒是回来的妙。”想毕，抽身回来。

刚要寻别的姊妹去，忽见前面一双玉色蝴蝶，大如团扇，一上一下迎风翩跹，十分有趣。宝钗意欲扑了来玩耍，遂向袖中取出扇子来，向草地下扑。只见那一双蝴蝶忽起忽落，来来往往，穿花度柳，将欲过河去了。倒引的宝钗蹑手蹑脚的，一直跟到池中滴翠亭上，香汗淋漓，娇喘细细。宝钗也无心扑了，刚欲回来，只听滴翠亭里边嘁嘁喳喳有人说话。原来这亭子四面俱是游廊曲桥，盖在池中水上，四面雕镂桶子糊着纸。

宝钗在亭外听见说话，便煞住脚往里细听。只听说道：



out so prettily, too, as to put the very flowers and birds to shame. But time forbids us to dwell on that splendid scene.

Now Baochai, the three Jia girls, Li Wan and Xifeng were enjoying themselves in the Garden with Xifeng's little daughter as well as Xiangling and the other maids. Only one person was missing, and that was Daiyu.

"Why isn't Cousin Lin here?" asked Yingchun. "Surely the lazy creature isn't still sleeping?"

"I'll go and rouse her," volunteered Baochai. "The rest of you wait here and I'll soon bring her."

She set off instantly for Bamboo Lodge.

On the way she met the twelve young actresses headed by Wenguan, who greeted her and chatted for a while. Then Baochai told them how to find the others and, having explained her own errand, followed the winding path towards Daiyu's quarters. As she approached Bamboo Lodge she saw Baoyu enter the courtyard. That made her pause and lower her head in thought.

"Baoyu and Daiyu grew up under one roof," she reflected. "They're so free and easy together, they don't care how they tease each other or show their feelings. And Daiyu's rather jealous and petty-minded. If I follow Baoyu in, he may not like it and she may resent it. I'd better go back."

She had started back to rejoin the other girls when a pair of jade-coloured butterflies the size of a circular fan appeared before her. They fluttered up and down most bewitchingly in the breeze. What fun it would be to catch them! Baochai drew her fan from her sleeve and ran after them over the grass. Flitting now high now low, this way and that, the butterflies led her through the flowers and willows all the way to the water's brink. By the time she neared Dripping Emerald Pavilion, panting and perspiring from all her exertions, she decided to give up the pursuit and go back. But just then she heard muffled voices from the pavilion.

Now this pavilion, which stood out in the middle of the pool, was surrounded on four sides by covered corridors with balustrades and connected with the banks by zigzag bridges. It had papered latticed windows on all four sides. Baochai stopped outside it to catch what was being said.

"Look at this handkerchief. If it's the one you lost, you can have it. If

“你瞧瞧这手帕子，果然是你丢的那块，你就拿着；要不是，就还芸二爷去。”又有一人说话：“可不是我那块！拿来给我罢。”只听道：“你拿什么谢我呢？难道白寻了来不成。”又答道：“我既许了谢你，自然不哄你的。”又听说道：“我寻了来给你，自然谢我；但只是拣的人，你就不拿什么谢他？”又回道：“你别胡说。他是个爷们家，拣了我们的东西，自然该还的。我拿什么谢他呢？”又听说道：“你不谢他，我怎么回他呢？况且他再三再四的和我说了，若没谢的，不许我给你呢。”半晌，又听答道：“也罢，拿我这个给他，算谢他的罢。你要告诉别人呢？须说个誓来。”又听说道：“我要告诉一个人，就长一个疔，日后不得好死！”又听说道：“嗳呀！咱们只顾说话，看有人来悄悄在外头听见。不如把这桶子都推开了，便是人见咱们在这里，他们只当我说玩话呢。若走到跟前，咱们也看的见，就别说了。”

宝钗在外面听见这话，心中吃惊，想道：“怪道从古至今那些奸淫狗盗的人，心机都不错。这一开了，见我在这里，他们岂不臊了。况才说话的语音，大似宝玉房里红儿的言语。他素昔眼空心大，是个头等刁钻古怪东西。今儿我听了他的短儿，一时人急造反，狗急跳墙，不但生事，而且我还没趣。如今便赶着躲了，料也躲不及，少不得要使个‘金蝉脱壳’的法子。”犹未想完，只听“咯吱”一声，宝钗便故意放重了脚步，笑说道：“颦儿，我看你往那里藏！”一面说，一面故意往前赶。那亭内的红玉、坠儿刚一推窗，只听宝钗如此说着往前赶，两个人都唬怔了。宝钗反向他二人笑





not, I'll take it back to Master Yun."

"Of course it's mine. Let me have it."

"What thanks am I going to get? You don't expect me to do this for nothing, do you?"

"Don't worry. I promised you something, I won't cheat you."

"I should hope not, after I've brought it back to you. But how are you going to thank the man who found it?"

"Don't be silly. He's a young gentleman. It's only right he should return what he finds. How could I reward him?"

"If you don't, what am I to say to him? Besides, he told me repeatedly he wouldn't let me give you this unless you offered him some reward."

A short silence followed.

"All right," came the answer at last. "Give him this from me to thank him. But swear you won't let on to a soul."

"If I do, may a boil break out in my mouth and may I die a miserable death!"

Then a note of alarm was sounded.

"Goodness! We've been so busy talking, what if someone's eavesdropping outside? We'd better open the windows. Then if people see us they'll assume we're just chatting. And if anyone comes near we'll see her and can change the subject."

Baochai could hardly believe her ears.

"No wonder they say wicked people have always been cunning!" she thought. "How they're going to blush when they open the window and see me! One of them sounded like that sly, conceited Xiaohong who works for Baoyu. She's a strange crafty creature if ever I saw one. 'Desperation drives men to rebel and a dog to jump over a wall.' If she thinks I know her secret there may be trouble, and that would be awkward for me. Well, it's too late to hide now. I must try to avoid suspicion by throwing them off the scent...."

That same instant she heard the thud of a window opening. At once she ran forward as noisily as she could, calling out laughingly:

"Where are you hiding, Daiyu?"

Xiaohong and Zhuier, who had just opened the window, were stag-

道：“你们把林姑娘藏在那里了？”坠儿道：“何曾见林姑娘了？”宝钗道：“我才在河边看着林姑娘在这里蹲着弄水儿的。我要悄悄的唬他一跳，还没有走到跟前，他倒看见我了，朝东一绕就不见了。别是藏在这里头了。”一面说，一面故意进去寻了一寻，抽身就走，口内说道：“一定又钻在山子洞里去了。遇见蛇，咬一口也罢了。”一面说，一面走，心中又好笑：这件事算遮过去了，不知他二人是怎样。

谁知红玉听了宝钗的话，便信以为真。让宝钗去远，便拉坠儿道：“了不得了！林姑娘蹲在这里，一定听了话去了！”坠儿听说，也半日不言语。红玉又道：“这可怎么样呢？”坠儿道：“便是听见了，管谁筋疼，各人干各人的就完了。”红玉道：“若是宝姑娘听见，还倒罢了。林姑娘嘴里又爱刻薄人，心里又细，他一听见了，倘或走露了风声，怎么样呢？”二人正说着，只见文官、香菱、司棋、待书等上亭子来了。二人只得掩住这话，且和他们玩笑。

只见凤姐儿站在山坡上招手叫，红玉连忙弃了众人，跑至凤姐前，堆着笑问：“奶奶使唤作什么事？”凤姐打量了一打量，见他生的干净俏丽，说话知趣，因笑道：“我的丫头今儿没跟进我来。我这会子想起一件事来，要使唤个人出去，不知你能干不能干，说的齐全不齐全？”红玉笑道：“奶奶有什么话，只管吩咐我说去。若说的不齐全，误了奶奶的事，凭奶奶责罚就是了。”凤姐笑道：“你是那位小姐房里的？我使你出去，他回来找你，我好替你说的。”红玉道：“我是宝二爷房里的。”凤姐听了，笑道：“嗳哟！你原是宝玉房里



gered to see her before them.

“Where have you hidden Miss Lin?” Baochai asked them merrily.

“Miss Lin? We haven’t seen her,” Zhuier answered.

“Just now, from the other bank, I saw her crouching here dabbling in the water. I meant to take her by surprise but she spotted me coming and dashed off to the east. And now she’s disappeared. Are you sure she’s not hiding in there?”

She deliberately went in and made a search before going on.

“She must have popped into some cave in the rocks,” she muttered. “If a snake bites her, serve her right.”

With that she went off, laughing up her sleeve at the way she had foxed them and wondering what they were thinking.

Xiaohong, in fact, had been quite taken in. As soon as Baochai was safely out of earshot she caught Zhuier by the arm.

“Heaven help us!” she whispered. “If Miss Lin was here she must have overheard us.”

Zhuier said nothing, and a long pause followed.

“What shall we do?” asked Xiaohong.

“What if she did hear? This is none of her business.”

“It wouldn’t have been so bad Miss Xue overhearing. But Miss Lin’s narrow-minded and likes to make cutting remarks. If she heard, and gives us away, what shall we do?”

A stop was put to this discussion by the arrival of Wenguan with Xiangling, Siqi and Daishu. The two girls chatted with them as if nothing had happened until Xiaohong saw Xifeng beckoning from the slope. Leaving the other girls, she ran over to her.

“Can I do anything for Your Ladyship?” she asked, smiling sweetly.

Xifeng had a close look at her and was favourably impressed by her neat good looks and pleasant way of talking.

“I didn’t bring my maids with me today,” she said. “But now I’ve remembered something I want done. Do you think you could deliver a message correctly?”

Xiaohong smiled.

“Just give me your instructions, madam. If I don’t get the message right and hold up your business, you can punish me.”

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的，怪道呢。也罢了，等他问，我替你说。你到我们家，告诉你平姐姐：外头屋里桌子上汝窑盘子架儿底下放着一卷银子，那是一百六十两，给绣匠的工价，等张材家的来要，当面称给他瞧了，再给他拿去。再里头床头间有一个小荷包拿了来。”

红玉听说，撒身去了，回来只见凤姐不在这山坡子上了。因见司棋从山洞里出来，站着系裙子，便赶上来问道：“姐姐，可知道二奶奶往那里去了？”司棋道：“没理论。”红玉听了，抽身又往四下里一看，只见那边探春、宝钗在池边看鱼。红玉上来陪笑问道：“姑娘们可知道二奶奶那去了？”探春道：“往你大奶奶院里找去。”红玉听了，才往稻香村来，顶头的只见晴雯、绮霰、碧痕、紫绡、麝月、待书、入画、莺儿等一群人来了。晴雯一见了红玉，便说道：“你只是疯罢！院子里花儿也不浇，雀儿也不喂，茶炉子也不烧，就在外头逛。”红玉道：“昨儿二爷说了，今儿不用浇花，过一日浇一回罢。我喂雀儿的时候，姐姐还睡觉呢。”碧痕道：“茶炉子呢？”红玉道：“今儿不该我烧的班儿，有茶没茶别问我。”绮霰道：“你听听他的嘴！你们别说了，让他逛去罢。”红玉道：“你们再问问我逛了没逛？二奶奶使唤我说话、取东西的。”说着，将荷包举给他们看，方没言语了，大家分路走开。晴雯冷笑道：“怪道呢！原来爬上高枝儿去





"Tell me, which of the young ladies do you work for? Then I can explain where you are if she asks for you."

"I'm attached to Master Bao's apartments."

Xifeng chuckled.

"I see. That accounts for it. All right, if he asks, I'll let him know where you are. Now go to my house and tell your sister Pinger that she'll find a packet containing a hundred and sixty taels of silver under the stand of the *ju*-ware plate on the table in the outer room. That's for the embroiderers. When Zhang Cai's wife comes, she's to weigh it in her presence and let her take it. And there's another thing. I want you to bring me the pouch which is by the pillow on the bed in the inner room"

Xiaohong went off to carry out these orders. She returned presently to find that Xifeng had vanished. But Siqi had just emerged from a cave and stopped to fasten her skirt. Xiaohong approached her.

"Know where the Second Mistress has gone?" she asked.

"I didn't notice."

Xiaohong looked around and went to ask Tanchun and Baochai, who were watching the fish not far off.

"You'll find her with Madam Li Wan, I think," Tanchun told her.

Xiaohong promptly set off to Paddy-Sweet Cottage, but on the way met Qingwen and half a dozen other maids.

"Still prancing about!" exclaimed Qingwen as soon as she set eyes on her. "You haven't watered the flowers, fed the birds or lit the tea-stove in our courtyard, yet you gad about outside."

"Yesterday Master Bao said the flowers needn't be watered today — once every other day would do," Xiaohong retorted. "I fed the birds while you were still asleep."

"And what about the tea-stove?" demanded Bihen.

"It's not *my* turn today, so don't ask me whether there's any tea or not."

"Just listen to the way she talks," jeered Yixian. "You'd all better keep quiet and let her fool about."

"Who says I was fooling about?" snapped Xiaohong. "I've been on an errand for the Second Mistress."

With that she showed them the pouch to silence them, and they parted company.



了，把我不放在眼里。不知说了一句话半句话，名儿姓儿知道了不曾呢，就把他兴的这个样！这一遭半遭儿的算不得什么，过了后儿还听得么！有本事从今儿出了这园子，长长远远的在高枝儿上才算得。”一面说着去了。

这里红玉听说，不便分证，只得忍着气来找凤姐儿。到了李氏房中，果见凤姐儿在这里和李氏说话儿呢。红玉上来回道：“平姐姐说，奶奶刚出来了，他就把银子收了起来，才将张材家的来取，当面称了给他拿去了。”说着，将荷包递了上去。又道：“平姐姐叫我回奶奶：才旺儿进来讨奶奶的示下，好往那家去的。平姐姐就把那话按着奶奶的主意打发他去了。”凤姐笑道：“他怎么按我的主意打发去了？”红玉道：“平姐姐说：我们奶奶问这里奶奶好。原是我们二爷不在家，虽然迟了两天，只管请奶奶放心。等五奶奶好些，我们奶奶还会了五奶奶来瞧奶奶呢。五奶奶前儿打发了人来说，舅奶奶带了信来了，问奶奶好，还要和这里的姑奶奶寻两丸延年神验万金丹。若有了，奶奶打发人来，只管送在我们奶奶这里。明儿有人去，就顺路给那边舅奶奶带去。”

话未说完，李氏道：“嗳哟哟！这话我就不懂了。什么‘奶奶’‘爷爷’的一大堆。”凤姐笑道：“怨不得你不懂，这是四五门子的话呢。”说着，又向红玉笑道：“好孩子，难为你说的齐全。别像他们扭扭捏捏的蚊子似的。嫂子你不知道，如今除了我随手使的几个丫头、老婆之外，我就怕和别人说话，他们必定把一句话拉长了作两三截儿，咬文嚼字，



"No wonder!" Qingwen snorted as they walked on. "Now that she's climbed to a higher branch of the tree, she won't pay any more attention to us. Our lady may have thrown her a word or two, without even knowing her name, and she's already eaten up with pride. What's so marvelous about running a little errand? We shall see if anything comes of it or not. If she's all that clever she'd better clear out of this Garden and stay perched on the top of the tree."

Xiaohong could hardly have it out with her. Swallowing her resentment she went on and found Xifeng, sure enough, chatting in Li Wan's apartment. She stepped forward to make her report.

"Sister Pinger said, madam, that as soon as Your Ladyship left she put away the money; and when Zhang Cai's wife came for it, she weighed it in her presence and gave it to her." She handed the pouch to Xifeng and continued, "Sister Pinger asked me to tell Your Ladyship: Just now Lai Wang came to ask for your instructions before setting out to the mansion where you sent him, and she sent him off after explaining Your Ladyship's wishes."

"How did she explain my wishes?" Xifeng smiled.

"She said, 'Our lady sends her compliments to Her Ladyship. Our Second Master is away from home now, so Her Ladyship shouldn't worry over a couple of days' delay. When the Fifth Mistress is better, our lady will come with her to see Her Ladyship. The Fifth Mistress sent a servant the other day to report that our lady's sister-in-law had inquired after Her Ladyship in a letter, and hoped her sister-in-law here would oblige her with two longevity pills. If Her Ladyship has any to spare, please send them to our lady, and the next person to go that way will deliver them to her sister-in-law.'"

"Mercy on us!" cut in Li Wan with a laugh. "I've lost track of all these ladies and mistresses."

"I don't blame you." Xifeng smiled. "There are five families involved." She turned to Xiaohong. "You're a good child and deliver messages clearly, not like some who mince their words or buzz like mosquitoes. You know," she turned to Li Wan, "my dear sister-in-law, I can't stand talking to most of the maids, apart from, the few in my service. They don't know it, but I find it quite maddening the way they pad out a



拿着腔儿，哼哼唧唧的，急的我冒火，他们那里知道！先时我们平儿也是这么着，我就问着他：难道必定装蚊子哼哼就是美人了？说了几遭才好些儿了。”李宫裁笑道：“都像你破落户才好。”凤姐又道：“这一个丫头就好。方才两遭，说话虽不多，听那口声就简断。”说着，又向红玉笑道：“你明儿伏侍我去罢。我认你作女儿，我一调理，你就出息了。”

红玉听了，“扑哧”一笑。凤姐道：“你怎么笑？你说我年轻，比你能大几岁，就作你的妈了？你还作春梦呢！你打听打听，这些人头，比你大的大的，赶着我叫妈，我不理。今儿抬举了你呢！”红玉笑道：“我不是笑这个，我笑奶奶认错了辈数了。我妈是奶奶的女儿，这会子又认我作女儿。”凤姐道：“谁是你妈？”李宫裁笑道：“你原来不认得？他是林之孝之女。”凤姐听了十分诧异，说道：“哦！原来是他的丫头。”又笑道：“林之孝两口子都是锥子扎不出一声儿来的。我成日家说，他们倒是配就了的一对夫妻，一个天聋，一个地哑。那里承望养出这么样伶俐丫头来！你十几岁了？”红玉道：“十七岁了。”又问名字，红玉道：“原叫红玉的，因为重了宝二爷，如今只叫红儿了。”

凤姐听说，将眉一皱，把头一回，说道：“讨人嫌的很！得了玉的益似的，你也玉，我也玉。”因说道：“既这么着，肯跟我，我还和他妈说，‘赖大家的如今事多，也不知这府里谁是谁，你替我好好的挑两个丫头我使’，他一般答应

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sentence and then break it down into several, the way they mince, drawl and stutter. Our Pinger used to be as bad as the rest. I asked her: Does a pretty girl have to buzz like a mosquito? And after a few scoldings she improved.”

Li Wan laughed.

“Not everyone is a termagant like you.”

“But I like this girl,” Xifeng continued. “Admittedly, her two messages weren’t long, but she spoke to the point.” She smiled at Xiaohong. “You must come and work for me. I’ll make you my adopted daughter and see that you turn out all right.”

Xiaohong burst out laughing.

“What’s so funny?” demanded Xifeng. “Do you think, because I’m not much older than you, I’m too young to be your mother? If so, you’re crazy. Just ask around. There are plenty of people twice your age eager to call me mother — if only I’d let them. I’m doing you an honour.”

“That wasn’t why I laughed,” replied Xiaohong. “I laughed because Your Ladyship has got my generation wrong. My *mother’s* Your Ladyship’s adopted daughter, yet now you talk of me as a daughter too.”

“Who’s your mother?”

“Don’t you know her?” put in Li Wan with a smile. “This child is Lin Zhixiao’s daughter.”

“You don’t say so!” exclaimed Xifeng in surprise. “Why, you can’t get a word out of Lin Zhixiao and his wife, not even if you stick an awl into them. I’ve always said they were a well-matched couple, deaf mutes the pair of them. Who could have believed they’d produce such a clever daughter? How old are you?”

“Seventeen.”

Next she was asked her name.

“I was first called Hongyu,” she answered. “But because of the ‘yu’ in Master Bao’s name they call me Xiaohong now.”

Xifeng frowned and tossed her head.

“Disgusting! You’d think there was something special about ‘yu’, the way everybody wants that name. So in that case you can work for me. You know, sister-in-law, I told her mother, ‘Lai Da’s wife has her hands full, and anyway she’s no idea who’s who in this household. You

着。他饶不挑，倒把他的这女孩子送了别处去。难道跟我必定不好？”李氏笑道：“你可是又多心了。他进来在先，你说在后，怎么怨的他妈！”凤姐道：“既这么着，明儿我和宝玉说，叫他再要人，叫这丫头跟我去。可不知本人愿意不愿意？”红玉笑道：“愿意不愿意，我们也不敢说。只是跟着奶奶，我们也学些眉眼高低，出入上下，大小的事也得见识见识。”刚说着，只见王夫人的丫头来请，凤姐便辞了李宫裁去了。红玉回怡红院去，不在话下。

如今且说林黛玉因夜间失寐，次日起来迟了，闻得众姊妹都在园中作饯花会，恐人笑他痴懒，连忙梳洗了出来。刚到院中，只见宝玉进门来了，笑道：“好妹妹，你昨儿可告我了不曾？教我悬了一夜心。”林黛玉便回头叫紫鹃道：“把屋子收拾了，下一扇纱屉；看那大燕子回来，把帘子放了下来，拿狮子倚住；烧了香，就把炉罩上。”一面说，一面直往外走。宝玉见他这样，还认作是昨日中晌的事，那知晚间的这段公案，还打恭作揖的。林黛玉正眼也不看，各自出了院门，一直找别的姊妹去了。宝玉心中纳闷，自己猜疑：看起这个光景来，不像是为昨日的事；但只昨日我回来的晚了，又没有见他，再没有冲撞了他的去处了。一面想，一面由不得随后追了来。

只见宝钗、探春正在那边看鹤舞，见黛玉去了，三个一





choose a couple of good maids for me.' And she promised that's what she'd do. But instead, she sends this daughter of hers somewhere else. Did she think the girl would have a bad time with me?"

"How suspicious you are," teased Li Wan. "This child was already here by then. How can you blame her mother?"

"In that case, I'll tell Baoyu to ask for someone else and send this girl to me — if she's willing, that is."

Xiaohong smiled.

"Willing? As if that were for us to say! But if only I could work for Your Ladyship, I'd learn some manners and get more experience."

As she said this a maid came from Lady Wang to summon Xifeng, who took her leave of Li Wan. And Xiaohong went back to Happy Red Court, where we leave her.

Let us return to Daiyu, who had risen late after a sleepless night. When she heard that the other girls were farewelling the God of Flowers in the Garden, for fear of being laughed at for laziness she made haste to dress and go out. She was crossing the courtyard when Baoyu came in.

"Dear cousin, did you tell on me yesterday?" he greeted her laughingly. "You had me worrying the whole night long."

Daiyu turned away from him to Zijuan.

"When you've tidied the rooms, close the screen windows," she instructed. "As soon as the big swallows come back, you can let down the curtains. Hold them in place by moving the lions against them. And cover the censer once the incense is lit."

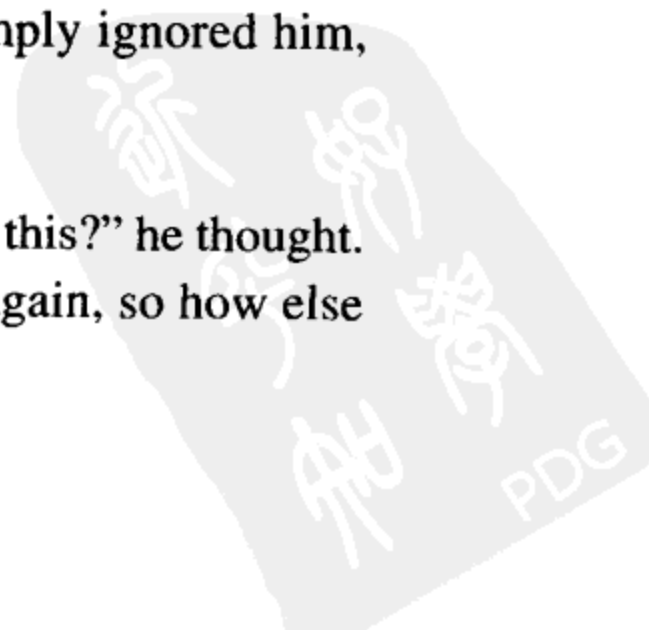
As she said this, she walked on.

Baoyu attributed this cold behaviour to the lines he had quoted at noon the previous day, having no idea of the incident in the evening. He bowed and raised his clasped hands in salute, but Daiyu simply ignored him, walking straight off to find the other girls.

Baoyu was puzzled.

"Surely what happened yesterday can't account for this?" he thought. "And I came back too late in the evening to see her again, so how else can I have offended her?"

With these reflections, he trailed after her.



同站着说话儿。又见宝玉来了，探春便笑道：“宝哥哥，身上好？我整整的三天没见你了。”宝玉笑道：“妹妹身上好？我前儿还在大嫂子跟前问你呢。”探春道：“宝哥哥，你往这里来，我和你说话。”宝玉听说，便跟了他，离了钗、玉两个，到了一棵石榴树下。探春因说道：“这几天老爷可曾叫你？”宝玉笑道：“没有叫。”探春说：“昨儿我恍惚听见说老爷叫你出去的。”宝玉笑道：“那想是别人听错了，并没叫的。”探春又笑道：“这几个月，我又攒下有十来吊钱了。你还拿了去，明儿出门逛去的时候，或是好字画，好轻巧玩意儿，替我带些来。”宝玉道：“我这么城里城外、大廊小庙的逛，也没见个新奇精致东西，左不过是那些金玉铜磁没处摆的古董，再就是绸缎、吃食、衣服了。”探春道：“谁要这些！怎么像你上回买的那柳枝儿编的小篮子，整竹子根抠的香盒儿，胶泥埭的风炉儿，这就好了。我喜欢的什么似的，谁知他们都爱上了，都当宝贝似的抢了去了。”宝玉笑道：“原来要这个。这不值什么，拿五百钱出去给小子们，包管拉两车来。”探春道：“小厮们知道什么。你拣那朴而不俗、直而不拙者，这些东西，你多多的替我带了来。我还像上回的鞋，作一双你穿，比那双还加工夫，如何呢？”

宝玉笑道：“你提起鞋来，我想起个故事：那一回我穿着，可巧遇见了老爷，老爷就不受用，问是谁作的。我那里敢提‘三妹妹’三个字，我就回说是前儿我生日，是舅母给





Daiyu joined Baochai and Tanchun, who were both watching the storks dancing, and the three girls were chatting together when Baoyu arrived.

“How are you, brother?” asked Tanchun. “It’s three whole days since last I saw you.”

“How are you, sister?” he rejoined. “The other day I was asking our elder sister-in-law about you.”

“Come over here. I want to talk to you.”

The pair of them strolled aside under a pomegranate tree away from the other two.

“Has father sent for you these last few days?” asked Tanchun.

Baoyu smiled.

“No, he hasn’t.”

“Oh, I thought someone told me he sent for you yesterday.”

“That someone must have misheard. He didn’t.”

Tanchun chuckled.

“These last few months I’ve saved a dozen strings of cash. I want you to take them. Next time you go out you can buy me some good calligraphy and paintings, or some amusing toys.”

“In my strolls through the squares and temple markets inside and outside the city,” Baoyu told her, “I haven’t seen anything novel or really well made. Nothing but curios of gold, jade, bronze or porcelain, which would be out of place here. Or things like silk textiles, food and clothing.”

“That’s not what I mean. No, but things like you bought me last time: little willow baskets, incense-boxes carved out of bamboo roots, and tiny clay stoves. They were so sweet, I just loved them! But the other people fell in love with them too and grabbed them as if they were treasures.”

Baoyu laughed.

“If that’s what you want, those things are dirt cheap. Just give five hundred cash to the pages and they’ll fetch you two cartloads.”

“Those fellows have no taste. Please choose some things which are simple without being vulgar, and genuine instead of artificial. Do get me a whole lot more, and I’ll make you another pair of slippers. I’ll put even more work into them than last time. How’s that?”

“That reminds me.” Baoyu grinned. “I was wearing your slippers one day when I met father. He asked me disapprovingly who’d made

的。老爷听了是舅母给的，才不好说什么的，半日还说：  
‘何苦来！虚耗人力，作践绫罗，作这样的东西。’我回来告诉了袭人，袭人说这还罢了，赵姨娘气的抱怨的了不得：  
‘正经兄弟，鞋搭拉、袜搭拉的，没人看的见，且作这些东西！’”探春听说，登时沉下脸来，道：“这话糊涂到什么田地！怎么我是该作鞋的人么？环儿难道没有分例的，没有人的？一般的衣裳是衣裳，鞋袜是鞋袜，丫头、老婆一屋子，怎么抱怨这些话！给谁听呢！我不过闲着没事，作一双半双，爱给那个哥哥兄弟，随我的心。谁敢管我不成！这有什么他也气。”宝玉听了，点头笑道：“你不知道，他心里自然又有个想头了。”探春听说，益发动了气。将头一扭，说道：“连你也糊涂了！他那想头自然是有的，不过是那阴微鄙贱的见识。他只管这么想，我只管认得老爷、太太两个人，别人我一概不管。就是姊妹弟兄跟前，谁和我好，我就和谁好。什么偏的庶的，我也不知道。论理我不该说他，但忒昏愤的不像了！还有笑话呢：就是上回我给你那钱，替我带那玩的东西。过了两天，他见了我，也是说没钱使，怎么难，我也不理论。谁知后来丫头们出去了，他就抱怨起我来，说我攒了钱，为什么给你使，倒不给环儿使呢。我听见这话，又好笑又好气，我就出来往太太跟前去了。”正说着，只见宝钗那边笑道：“说完了，来罢。显见的是哥哥妹妹了，丢下别人，且说梯己去。我们听一句儿就使不得了！”说着，探春、宝玉二人方笑着来了。

宝玉因不见了林黛玉，便知他躲了别处去了。想了一



them. It wouldn't have done to tell him it was you, sister; so I said they were a present from Aunt Wang on my last birthday. There wasn't much he could say to that, but after an awful silence he commented, 'What a waste of time and energy and good silk.' When I told Xiren she said: 'Never mind that, but the concubine Zhao's been complaining bitterly, "Her own younger brother Huan's shoes and socks are in holes yet she doesn't care. Instead she embroiders slippers for Baoyu. "'"

Tanchun frowned.

"Did you ever hear such nonsense?" she fumed. "Is it my job to make shoes? Doesn't Huan have his fair share of clothes, shoes and socks, not to mention a whole roomful of maids and servants? What has she got to complain of? Who's she trying to impress? If I make a pair of slippers in my spare time, I can give them to any brother I choose and no one has any right to interfere. She's crazy, carrying on like that."

Baoyu nodded and smiled.

"Still, it's natural, you know, for her to see things rather differently."

This only enraged Tanchun more. She tossed her head.

"Now *you're* talking nonsense too. Of course she sees things differently with that sly, low, dirty mind of hers. Who cares what she thinks? I don't owe any duty to anyone except our parents. If my sisters, brothers and cousins are nice to me, I'll be nice to them too, regardless of which is the child of a wife or the child of a concubine. Properly speaking, I shouldn't say such things, but really that woman's the limit!

"Let me tell you another ridiculous thing too. Two days after I gave you that money to buy knick-knacks, she complained to me she was hard up. I paid no attention, of course. But after my maids left the room, she started scolding me for giving my savings to you instead of to Huan. I didn't know whether to laugh or lose my temper. So I left her and went to Her Ladyship."

But now Baochai called to them laughingly: "Haven't you talked long enough? It's clear you're brother and sister, the way you leave other people out in the cold to discuss your private affairs. Aren't we allowed to hear a single word?"

They smiled at that and joined her.

Meanwhile Daiyu had disappeared, and Baoyu knew she was avoid-

想，越性迟两日，等他的气消一消，再去也罢了。因低头看见许多凤仙、石榴等各色落花，锦重重的落了一地，因叹道：“这里他心里生了气，也不收拾这花儿来了。待我送去了，明儿再问着他。”说着，只见宝钗约着他们往外头去。宝玉道：“我就来。”说毕，等他二人去远了，便把那花兜了起来，登山渡水，过树穿花，一直奔了那日同林黛玉葬桃花的去处来。将已到了花冢，犹未转过山坡，只听山坡那边有呜咽之声，一行数落着，哭的好不伤感。宝玉心下想道：“这不知是那房里的丫头，受了委曲，跑到这个地方来哭。”一面想，一面煞住脚步，听他哭道是：

花谢花飞花满天，红消香断有谁怜？  
游丝软系飘春榭，落絮轻沾扑绣帘。  
闺中女儿惜春暮，愁绪满怀无释处。  
手把花锄出绣闺，忍踏落花来复去。  
柳丝榆荚自芳菲，不管桃飘与李飞。  
桃李明年能再发，明年闺中知有谁？  
三月香巢已垒成，梁间燕子太无情！  
明年花发虽可啄，却不道人去梁空巢也倾。  
一年三百六十日，风刀霜剑严相逼。  
明媚鲜妍能几时，一朝飘泊难寻觅。





ing him. He decided to wait a couple of days for the storm to blow over before approaching her again. Then, lowering his head, he noticed that the ground was strewn with balsam and pomegranate petals.

“She’s too angry even to gather up the blossom,” he sighed. “I’ll take these over and try to speak to her tomorrow.”

At this point Baochai urged them to take a stroll.

“I’ll join you later,” he said.

As soon as the other two had gone, he gathered up the fallen flowers in the skirt of his gown and made his way over a small hill, across a stream and through an orchard towards the mound where Daiyu had buried the peach-blossom. Just before rounding the hill by the flower’s grave he caught the sound of sobs on the other side. Someone was lamenting and weeping there in a heart-rending fashion.

“Some maid’s been badly treated and come here to cry,” he thought. “I wonder which of them it is.”

He halted to listen. And this is what he heard:

As blossoms fade and fly across the sky,  
Who pities the faded red, the scent that has been?  
Softly the gossamer floats over spring pavilions,  
Gently the willow fluff wafts to the embroidered screen.

A girl in her chamber mourns the passing of spring,  
No relief from anxiety her poor heart knows;  
Hoe in hand she steps through her portal,  
Loath to tread on the blossom as she comes and goes.

Willows and elms, fresh and verdant,  
Care not if peach and plum blossom drift away;  
Next year the peach and plum will bloom again,  
But her chamber may stand empty on that day.

By the third month the scented nests are built,  
But the swallows on the beam are heartless all;  
Next year, though once again you may peck the buds,  
From the beam of an empty room your nest will fall.

Each year for three hundred and sixty days  
The cutting wind and biting frost contend.  
How long can beauty flower fresh and fair?



花开易见落难寻，阶前闷杀葬花人。  
独把花锄泪暗洒，洒上空枝见血痕。  
杜鹃无语正黄昏，荷锄归去掩重门。  
青灯照壁人初睡，冷雨敲窗被未温。  
怪奴底事倍伤神，半为怜春半恼春。  
怜春忽至恼忽去，至又无言去不闻。  
昨宵庭外悲歌发，知是花魂与鸟魂？  
花魂鸟魂总难留，鸟自无言花自羞。  
愿奴胁下生双翼，随花飞到天尽头。  
天尽头，何处有香丘？  
未若锦囊收艳骨，一堆净土掩风流。  
质本洁来还洁去，强于污淖陷渠沟。  
尔今死去侬收葬，未卜侬身何日丧？  
侬今葬花人笑痴，他年葬侬知是谁？  
试看春残花渐落，便是红颜老死时。  
一朝春尽红颜老，花落人亡两不知！

宝玉听了，不觉痴倒。要知端详，且听下回分解。



In a single day wind can whirl it to its end.  
Fallen, the brightest blooms are hard to find;  
With aching heart their grave-digger comes now  
Alone, her hoe in hand, her secret tears  
Falling like drops of blood on each bare bough.  
Dusk falls and the cuckoo is silent;  
Her hoe brought back, the lodge is locked and still;  
A green lamp lights the wall as sleep enfolds her,  
Cold rain pelts the casement and her quilt is chill.  
What causes my two-fold anguish?  
Love for spring and resentment of spring;  
For suddenly it comes and suddenly goes,  
Its arrival unheralded, noiseless its departing.  
Last night from the courtyard floated a sad song —  
Was it the soul of blossom, the soul of birds?  
Hard to detain, the soul of blossom or birds,  
For blossoms have no assurance, birds no words.  
I long to take wing and fly  
With the flowers to earth's uttermost bound;  
And yet at earth's uttermost bound  
Where can a fragrant burial mound be found?  
Better shroud the fair petals in silk  
With clean earth for their outer attire;  
For pure you came and pure shall go,  
Not sinking into some foul ditch or mire.  
Now you are dead I come to bury you;  
None has divined the day when I shall die;  
Men laugh at my folly in burying fallen flowers,  
But who will bury me when dead I lie?  
See, when spring draws to a close and flowers fall,  
This is the season when beauty must ebb and fade;  
The day that spring takes wing and beauty fades  
Who will care for the fallen blossom or dead maid?

Baoyu, listening, was overwhelmed with grief. To know more of this,  
read the next chapter.



## 第二十八回

蒋玉菡情赠茜香罗 薛宝钗羞笼红麝串

话说林黛玉只因昨夜晴雯不开门一事，错疑在宝玉身上。至次日又可巧遇见饯花之期，正是一腔无明正未发泄，又勾起伤春愁思。因把些残花落瓣去掩埋，由不得感花伤己，哭了几声，便随口念了几句。不想宝玉在山坡上听见，先不过点头感叹；次后听到“依今葬花人笑痴，他年葬依知是谁”，“一朝春尽红颜老，花落人亡两不知”等句，不觉恹倒山坡之上，怀里兜的落花撒了一地。试想林黛玉的花颜月貌，将来亦到无可寻觅之时，宁不心碎肠断！既黛玉终归无可寻觅之时，推之于他人，如宝钗、香菱、袭人等，亦可以到无可寻觅之时矣。宝钗等终归无可寻觅之时，则自己又安在哉？且自身尚不知何在何往，则斯处、斯园、斯花、斯柳，又不知当属谁姓矣！因此一而二，二而三，反复推求了去，真不知此时此际欲为何等蠢物，杳无所知，逃大造，出尘网，使可解释这段悲伤。正是：花影不离身左右，鸟声只在耳东西。

那林黛玉正自伤感，忽听山坡上也有悲声，心下想道：“人人都笑我有些痴病，难道还有一个痴子不成？”想着，抬头一看，见是宝玉。林黛玉看见，便道：“啐！我当是谁，原



## Chapter 28

### **Jiang Yuhan Gives a New Friend a Scarlet Perfumed Sash Baochai Bashfully Shows Her Red Bracelet Scented with Musk**

As we saw, Daiyu held Baoyu to blame for her exclusion by Qingwen the previous night. As today happened to be the occasion for feasting the God of Flowers, her pent-up resentment merged with her grief at the transience of spring, and as she buried the fading petals she could not help weeping over her own fate and composing a lament.

Baoyu listened from the slope. At first he just nodded in sympathy, until she came, to the lines:

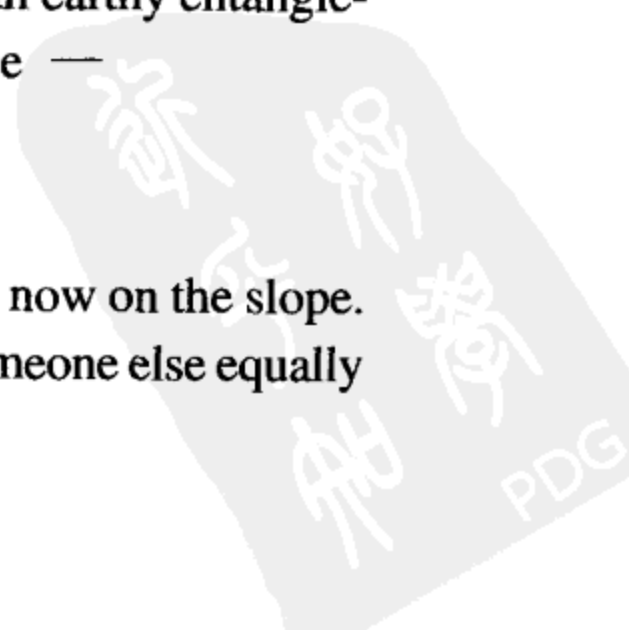
Men laugh at my folly in burying fallen flowers,  
But who will bury me when dead I lie?....  
The day that spring takes wing and beauty fades  
Who will care for the fallen blossom or dead maid?

At this point he flung himself wretchedly down on the ground, scattering his load of fallen flowers, heart-broken to think that Daiyu's loveliness and beauty must one day vanish away. And it followed that the same fate awaited Baochai, Xiangling, Xiren and all the rest. When at last they were all gone, what would become of him? And if he had no idea where he would be by then, what would become of this place and all the flowers and willows in the Garden and who would take them over? One reflection led to another until, after repeated ruminations, he wished he were some insensible, stupid object, able to escape all earthy entanglements and be free from such wretchedness despite the —

Shadows of blossom all around,  
Birdsong on every side.

Daiyu, giving way to her own grief, heard weeping now on the slope.

"Everyone laughs at me for being foolish. Is there someone else equally foolish?" she asked herself.





来是这个狠心短命的……”刚说到“短命”二字上，又把口掩住，长叹了一口气，自己抽身便走了。

这里宝玉悲恸了一回，忽然抬头不见了黛玉，便知黛玉看见他躲开了。自己也觉无味，抖抖土起来，下山寻归旧路，往怡红院来。可巧看见林黛玉在前头走，连忙赶上去，说道：“你且站住。我知你不理我，我只说一句话，从今以后撂开手。”林黛玉回头见是宝玉，待要不理他，听他说“只说一句话，从此撂开手”，这话里有文章，少不得站住说道：“有一句话，请说来。”宝玉笑道：“两句话，说了你听不听？”黛玉听说，回头就走。宝玉在后面叹道：“既有今日，何必当初！”林黛玉听见这话，由不得站住，回头道：“当初怎么样？今日怎么样？”宝玉叹道：“当初姑娘来了，那不是我陪着玩笑？凭我心爱的，姑娘要，就拿去；我爱吃的，听见姑娘也爱吃，连忙干干净净收着，等姑娘吃。一桌子吃饭，一床上睡觉。丫头们想不到的，我怕姑娘生气，我替丫头们想到了。我心里想着：姊妹们从小儿长大，亲也罢，热也罢，和气到了儿，才见得比人好。如今谁承望姑娘人大心大，不把我放在眼睛里，倒把外四路的什么宝姐姐、凤姐姐的放在心坎儿上，倒把我三日不理，四日不见的。我又没个亲兄弟、亲姊妹。虽然有两个，你难道不知道是和我隔母的？我也和你似的独出，只怕同我的心一样。谁知我白操了这个心，弄的有冤无处诉！”说着，不觉滴下眼泪来。

林黛玉耳内听了这话，眼内见了这形景，心中不觉灰了

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Then, looking up, she saw Baoyu.

“So that’s who it is.” She snorted. “That heartless, wretched....”

But the moment the words “wretched” escaped her she covered her mouth and moved quickly away with a long sigh.

When Baoyu recovered sufficiently to look up she had gone, obviously to avoid him. Getting up rather sheepishly, he dusted off his clothes and walked down the hill to make his way back again to Happy Red Court. Catching sight of Daiyu ahead, he overtook her.

“Do stop!” he begged. “I know you won’t look at me, but let me just say *one* word. After that we can part company for good.”

Daiyu glanced round and would have ignored him, but was curious to hear this “*one* word,” thinking there must be something in it. She came to a halt.

“Out with it.”

Baoyu smiled.

“Would you listen if I said two words?” he asked.

At once she walked away.

Baoyu, close behind her, sighed.

“Why are things so different now from in the past?”

Against her will she stopped once more and turned her head.

“What do you mean by ‘now’ and ‘the past’?”

Baoyu heaved another sigh.

“Wasn’t I your playmate when you first came?” he demanded. “Anything that pleased me was yours, cousin, for the asking. If I knew you fancied a favourite dish of mine, I put it away in a clean place till you came. We ate at the same table and slept on the same bed. I took care that the maids did nothing to upset you; for I thought cousins growing up together as such good friends should be kinder to each other than anyone else. I never expected you to grow so proud that now you have no use for me while you’re so fond of outsiders like Baochai and Xifeng. You ignore me or cut me for three or four days at a time. I’ve no brothers or sisters of my own — only two by a different mother, as well you know. So I’m an only child like you, and I thought that would make for an affinity between us. But apparently it was no use my hoping for that. There’s nobody I can tell how unhappy I am.” With that, he broke down

大半，也不觉滴下泪来，低头不语。宝玉见他这般形景，遂又说道：“我也知道我如今不好了，但只凭着怎么不好，万不敢在妹妹跟前有错处。便有一二分错处，你倒是或教导我，戒我下次；或骂我两句，打我两下，我都不灰心。谁知你总不理我，叫我摸不着头脑，少魂失魄，不知怎么样才是。就便死了，也是屈死鬼，任凭高僧高道忏悔也不能超升，还得你申明了缘故，我才得托生呢！”

黛玉听了这话，不觉将昨晚的事都忘在九霄云外了。便说道：“你既这么说，昨儿为什么我去了，你不叫丫头开门？”宝玉诧异道：“这话从那里说起？我要是这么样，立刻就死了！”林黛玉啐道：“大清早死呀活的，也不忌讳。你说有呢就有，没有就没有，起什么誓呢。”宝玉道：“实在没有见你去。就是宝姐姐坐了一坐，就出来了。”林黛玉想了一想，笑道：“是了。想必是你的丫头们懒待动，丧声歪气的，也是有的。”宝玉道：“想必是这个原故。等我回去问了是谁，教训教训他们就好了。”黛玉道：“你的那些姑娘们也该教训教训，只是论理我不该说。今儿得罪了我的事小，倘或明儿宝姑娘来，什么贝姑娘来，也得罪了，事情岂不大了。”说着抿着嘴笑。宝玉听了，又是咬牙，又是笑。

二人正说话，只见丫头来请吃饭，遂都往前头来了。王夫人见了林黛玉，因问道：“大姑娘，你吃那鲍太医的药可好些？”林黛玉道：“也不过这么着。老太太还叫我吃王大夫的药呢。”宝玉道：“太太不知道，林妹妹是内症，先天生的





again.

This appeal and his obvious wretchedness melted her heart. But though shedding tears of sympathy, she kept her head lowered and made no reply.

This encouraged Baoyu to go on.

“I know my own faults. But however bad I may be, I’d never dare do anything to hurt you. If I do something the least bit wrong, you can tick me off, warn me, scold me or even strike me, and I won’t mind. But when you just ignore me and I can’t tell why, I’m at my wits’ end and don’t know what to do. If I die now I can only become a ‘ghost hounded to death,’ and not even the masses of the best bonzes and Taoists will be able to save my soul. I can only be born again if you’ll tell me what’s wrong.”

By now Daiyu’s resentment over the previous evening was completely forgotten.

“Then why did you tell your maids not to open the gate when I called last night?” she asked.

“Whatever do you mean?” he cried in amazement. “If I did such a thing, may I die on the spot.”

“Hush! Don’t talk about dying so early in the morning. Did you or didn’t you? There’s no need to swear.”

“I honestly knew nothing about your coming. Baochai did drop in for a chat, but she didn’t stay long.”

Daiyu thought this over.

“Yes,” she said more cheerfully, “I suppose your maids felt too lazy to stir and that made them answer rudely.”

“That’s it, for sure. I shall find out who it was when I get back and give them a good scolding.”

“Those maids of yours deserve one, although of course that’s not for me to say. It doesn’t matter their offending me, but think what trouble there’ll be if next time they offend your precious Baochai!”

She compressed her lips to smile, and Baoyu did not know whether to grind his teeth or laugh.

They were summoned now to a meal and went over to his mother’s apartment where, on seeing Daiyu, Lady Wang asked:

弱，所以禁不住一点儿风寒，不过吃两剂煎药，疏散了风寒，还是吃丸药的好。”王夫人道：“前儿大夫说了个丸药的名字，我也忘了。”宝玉道：“我知道那些丸药，不过叫他吃什么人参养荣丸。”王夫人道：“不是。”宝玉又道：“八珍益母丸？左归？右归？再不，就是六味地黄丸。”王夫人道：“都不是。我只记得有人‘金刚’两个字的。”宝玉拍手笑道：“从来没听见有个什么‘金刚丸’。若有了‘金刚丸’，自然有‘菩萨散’了！”说的满屋里人都笑了。宝钗抿嘴笑道：“想是天王补心丹。”王夫人笑道：“是这个名儿。如今我也糊涂了。”宝玉道：“太太倒不糊涂，都是叫‘金刚’‘菩萨’支使糊涂了。”王夫人道：“扯你娘的臊！又欠你老子捶你了。”宝玉笑道：“我老子再不为这个捶我的。”

王夫人又道：“既有这个名儿，明儿就叫人买些来吃。”宝玉道：“这些药都不中用的。太太给我三百六十两银子，我替妹妹配一料丸药，包管一料不完就好了。”王夫人道：“放屁！什么药就这么贵？”宝玉笑道：“当真的呢。我这个方子，比别不同。那个药名儿也古怪，一时也说不清。只讲那头胎紫河车，人形带叶参，三百六十两还不够。龟大的何首



“Has Doctor Bao’s medicine done you any good, child?”

“Not much,” the girl answered. “The old lady wants me to try Doctor Wang’s medicine.”

“You don’t know, madam,” said Baoyu, “Cousin Lin suffers from an inherited weakness and has such a delicate constitution that she can’t stand the least little chill. All she needs is a couple of doses to clear this up. Some pills would be best for her.”

“The other day the doctor recommended some pills,” said his mother. “I can’t quite recall the name.”

“I can guess,” said Baoyu. “Just ginseng tonic pills.”

“That wasn’t it.”

“Eight-treasure-leonurus pills then?” Left restorative? Right restorative? Or, failing that, six-flavour-digitalis pills?”

“No, it wasn’t any of those. All I can remember are the words ‘guardian angel.’”

Baoyu clapped his hands and laughed.

“I’ve never heard of guardian-angel pills. If there are guardian-angel pills there must be Bodhisattva powders too.”

Everyone in the room burst out laughing.

Trying to repress a smile Baochai suggested: “Were they heavenly-king-fortifying-the-heart pills?”

“That’s it,” said Lady Wang. “How muddle-headed I’ve grown.”

“You’re not muddle-headed, madam,” her son assured her. “Those angels and Bodhisattvas have muddled you.”

“That’s enough from you,” she scolded. “It’s time your father gave you another beating.”

“My father wouldn’t beat me for that.”

“Since we know the name we’ll send out tomorrow to buy some.”

“Those remedies are useless,” protested Baoyu. “If you’ll give me three hundred and sixty taels of silver, I’ll make up some pills for my cousin and I guarantee she’ll be cured before they’re all taken.”

“Have some sense! What pills could be so expensive?”

Baoyu chuckled.

“It’s true. This is a unique prescription. I won’t go into all the strange ingredients now, but one’s the afterbirth of a firstborn child, another’s

乌，千年松根茯苓胆，诸如此类的药都不算为奇，只在群药里算那为君的药，说起来唬人一跳。前儿薛大哥哥求了我一二年，我才给了他这方子。他拿了方子去，又寻了二三年，花了有上千的银子，才配成了。太太不信，只问宝姐姐。”宝钗听说，笑着摇手儿说道：“我不知道，也没听见。你别叫姨妈问我。”王夫人笑道：“到底是宝丫头，好孩子，不撒谎。”宝玉站在当地，听见如此说，一回身把手一拍，说道：“我说的倒是真话呢，倒说我撒谎。”口里说着，忽一回身，只见林黛玉坐在宝钗身后抿着嘴笑，用手指头在脸上画着羞他。

凤姐因在里间房里看着人放桌子，听如此说，便走来笑道：“宝兄弟不是撒谎，这倒是有的。上日薛大哥亲自来向我寻珍珠，我问他作什么，他说是配药。他还抱怨说，不配也罢了，如今那里知道这么费事。我问他什么药，他说是宝兄弟的方子，说了多少药，我也没工夫听。他说‘不然我也买几颗珍珠了，只是定要头上带过的’，所以来和我寻。他说‘妹妹就没散的，花儿上也得掐下来，过后儿我拣好的再给妹妹穿了来。’我没法儿，把两枝珠花儿现拆了给他。还要了一块三尺上用大红纱去，乳钵乳了，合面子呢。”凤姐说一句，那宝玉念一句佛，说：“太阳在屋子里呢！”凤姐说完了，宝玉又道：“太太想，这不过是将就呢。正经按那方子，



man-shaped ginseng roots with leaves on them — these alone would cost more than three hundred and sixty taels. Then there's polygonum the size of a tortoise, pachyma from the root of a thousand-year-old pine, and other things of the same sort. These are nothing unusual, just ordinary herbs; but the chief ingredient would give you a shock. Cousin Xue Pan pestered me for more than a year to give him this prescription. Even then, it took him more than two years and about a thousand taels of silver to have it made up. If you don't believe me, madam, ask Cousin Baochai."

Baochai raised a protesting hand, smiling.

"I know nothing and never heard a word about it. So don't refer auntie to me."

"After all she's good girl," said Lady Wang. "Baochai wouldn't tell a lie."

Baoyu turned where he was standing and clapped his hands.

"What I said is in fact true. Yet you accuse me of lying."

Whirling back he caught sight of Daiyu, who was seated behind Baochai, laughingly drawing one finger across her cheek to shame him.

Xifeng had been supervising the laying of the tables in the inner room but now she came out to join in the discussion.

"Baoyu isn't fibbing," she declared. "It's true. The other day Xue Pan came to me for some pearls. 'What for?' I wanted to know.

"He said, 'For a prescription.' And he grumbled, 'If I'd known all the trouble involved, I'd have left it alone.'

"I asked, 'What prescription is it?'

"He said, 'One of Baoyu's.'

"I hadn't time to listen to all the ingredients he listed. Then he said, 'I could have bought some pearls, but pearls for this medicine must have been worn on the head. That's why I've come to you. If you haven't any loose ones, let me take the pearls from one of your trinkets and I'll find you some good ones later to replace them.'

"So I had to give him a couple of my pearl trinkets. He wanted three feet of red gauze from the Palace too. Said he meant to grind the pearls into a fine powder to be mixed with other powdered ingredients."

Baoyu had punctuated Xifeng's speech with cries of "Buddha be praised! The sun shines at last in this room." As soon as she had finished

这珍珠宝石定要在古坟里的，有那古时富贵人家装裹的头面，拿了来才好。如今那里为这个去刨坟掘墓，所以只是活人带过的，也可以使得。”王夫人道：“阿弥陀佛，没当家花花的！就是坟里有这个，人家死了几百年，这会子翻尸盗骨的，作了药也不灵！”

宝玉向林黛玉说道：“你听见了没有，难道二姐姐也跟着我撒谎不成？”脸望着黛玉说话，却拿眼睛瞟着宝钗。林黛玉便拉王夫人道：“舅母听听，宝姐姐不替他圆谎，他支吾着我。”王夫人也道：“宝玉很会欺负你妹妹。”宝玉笑道：“太太不知道这原故。宝姐姐先在家里住着，那薛大哥哥的事，他也不知道，何况如今在里头住着呢，自然是越发不知道了。林妹妹才在背后以为是我撒谎就羞我。”

正说着，只见贾母房里的丫头找宝玉、林黛玉去吃饭。林黛玉也不叫宝玉，便起身拉了那丫头就走。那丫头说等着宝玉一块儿走，林黛玉道：“他不吃饭了，咱们走。我先走了。”说着，便出去了。宝玉道：“我今儿还跟着太太吃罢。”王夫人道：“罢，罢，我今儿吃斋，你正经吃你的去罢。”宝玉道：“我也跟着吃斋。”说着，便叫那丫头“去罢”，自己先跑到桌子上坐了。王夫人向宝钗等笑道：“你们只管吃你们的，由他去罢。”宝钗因笑道：“你正经去罢。吃不吃，陪着林姑娘走一趟，他心里打紧的不自在呢。”宝玉道：“理他呢，过一会子就好了。”



he put in:

“This is actually only a makeshift, madam. The real prescription calls for pearls and gems worn by wealthy ladies of old from ancient tombs. But we can hardly go and dig up graves, can we? So we have to make do with pearls worn by living people.”

“Amida Buddha!” cried Lady Wang. “The idea! Even if there are pearls in old tombs, how can you dig them up and disturb the bones of people dead for all those hundreds of years? No medicine made that way could be any good.”

Baoyu appealed to Daiyu.

“You heard what’s been said. Would my Cousin Xifeng back me up if I were lying?” Although facing Daiyu, he glanced at Baochai as he spoke.

Daiyu caught Lady Wang’s arm.

“Just listen to him, auntie. When Baochai won’t back up his fib, he appeals to me.”

“Yes, Baoyu is good at bullying you,” said Lady Wang.

“You don’t know the reason, madam.” Baoyu grinned. “Even when Cousin Baochai lived with her family she didn’t know her brother’s doings; so she knows even less now that she’s in the Garden. But just now cousin Daiyu, sitting at the back, drew a finger across her cheek to shame me because she thought I was fibbing.”

A maid came in then to summon Baoyu and Daiyu to dinner with the Lady Dowager. Without a word to Baoyu, Daiyu rose and started leading the maid away.

“Won’t you wait for Master Bao?” asked the maid.

“He doesn’t want anything to eat,” replied Daiyu. “Come on, let’s go. I’m going.” She walked out.

“I’ll eat here with you, madam,” said Baoyu.

“No, no,” objected Lady Wang. “This is one of my meatless days, so run along and have a proper meal.”

“I’ll have vegetarian food with you.” He sent the maid away and took a seat at the table.

His mother told Baochai and the other girls to go ahead with their own meal and ignore him.

“You’d better go,” Baochai urged him. “Even if you don’t want

一时吃过饭，宝玉一则怕贾母记挂，二则也记挂着林黛玉，忙忙的要茶漱口。探春、惜春都笑道：“二哥哥，你成日家忙些什么？吃饭吃茶也是这么忙碌碌的。”宝钗笑道：“你叫他快吃了瞧黛玉妹妹去罢，叫他在这里胡麝些什么。”宝玉吃了茶，便出来，一直往西院来。可巧走到凤姐儿院门前，只见凤姐站着，蹬着门槛子，拿耳挖子剔牙，看着十来个下人挪花盆呢。见宝玉来了，笑道：“你来的好。进来，进来，替我写几个字儿。”宝玉只得跟了进来。到了屋里，凤姐命人取过笔、砚、纸来，向宝玉道：“大红妆缎四十匹，蟒缎四十匹，上用纱各色一百匹，金项圈四个。”宝玉道：“这算什么？又不是账，又不是礼物，怎么个写法？”凤姐儿道：“你只管写上，横竖我自己明白就罢了。”宝玉听说，只得写了。凤姐一面收起，一面笑道：“还有句话告诉你，不知你依不依？你屋里有个丫头叫红玉的，我要叫了来使唤，明儿我再替你挑几个，可使得？”宝玉道：“我屋里的人也多的很，姐姐喜欢谁，只管叫了来，何必问我。”凤姐笑道：“既这么着，我就叫人带他去了。”宝玉道：“只管带去。”说着，便要走。凤姐儿道：“你回来，我还有一句话呢。”宝玉





anything to eat you should keep Daiyu company, she's not feeling happy."

"Never mind her," he answered. "She'll be all right presently."

But as soon as the meal was over he called for tea to rinse his mouth, suspecting that his grandmother might be worried by his absence, and worried himself about Daiyu.

Tunchun and Xichun smiled.

"Why are you always in such a hurry, brother?" they teased. "Even rushing through your meals and tea."

"Let him finish quickly and join Cousin Lin," said Baochai. "Why should he fool around here?"

Baoyu gulped down his tea then and left, making straight for the west court. On the way he found Xifeng standing in the gateway of her compound and picking her teeth with an earpick as she watched a dozen pages move some flower-pots.

"You've turned up just at the right time," she called to him with a smile. "Come on in. Come in and write a few words for me."

Baoyu had no option but to follow her in.

Once inside Xifeng called for a brush, inkstone and paper and started dictating to him:

"Forty rolls of red flowered satin; forty rolls of satin with serpent designs; a hundred rolls of Imperial gauze of different colours; four gold necklaces."

"What is all this?" asked Baoyu. "It sounds neither like an account nor a list of presents. How am I to write it?"

"Just put it down. So long as I know what it means that'll do."

Baoyu did as he was told. And when he had finished she put the list away.

"There's something else I want, if you're agreeable," she then said with a smile. "I'd like that maid called Hongyu in your place to come and work for me. I'll find you a few others instead later. All right?"

"My place is swarming with people," said Baoyu. "Take any of them you like. You don't have to ask."

"In that case, I'll send someone to fetch her."

"Do."

He was starting to leave when Xifeng called him back, saying that she

道：“老太太叫我呢，有话等我回来罢。”说着，便来至贾母这边，只见都已吃完饭了。贾母因问他：“跟着你娘吃了什么好的？”宝玉笑道：“也没什么好的，我倒多吃了一碗饭。”因问：“林妹妹在那里？”贾母道：“里头屋里呢。”

宝玉进来，只见地下一个丫头吹熨斗，炕上两个丫头打粉线，黛玉弯着腰，拿着剪子裁什么呢。宝玉走进来笑道：“哦，这是作什么呢？才吃了饭，这么空着头，一会子又头疼了。”黛玉并不理，只管裁他的。有一个丫头说道：“那块绸子角儿还不好呢，再熨他一熨。”黛玉便把剪子一撂，说道：“理他呢，过一会子就好了。”宝玉听了，只是纳闷。只见宝钗、探春等也来了，和贾母说了一回话。宝钗也进来问：“林妹妹作什么呢？”因见林黛玉裁剪，因笑道：“妹妹越发能干了，连裁剪都会了。”黛玉笑道：“这也不过是撒谎哄人罢了。”宝钗笑道：“我告诉你个笑话儿，才刚为那个药，我说了个不知道，宝兄弟心里不受用了。”林黛玉道：“理他呢，过一会儿就好了。”宝玉向宝钗道：“老太太要抹骨牌，正没人呢，你去抹骨牌罢。”宝钗听说，便笑道：“我是为抹骨牌才来了？”说着便走了。林黛玉道：“你倒是去罢，这里



had something else to tell him.

"The old lady is waiting for me," he demurred. "You can tell me when I come back."

By the time he reached the Lady Dowager's quarters they had finished their meal there.

"Well," his grandmother asked, "what good things did your mother give you to eat?"

"Nothing special, but I had one bowl of rice more than usual. Where's Cousin Lin?"

"In the inner room."

Baoyu went in and saw a maid blowing at the charcoal in an iron. Two others were chalking patterns on the *kang* where Daiyu, bending over, was cutting out some material. He walked forward with a smile.

"Why, what are you doing?" he asked. "Stooping like that just after a meal will bring your headache back."

Daiyu paid no attention but went on with her work.

"That corner of the silk is still rather crumpled," one of the maids remarked. "Better iron it again."

"Never mind it." Daiyu put down her scissors. "It'll be all right presently."

Baoyu was digesting this snub when Baochai, Tanchun and the others arrived to chat with the old lady. Soon Baochai stepped into the inner room and asked Daiyu what she was doing, then watched her at work.

"How clever you're getting," she commented, "even able to cut out clothes."

"This is just another specious way of fooling people," retorted Daiyu. Baochai smiled.

"Let me tell you something funny," she volunteered. "Cousin Bao's annoyed with me because I denied knowing anything about that medicine."

"Never mind him. He'll be all right presently."

Baoyu told Baochai, "The old lady wants to play cards and there aren't enough people. Won't you take a hand?"

Again Baochai smiled.

"Of course, that's what I came for."



有老虎，看吃了你！”说着又裁。宝玉见他不理，只得还陪笑说道：“你也去逛逛，再裁不迟。”林黛玉总不理。宝玉便问丫头们：“这是谁叫裁的？”林黛玉见问丫头们，便说道：“凭他谁叫我裁，也不干二爷的事！”宝玉方欲说话，只见有人进来回说“外头有人请”。宝玉听了，忙撤身出来。黛玉向外头说道：“阿弥陀佛！赶你回来，我死了也罢了。”

宝玉出至外面，只见焙茗说道：“冯大爷家请。”宝玉听了，知道是昨日的话，便说：“要衣裳去。”自己便往书房里来。焙茗一直到了二门前等人，只见出来了一个老婆子，焙茗上去说道：“宝二爷在书房里等出门的衣裳，你老人家进去带个信儿。”那婆子说：“放你娘的屁！倒好，宝二爷如今在园里住着，跟他的人都在园里，你又跑了这里来带信儿！”焙茗听了，笑道：“骂的是，我也糊涂了。”说着，一径往东边二门前来。可巧门上小厮上甬路底下踢球，焙茗将原故说了。小厮跑了进去，半日才抱了一个包袱出来，递与焙茗。回到书房里，宝玉换了。命人备马，只带着焙茗、锄药、双瑞、双寿四个小厮去了。

一径到了冯紫英家门口，有人报与冯紫英，出来迎接进去。只见薛蟠早已在那里久候了，还有许多唱曲儿的小厮并唱小旦的蒋玉菡、锦香院的妓女云儿。大家都见过了，然后吃茶。宝玉擎茶笑道：“前儿所言幸与不幸之事，我昼悬夜想，今日一闻呼唤即至。”冯紫英笑道：“你们令表兄弟倒都



As she went out Daiyu called after her, "You had better leave. There's a tiger here who might eat you."

She went on with her cutting and ignored Baoyu, who suggested with a conciliatory smile: "Why don't you take a stroll before doing any more?"

Daiyu remained silent.

"Who told her to do this?" he asked the maids.

"Whoever it was," said Daiyu, "It's none of Master Bao's business."

Before he could say any more a servant came in to announce that someone was waiting outside to see him. As he hurried out Daiyu called after him:

"Buddha be praised! I hope I'm dead before you come back."

Outside he found Beiming, who told him that Feng Ziyang had invited him over. Remembering what had been said the previous day, Baoyu sent for his outdoor clothes and waited for them in the library.

Beiming went to the second gate, where he waited until an old woman appeared.

"Master Bao is in the library waiting for his outdoor clothes," he announced. "Do you mind going in to tell them?"

"You farting fool!" she cried. "Master Bao lives in the Garden now and so do all his attendants. Why bring the message *here*?"

"Of course." Beiming laughed. "How idiotic of me!"

He hurried to the inner gate on the east and got one of the lads playing ball by the paved passageway to run in with the message. The youngster came back after a while with a bundle which Beiming carried to the library.

Baoyu, having changed, called for his horse and set off with only four pages: Beiming, Chuyao, Shuangrui and Shuangshou. When they reached Feng Ziyang's gate and were announced, Feng came out to welcome them. Xue Pan had already been there for some time with a number of singing-boys, Jiang Yuhan, an actor who played female roles, and Yun'er, a courtesan from Brocade Fragrance Court. The introductions were made and tea was served.

Raising his cup Baoyu smiled at their host.

"Your remark the other day about good fortune and bad has been on



心实。前日不过是我的设辞，诚心请你们一饮，恐又推托，故说下这句话。今日一邀即至，谁知都信真了。”说毕，大家一笑。然后摆上酒来，依次坐定。冯紫英先命唱曲儿的小厮过来让酒，然后命云儿也来敬。

那薛蟠三杯下肚，不觉忘了情，拉着云儿的手，笑道：“你把那梯己新样儿的曲子唱个我听，我吃一坛如何？”云儿听说，只得拿起琵琶来，唱道：

两个冤家，都难丢下，想着你来又记挂着他。两个人形容俊俏，都难描画。想昨宵幽期私订在荼蘼架，一个偷情，一个寻拿，拿住了三曹对案，我也无回话。唱毕，笑道：“你喝一坛子罢了。”薛蟠听说，笑道：“不值一坛，再唱好的来。”

宝玉笑道：“听我说来：如此滥饮，易醉而无味。我先喝一大海，发一新令，有不遵者，连罚十大海，逐出席外与人斟酒。”冯紫英、蒋玉菡等都道：“有理，有理。”宝玉拿起海来，一气饮尽，说道：“如今要说悲、愁、喜、乐四字，却要说出女儿来，还要注明这四字原故。说完了，饮门杯。酒面要唱一个新鲜时样曲子，酒底要席上生风一样东西，或古诗、旧对、《四书》《五经》成语。”薛蟠未等说完，先站



my mind ever since," he said. "So as soon as your summons arrived I hurried over."

"How trusting you all are." Feng Ziying chuckled. "That was just an excuse to get you over here, for otherwise I was afraid you might decline. Fancy your taking it so seriously."

Amid laughter wine was brought in and they took seats in due order. Feng made one of the boy singers pour the wine and asked Yuner to their table to toast the guests. After three cups Xue Pan grew rowdy and seized her hand.

"Sing a nice new song for me," he begged, "and I'll drink a whole jarful of wine. How about it?"

Yuner had no choice but to take her *pipa* and sing:

Two lovers have I,  
From both I'm loath to part,  
For while I think of one  
The other's in my heart.  
Both have so many charms  
They're hard to list;  
Last night by the rose trellis  
Was our tryst.  
One came to make love, one to spy;  
Caught in the act was I  
And, challenged by the two of them,  
Could think of no reply!

This sung, she said, "All right, now drink a jar."

"That wasn't worth a whole jar," protested Xue Pan. "Let's hear something better."

"Listen," put in Baoyu. "If you drink so fast, you'll soon be drunk and we shan't have any fun. Suppose I empty a goblet first and we play a new game of forfeits? Anyone who doesn't do as I say will have to drain ten goblets in succession and leave the table to wait on the others."

When they all agreed to this, he picked up a goblet and drained it.

"Now," he said, "you must all make four lines about a girl's sorrow, her worry, her joy and her delight, explaining the reason for each. Then you must drink a cup of wine, sing a new popular song, and recite either



起来拦道：“我不来，别算我。这竟是捉弄我呢！”云儿也站起来，推他坐下，笑道：“怕什么？这还亏你天天吃酒呢，难道连我也不如！我回来还说呢。说是了，罢；不是了，不过罚上几杯，那里就醉死了。你如今一乱令，倒喝十大海，下去斟酒不成？”众人都拍手道妙。薛蟠听说无法，只得坐了。听宝玉说道：“女儿悲，青春已大守空闺。女儿愁，悔教夫婿觅封侯。女儿喜，对镜晨妆颜色美。女儿乐，秋千架上春衫薄。”

众人听了，都说道：“说得有理。”薛蟠独扬着脸，摇头说：“不好，该罚！”众人问：“如何该罚？”薛蟠道：“他说的我通不懂，怎么不该罚？”云儿便拧他一把，笑道：“你悄悄的想你的罢，回来说不出，又该罚了。”于是拿琵琶听宝玉唱道：

滴不尽相思血泪抛红豆，开不完春柳春花满画楼，  
睡不稳纱窗风雨黄昏后，忘不了新愁与旧愁，咽不下玉  
粒金莼噎满喉，照不见菱花镜里形容瘦。展不开的眉  
头，捱不明的更漏。呀！恰便似遮不住的青山隐隐，流  
不断的绿水悠悠。

唱完，大家齐声喝彩，独薛蟠说无板。宝玉饮了门杯，便拈





a line from an old poem or couplet, or a saying from the *Four Books* or the *Five Classics* connected with some object on the table.”

Before he had finished Xue Pan was on his feet protesting.

“I’m not doing that. Count me out. You just want to make fun of me.”

Yuner stood up to push him back on to his seat.

“What are you afraid of?” she teased. “Don’t you drink every day? Aren’t you even up to me? I’m going to join in. If you do all right, well and good; if not, it won’t kill you to drink a few cups. Or would you rather refuse and have to drink ten goblets and wait on the rest of us?”

All clapped their approval and Xue Pan had to subside.

Baoyu began:

“The girl’s sorrow: Youth is passing but she remains single.

“The girl’s worry: Her husband leaves home to make his fortune.

“The girl’s joy: Her good looks in the mirror in the morning.

“The girl’s delight: Swinging in a light spring gown.”

All cried “Good!” except Xue Pan, who shook his head.

“No good,” he growled. “He ought to pay a forfeit.”

“Why?” asked the others.

“Because I didn’t understand a word.”

Yuner gave him a pinch.

“Be quiet and think out your lines. If you don’t, you’ll be the one to pay a forfeit.”

She accompanied Baoyu on the *pipa* as he sang:

Like drops of blood fall endless tears of longing,  
By painted pavilion grow willows and flowers untold;  
Sleepless at night when wind and rain lash gauze windows,  
She cannot forget her sorrows new and old;  
Choking on rice like jade and wine like gold,  
She turns from her wan reflection in the glass;  
Nothing can smooth away her frown,  
It seems that the long night will never pass;  
Like the shadow of peaks, her grief is never gone;  
Like the green stream it flows for ever on.

The only one not to applaud this song was Xue Pan.



起一片梨来，说道：“雨打梨花深闭门。”完了令。

下该冯紫英说，便道是：“女儿悲，儿夫染病在垂危。女儿愁，大风吹倒梳妆楼。女儿喜，头胎养了双生子。女儿乐，私向花园掏蟋蟀。”说毕，端起酒来，唱道：

你是个可人，你是个多情，你是个刁钻古怪鬼灵精，你是个神仙也不灵。我说的话儿你全不信，只叫你去背地里细打听，才知道我疼你不疼！

唱完，饮了门杯，便拈起一片鸡肉说道：“鸡声茅店月。”令完，下该云儿。

云儿便说道：“女儿悲，将来终身指靠谁？”薛蟠叹道：“我的儿，有你薛大爷在，你怕什么！”众人都道：“别混他，别混他！”云儿又道：“女儿愁，妈妈打骂何时休！”薛蟠道：“前儿我见了你妈，还吩咐他，不叫他打你呢。”众人都道：“再多言者，罚酒十杯。”薛蟠连忙自己打了一个嘴巴子，说道：“没耳性，再不许说了。”云儿又道：“女儿喜，情郎不舍还家里。女儿乐，住了箫管弄弦索。”说完，便唱道：





“You were off beat,” he objected.

Baoyu drained his cup and picked up a slice of pear from the table.

“Rain buffets the pear blossom and the door is closed,” he quoted.

It was now Feng Ziying’s turn. He started off:

“The girl’s sorrow: Her husband falls mortally ill.

“The girl’s worry: Her boudoir in the tower is blown down.

“The girl’s joy: Twin sons at her first confinement.

“The girl’s delight: Catching crickets on the sly in the garden.”

Next, raising his cup, he sang:

You can bill and you can coo,  
 Be an imp of mischief too,  
 But a fairy? No, not you,  
 As my word you doubt.  
 Ask around and you’ll find out  
 I love you, yes, I do!

Then, having drunk up, he picked up a piece of chicken.

“A cock crows at the moon by the rustic inn,” was his quotation.

Yuner’s turn came next and she began:

“The girl’s sorrow: Will she find a husband to support her?”

Xue Pan sighed.

“Why child,” he said, “with Master Xue here, what have you to worry about?”

“Don’t muddle her,” cried the others. “Don’t muddle her.”

Yuner went on:

“The girl’s worry: Will the bawd always beat and scold her?”

Xue Pan cut in, “The other day when I saw that bawd of yours, I told her not to beat you.”

“If you interrupt again,” the others warned him, “you’ll have to drink ten cups.”

At once he slapped his own cheek.

“You’ve been warned. Not another word now!”

Yuner continued:

“The girl’s joy: Her lover cannot bear to go home.

“The girl’s delight: The pipes hushed, she plays a stringed instrument.”



豆蔻开花三月三，一个虫儿往里钻。钻了半日不得进去，爬到花儿上打秋千。肉儿小心肝，我不开了你怎么钻？

唱毕，饮了门杯，便拈起一个桃来说道：“桃之夭夭。”令完，下该薛蟠。

薛蟠道：“我可要说了：女儿悲——”说了半日，不言语了。冯紫英道：“快说来怎么悲？”薛蟠急的眼瞪的铃铛似的，便说道：“女儿悲——”咳嗽了两声，又说道：“女儿悲，嫁了个男人是乌龟。”众人听了都笑起来。薛蟠道：“笑什么，难道我说的不是？一个女儿嫁了汉子，要当忘八，怎么不伤心呢？”众人笑的弯腰，忙说道：“你说的是，快说底下了。”薛蟠瞪了一瞪眼，又说道：“女儿愁——”说了这句，又不言语了。众人道：“怎么愁？”薛蟠道：“女儿愁，绣房撵出个大马猴。”众人哈哈大笑道：“该罚，该罚！这句更不通，先还可恕。”说着，便要筛酒。宝玉笑道：“押韵就好。”薛蟠道：“令官都准了，你们闹什么？”众人听说，方才罢了。云儿笑道：“下两句越发难说了，我替你说罢。”薛蟠道：“胡说！当真我没好的了？听我说罢：女儿喜，洞房花烛朝慵





Then she sang:

On the third of the third moon blooms the cardamom;  
Fain to creep into it an insect is come;  
Failing to enter it clings  
To the petals and there it swings.  
Dear heart, if I don't let you in,  
Your chances are thin!

She drained her cup and picked up a peach saying, "The peach trees are in blossom."

It was now Xue Pan's turn.

"All right," he said. "Here goes. The girl's sorrow..." A long pause followed.

"What is she sad about?" Feng Ziyang prompted him. "Go on."

Xue Pan's eyes bulged, he was so frantic.

"The girl's sorrow..."

He cleared his throat twice and persevered:

"The girl's sorrow: She marries a queer."

A roar of laughter went up.

"What's so funny?" he demanded. "Is that wrong? Wouldn't a girl be sad if the man she married insisted on being a bugger?"

Doubled up with laughter they gasped, "Quite right. Hurry up and go on."

His eyes bulging again he proceeded, "The girl's worry..." Once more his voice trailed away.

"Well, what's the worry?"

"The girl's worry: A big gorilla springs out of her boudoir."

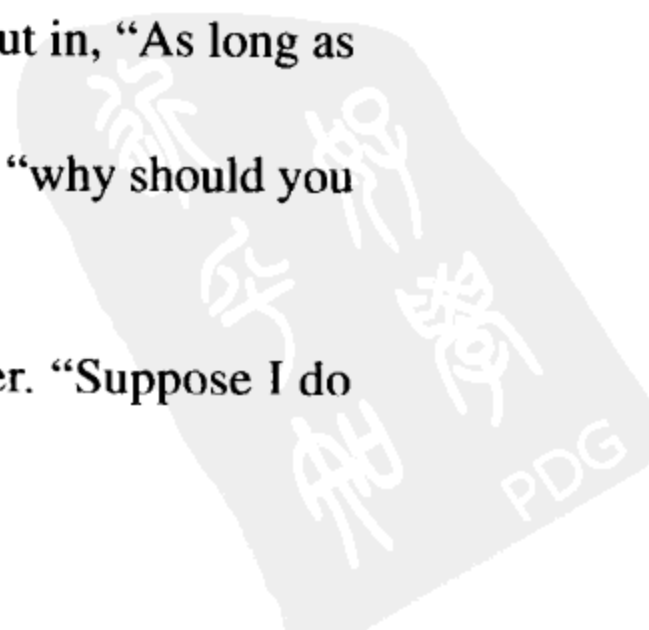
Roaring with laughter they cried, "Make him pay the forfeit. The last could just pass but this is impossible."

However, before they could fill the goblet Baoyu put in, "As long as he rhymes it, that's good enough."

"If the man in charge passes it," blustered Xue Pan, "why should you lot kick up such a fuss?"

The others gave way.

"The next two lines are more difficult," said Yuner. "Suppose I do them for you?"



起。”众人听了，都诧异道：“这句何其太韵！”薛蟠又道：“女儿乐，一根毡毬往里戳。”众人听了，都回头说道：“该死，该死！快唱了罢。”薛蟠便唱道：“一个蚊子哼哼哼。”众人都怔了，说：“这是个什么曲儿？”薛蟠还唱道：“两个苍蝇嗡嗡嗡。”众人都道：“罢，罢，罢！”薛蟠道：“爱听不听！这是新鲜曲儿，叫作哼哼韵。你们要懒待听，连酒底都免了，我就不唱。”众人都道：“免了罢，免了罢，倒别耽误了别人家。”

于是蒋玉菡说道：“女儿悲，丈夫一去不回归。女儿愁，无钱去打桂花油。女儿喜，灯花并头结双蕊。女儿乐，夫唱妇随真和合。”说毕，唱道：

可喜你天生成百媚娇，恰便似活神仙离碧霄。度青春，年正小；配鸾凤，真也着。呀！看天河正高，听谯楼鼓敲，剔银灯同人鸳帏悄。

唱毕，饮了门杯，笑道：“这诗词上我倒有限。幸而昨日见了一副对子，可巧只记得这句，幸而席上还有这件东西。”说毕，便干了酒，拿起一朵木樨来，念道：“花气袭人知昼暖。”



"Nonsense. You think I've nothing better coming? Listen.

"The girl's joy: Rising late after her wedding night."

"How poetic he's growing!" they exclaimed.

"The girl's delight: A good fuck."

All turned away crying, "For shame! Hurry up with your song."

Then he sang:

A mosquito buzzes, hum-hum.

"What sort of song do you call this?" they demanded.

He went on:

Two flies drone, buzz-buzz.

"That's enough. Shut up!" they cried.

"All right, if you don't want it. That's a new song called *Hum-hum*.

If you can't be bothered to listen and want me to stop, you must let me off the drinking."

"We'll let you off. You're just holding up other people."

Then Jiang Yuhuan took over.

"The girl's sorrow: Her husband leaves, never to return.

"The girl's worry: She has no money to buy pomade.

"The girl's joy: The wick forms two heads like a double flower. <sup>1</sup>

"The girl's delight: Husband and wife in harmony."

Next he sang:

So many charms has Heaven given you,  
You seem a goddess come down from the blue;  
And blooming youth, life's springtide,  
Is just the time to mate the lovebirds true.  
The watch-tower drum is beating now,  
The Milky Way gleams high above;  
Make haste to trim the silver lamp  
And draw the bridal curtains on our love.

This sung, he raised his cup and said, "I know very few poems, but luckily I remember a line of a couplet I read yesterday which happens to fit an object on the table."

Having drained his cup he picked up a sprig of fragrant osmanthus and quoted:

"When the fragrance of flowers assails men we know the day is

众人道：“都依了，完令。”薛蟠又跳了起来，喧嚷道：“了不得，了不得！该罚，该罚！这席上并没有宝贝，你怎么念起宝贝来？”蒋玉菡怔了，说道：“何曾有宝贝？”薛蟠道：“你还赖呢！你再念来。”蒋玉菡只得又念了一遍。薛蟠道：“袭人可不是宝贝是什么！你们不信，只问他。”说毕，指着宝玉。宝玉没好意思起来，说：“薛大哥，你该罚多少？”薛蟠道：“该罚，该罚！”说着拿起酒来，一饮而尽。冯紫英与蒋玉菡等不知原故，云儿便告诉了出来。蒋玉菡忙起身陪罪。众人都道：“不知者不罪。”

少刻，宝玉出席解手，蒋玉菡便随了出来。二人站在廊檐下，蒋玉菡又陪不是。宝玉见他妩媚温柔，心中十分留恋，便紧紧的捏着他的手，叫他：“闲了往我们那里去。还有一句话借问，也是你们贵班中，有一个叫琪官的，他在那里？如今名驰天下，我独无缘一见。”蒋玉菡笑道：“就是我的小名儿。”宝玉听说，不觉欣然跌足，笑道：“有幸，有幸！果然名不虚传。今儿初会，便怎么样呢？”想了一想，向袖中取出扇子，将一个玉玦扇坠解下来，递与琪官，道：“微物不堪，略表今日之谊。”琪官接了，笑道：“无功受禄，何以克当！也罢，我这里得了一件奇物，今日早起方系上，还





warm.’”

Everyone passed this, and so the game ended. But Xue Pan leapt to his feet.

“You’ve gone too far!” he shouted. “You must pay a forfeit. How can you mention a treasure that isn’t here?”

Jiang Yuhan was puzzled.

“What treasure?”

“Don’t try to deny it. Repeat that line again.”

The actor complied.

“Isn’t Xiren a treasure?” demanded Xue Pan. “If you don’t believe me, ask him.” He pointed at Baoyu.

In some embarrassment Baoyu stood up.

“How many cups should we fine you, cousin, for this?” he asked.

“All right. I’ll pay the penalty.”

Xue Pan picked up his cup and tossed it off.

Feng Ziyang and Jiang Yuhan asked for an explanation; and when Yun'er told them who Xiren was, the actor rose to his feet to apologize.

“You’re not to blame,” said the others. “You didn’t know.”

Presently Baoyu left the room to relieve himself, and Jiang Yuhan followed him out to apologize once more in the corridor. Baoyu was much taken by his charming appearance. Clasp ing his hand tightly he said:

“When you’ve time, do come and see me. By the way, I’ve something to ask you. In your honourable company there’s an actor called Qiguan who’s known all over the country, but I’ve never had a chance to see him.”

Jiang Yuhan smiled.

“That’s my professional name.”

Baoyu stamped one foot in delight.

“What luck!” he cried. “You certainly live up to your reputation. How can I mark this first meeting?”

After a second’s thought he drew the fan from his sleeve, unfastened the jade pendant on it and gave this to the actor.

“Please accept this trifle as a mark of my friendship.”

“What have I done to deserve this?” Qiguan smiled. “All right, I’ve something unusual here which I only put on for the first time this morning.”

是簇新的，聊可表我一点亲热之意。”说毕撩衣，将系小衣儿一条大红汗巾子解了下来，递与宝玉，道：“这汗巾子是茜香国女国王所贡之物，夏天系着，肌肤生香，不生汗渍。昨日北静王给我的，今日才上身。若是别人，我断不肯相赠。二爷请把自己系的解下来，给我系着。”宝玉听说，喜不自禁，连忙接了，将自己一条松花汗巾解了下来，递与琪官。二人方束好，只听一声大叫，“我可拿住了！”只见薛蟠跳了出来，拉着二人道：“放着酒不吃，两个人逃席出来干什么？快拿出来我瞧瞧。”二人都道：“没有什么。”薛蟠那里肯依，还是冯紫英出来才解开了。于是复又归坐饮酒，至晚方散。

宝玉回至园中，宽衣吃茶。袭人见扇子上的扇坠儿没了，便问他：“往那里去了？”宝玉道：“马上丢了。”睡觉时，只见腰里一条血点似的大红汗巾子，袭人便猜了八九分，因说道：“你有了好的系裤子，把我那条还我罢。”宝玉听说，方想起那条汗巾子原是袭人的，不该给人才是。心里后悔，口里说不出来，只得笑道：“我赔你一条罢。”袭人听了，点头叹道：“我就知道又干这些事！也不该拿着我的东西给那些混账人去。也难为你，心里没个算计儿。”再要说几句，又恐呕上他的酒来，少不得也睡了。一宿无话。

至次日天明，方才醒了。只见宝玉笑道：“夜里失了盗也



It's still quite new. A small token of my devotion."

He raised his gown to undo the scarlet sash round his trousers and handed it to Baoyu.

"This was part of the tribute from the Queen of Qianxiang," he explained. "Worn in summer, it will perfume your skin and stop you from perspiring. I was given it by the Prince of Beijing yesterday, and I put it on for the first time this morning. I wouldn't dream of giving it to anybody else. Would you mind letting me have your own in exchange, sir?"

Baoyu took the scarlet sash with the greatest of pleasure, then untied his own pale green one and handed it to the actor. They were both fastening their new sashes when they heard a loud shout.

"Caught in the act!"

It was Xue Pan, who bounded over to seize them.

"What are you up to?" he cried. "Leaving your wine and slipping away from the feast! Come on, let's see what you've got there."

When they told him "Nothing," he refused to believe them. Not until Feng Ziyong came out did he let them go. Then they went back to their seats and drank until the evening, when the party broke up.

On Baoyu's return to the Garden he took off his outer garments to drink tea and Xiren, noticing that his fan-pendant was missing, asked what had become of it.

"I must have lost it out riding," said Baoyu.

But when he went to bed and she saw the blood-red sash round his waist, she knew more or less what had happened.

"Now that you've got a better sash, will you return mine?" she asked.

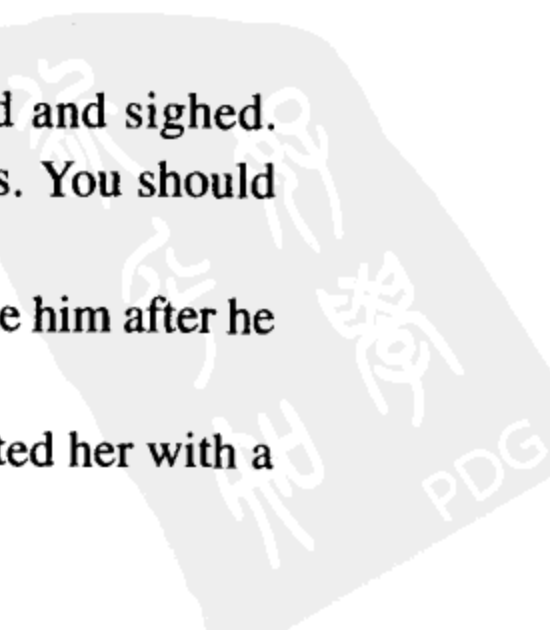
Only then did he remember that the green sash belonged to Xiren and he should never have given it away. He was sorry but could hardly explain to her what had happened.

"I'll get you another," he promised.

"I know what you've been up to again." She nodded and sighed. "You've no right to give my things to those low creatures. You should know better."

She let it go at that and went to bed too, afraid to provoke him after he had been drinking.

As soon as she woke the next morning, Baoyu confronted her with a





不晓得，你瞧瞧裤子上。”袭人低头一看，只见昨日宝玉系的那条汗巾子系在自己腰里呢，便知是宝玉夜间换了，连忙一头解下来，说道：“我不希罕这行子，趁早儿拿了去！”宝玉见他如此，只得委婉解劝了一回。袭人无法，只得系上。过后宝玉出去，终究解下来，掷在个空箱子里，自己又换了一条系着。

宝玉并未理论，因问起昨日可有什么事情。袭人便回说：“二奶奶打发人叫了红玉去了。他原要等你来，我想什么要紧，我就作了主，打发他去了。”宝玉道：“很是。我已知道了，不必等我罢了。”袭人又道：“昨日贵妃打发夏太监出来，送了一百二十两银子，叫在清虚观初一到初三打三天平安醮，唱戏献供，叫珍大爷领着众位爷们跪香拜佛呢。还有端午儿的节礼也赏了。”说着，命小丫头子来，将昨日所赐之物取了出来，只见上等宫扇两柄，红麝香珠二串，凤尾罗二端，芙蓉簟一领。宝玉见了，喜不自胜，问：“别人的也都是这个？”袭人道：“老太太的多着一个香如意，一个玛瑙枕。太太、老爷、姨太太的只多着一个香如意。你的同宝姑娘的一样。林姑娘同二姑娘、三姑娘、四姑娘只单有扇子同数珠儿，别人都没了。大奶奶、二奶奶他两个是每人两匹纱，两匹罗，两个香袋，两个錠子药。”宝玉听了，笑道：“这是怎么个原故？怎么林姑娘的倒不同我的一样，倒是宝姐姐的同我一样！别是传错了罢？”袭人道：“昨儿拿出来，都是一份一份写着签子，怎么就错了！你的是在老太太屋里的，我去拿了来了。老太太说了，明儿叫你一个五更天进去谢恩呢。”宝玉道：“自然要走一趟。”说着，便叫紫绶来：“拿了



smile.

"You wouldn't know if a thief came in the night," he said. "Look at your pants."

Xiren looked down and saw that the sash he had worn the previous day was now round her own waist. Aware that he had changed it during the night, she immediately took it off.

"I'm not interested in such trash. Take it away."

He pleaded with her until she consented to wear it. But as soon as he left the room she took it off, threw it into an empty case and put on another. Baoyu did not notice this on his return.

"Did anything happen yesterday?" he asked.

"Madam Lian sent over for Xiaohong. The girl wanted to wait for your return but I didn't think that necessary, so I took it upon myself to send her away."

"Quite right. I knew. There was no need for her to wait."

"And yesterday the Imperial Consort sent the eunuch Xia here with a hundred and twenty taels to be spent on masses, theatricals and sacrifices on the first three days of the month at Ethereal Abbey. She wants Lord Zhen to take all the gentlemen there to burn incense and worship Buddha. She also sent over presents for the Dragon-Boat Festival."

Xiren told a young maid to fetch his gifts: two fine Palace fans, two strings of red beads scented with musk, two lengths of phoenix-tail silk, and a bamboo mat woven in a lotus pattern.

Baoyu, delighted with these things, asked if the others had received the same gifts.

"The old lady had an extra sandalwood *Ruyi* sceptre and agate pillow. Lord Zheng, Lady Wang and Madam Xue each had an extra sandalwood sceptre. You got the same as Miss Xue, while Miss Lin and the three other young ladies were given fans and beads, nothing else. Madam Li Wan and Madam Xifeng each had two rolls of gauze, two rolls of silk, two aromatic pouches and two pills from the Palace."

"How can that be?" asked Baoyu. "Why did Miss Xue get the same as me and not Miss Lin? There must be some mistake."

"Impossible. Each share was labelled when they were brought yesterday. Yours went to the old lady's apartments, and when I fetched it

这个到林姑娘那里去，就说是昨儿我得的，爱什么留下什么。”紫绡答应了，拿了去。不一时回来，说：“林姑娘说了，昨儿也得了，二爷留着罢。”

宝玉听说，便命人收了。刚洗了脸出来，要往贾母那里请安去，只见林黛玉顶头来了。宝玉赶上去笑道：“我的东西叫你拣，你怎么不拣？”林黛玉昨日所恼宝玉的心事早又丢开，又顾今日的事了，因说道：“我没这么大福禁受，比不得宝姑娘，什么金什么玉的，我们不过是草木之人！”宝玉听他提出“金玉”二字来，不觉心动疑猜，便说道：“除了别人说什么金什么玉，我心里要有这个想头，天诛地灭，万世不得人身！”林黛玉听他这话，便知他心里动了疑，忙又笑道：“好没意思，白白的说什么誓？管你什么金什么玉的呢！”宝玉道：“我心里的事也难对你说，日后自然明白，除了老太太、老爷、太太这三个人，第四个就是妹妹了。要有第五个人，我也说个誓。”林黛玉道：“你也不用说誓，我很知道你心里有‘妹妹’，但只是见了‘姐姐’，就把‘妹妹’忘了。”宝玉道：“那是你多心，我再不的。”林黛玉道：“昨日宝丫头不替你圆谎，为什么问着我呢？那要是我，你又不知怎么样了。”

正说着，只见宝钗从那边来了，二人便走开了。宝钗分明看见，只装看不见，低着头过去了。到了王夫人那里，坐了一回，然后到了贾母这边，只见宝玉在这里呢。薛宝钗因往日母亲对王夫人等曾提过“金锁是个和尚给的，等日后有



she said you must go to the Palace at the fifth watch tomorrow to express your thanks.”

“Yes, of course.”

He called for Zixiao.

“Take these things to Miss Lin,” he instructed her. “Tell her this is what I got yesterday and she can keep anything she fancies.”

The maid did as she was told, coming back to report, “Miss Lin says she received presents too; she wants you to keep yours.”

He had the things put away then and washed his face before setting off to pay his respects to his grandmother. Meeting Daiyu on the way, he hurried up to her with a smile.

“Why didn’t you pick any of my things, as I asked?”

Daiyu had forgotten her earlier grievance in her preoccupation with this new incident.

“I’m not cut out for such good fortune,” she said. “I can’t compare with Cousin Baochai and her gold and jade. I’m just as common as any plant or tree.”

Baoyu caught this innuendo.

“Other people may talk about gold and jade,” he protested, “but if such an idea ever crossed my mind, may Heaven and Earth destroy me! May I never again be reborn in human form!”

Daiyu knew from this how hurt he felt.

“What nonsense,” she scoffed. “Why make such oaths for no reason? Who cares about your gold and jade anyway?”

“It’s hard to tell you all that’s in my heart, but you’ll understand some day. You’re the closest person in the world to me after my grandmother and my own parents. I swear there’s no one else.”

“There’s no need to swear. I know I have a place in your heart. But whenever you see *her*, you forget all about me.”

“That’s your imagination. I’m not like that.”

“Why did you appeal to me when Baochai refused to back up your fib yesterday? If I’d refused, goodness knows what you’d have done.”

Seeing Baochai approaching just then, they moved on. And pretending not to have seen them — although she had — she walked on with lowered head to chat with Lady Wang before going on to the Lady

玉的方可结为婚姻”等话，所以总远着宝玉。昨日见元春所赐的东西，独他与宝玉一样，心里越发没意思起来。幸亏宝玉被一个林黛玉缠绵住了，心心念念只挂着林黛玉，并不理论这事。此刻忽见宝玉笑问道：“宝姐姐，我瞧瞧你的红麝串子？”可巧宝钗左腕上笼着一串，见宝玉问他，少不得褪了下来。宝钗原生的肌肤丰泽，容易褪不下来。宝玉在旁边看着雪白一段酥臂，不觉动了羡慕之心，暗暗想道：“这个膀子要长在林妹妹身上，或者还得摸一摸，偏生长在他身上。”正是恨没福得摸，忽然想起“金玉”一事来，再看看宝钗形容，只见脸若银盆，眼同水杏，唇不点而红，眉不画而翠，比林黛玉另具一种妩媚风流，不觉就呆了。宝钗褪了串子来，递与他，也忘了接。宝钗见他怔了，自己倒不好意思的。丢下串子，回身才要走，只见林黛玉蹬着门槛子，嘴里咬着手帕子笑呢。宝钗道：“你又禁不得风儿吹，怎么又站在那风口里？”林黛玉笑道：“何曾不是在屋里的。只因听见天上一声叫唤，出来瞧了一瞧，原来是个呆雁。”薛宝钗道：“呆雁在那里呢？我也瞧瞧。”林黛玉道：“我才出来，他就‘忒儿’一声飞了。”口里说着，将手里帕子一甩，向宝玉脸上甩来。宝玉不防，正打在眼上，“嗳哟”了一声。要知端的，且听下回分解。







Dowager's apartments. She found Baoyu already there.

Now ever since her mother had told Lady Wang about the gold locket given to Baochai by a monk and his prediction that she would only marry a man with jade, Baochai had been rather distant to Baoyu. Yuanchun's gift of identical presents to them the previous day had made her even more sensitive on this score. Fortunately Baoyu was so wrapped up in Daiyu, so utterly engrossed in her, that he paid no attention to this coincidence.

Without warning now he asked Baochai to let him have a look at the red bead bracelet scented with musk on her left wrist. She had no alternative but to take it off. She was so plump, however, that this was by no means easy. And while he stood admiring her soft white arm it occurred to him: If she were Daiyu, I might have a chance to stroke her arm. Too bad for me that it's hers!

Suddenly remembering the talk about gold and jade, he looked at Baochai more closely. Her face seemed a silver disc, her eyes were lustrous and almond-shaped, her lips red without rouge, her eyebrows dark without being pencilled. She was charming in quite a different way from Daiyu. He was so fascinated that when she pulled off the bracelet and offered it to him, he did not even take it.

Embarrassed by the way he was staring, Baochai put the bracelet down and turned to go. She saw Daiyu then in the doorway, biting her handkerchief with a mocking smile.

"Why are you standing there in a draught?" asked Baochai. "You know how easily you catch cold."

"I was indoors until I heard a strange bird-cry. When I came out to look, it was only a silly goose."

"Where is this silly goose? I'd like to see it."

"As soon as I came out it flapped away."

With these words she flicked Baoyu's face with her handkerchief, catching him right on the eyes. He uttered an exclamation of surprise.

To know what came of this, read the next chapter.

红楼梦  
第八十回  
PDG

## 第二十九回

享福人福深还祷福 痴情女情重愈斟情

话说宝玉正发自怔，不想林黛玉将手帕子甩了来，正碰在眼睛上，倒唬了一跳，问是谁。林黛玉摇着头儿笑道：“不敢，是我失了手。因为宝姐姐要看呆雁，我比给他看，不想失了手。”宝玉揉着眼睛，待要说什么，又不好说的。

一时，凤姐儿来了，因说起初一日在清虚观打醮的事来，遂约着宝钗、宝玉、黛玉等看戏去。宝钗笑道：“罢，罢，怪热的。什么没看过的戏，我不去。”凤姐儿道：“他们那里凉快，两边又有楼。咱们要去，我头几天打发人去，把那些道士都赶出去，把楼上都打扫了，挂起帘子来，一个闲人不许放进庙去，才是好呢。我已经回了太太了，你们不去我去。这些日子也闷的很了。家里唱动戏，我又不得舒舒展展的看。”

贾母听说，笑道：“既这么着，我同你去。”凤姐听说，





## Chapter 29

### Favourites of Fortune Pray for Better Fortune An Absurd, Loving Girl Falls Deeper in Love

Baoyu was so absorbed by his thoughts that when Daiyu flicked his eyes with her handkerchief, he gave a sudden start.

“Who’s that?” he exclaimed.

She shook her head laughingly.

“Sorry, a slip of the hand. Cousin Baochai wanted to see the silly goose, and while pointing it out to her I hit you by mistake.”

Baoyu rubbed his eyes and bit back the retort which was on the tip of his tongue.

Then Xifeng arrived and, alluding in the course of conversation to the Taoist mass to be held at Ethereal Abbey on the first of the next month, she urged the young people to go there to watch the operas.

“It’s too hot for me,” objected Baochai. “Besides, there aren’t any operas I haven’t seen. I’m not going.”

“It’s cool there with tall buildings on either side,” countered Xifeng. “If we’re going I shall send servants a few days in advance to clear out the Taoist priests and clean the place up, then screen it off and close it to the general public. It will be rather pleasant then. I’ve already told Lady Wang. If you won’t go I mean to go alone. Things have been so boring recently; besides, even when we have shows at home, I can’t watch them in comfort.”

When the Lady Dowager heard of this she said, “In that case, I’ll go along with you.”

“If our Old Ancestress is going as well,” cried Xifeng, “so much the better — only I shan’t be free to enjoy myself.”

“I’ll sit in the main balcony and you can watch from one of the side ones, will that suit you? Then you won’t have to dance attendance on me.”

笑道：“老祖宗也去，敢情好！就只是我又不得受用了。”贾母道：“到明日，我在正面楼上，你在旁边楼上，你也不用到我这边来立规矩，好不好？”凤姐儿笑道：“这就是老祖宗疼我了。”贾母因又向宝钗道：“你也去逛逛，连你母亲也去。长天老日的，在家里也是睡觉。”宝钗只得答应着。

贾母又打发人去请了薛姨妈，顺路告诉王夫人，要带了他们姊妹去逛。王夫人因一则身上不好，二则预备着元春有人出来，早已回了不去的；听贾母如此说，笑道：“还是这么高兴。”因打发人去到园里告诉：“有要逛去的，只管初一日跟了老太太逛去。”这个话一传开了，别人都还可已，只是那些丫头们天天不得出门槛儿的，听了这话，谁不要去。便是各人的主子懒怠去，他也百般撺掇了去，因此李宫裁等都说去。贾母越发心中欢喜，早已吩咐人去打扫安置，都不必细说。

单表到了初一这一日，荣国府门前车轿纷纷，人马簇簇。那底下凡执事人等，闻得是贵妃作好事，贾母亲去拈香，正是初一日乃月之首日，况是端午节间，因此凡动用的什物，一色都是齐全的，不同往日。少时，贾母等出来。贾母独坐一乘八人大轿，李氏、凤姐儿、薛姨妈每人一乘四人轿，宝钗、黛玉二人共坐一辆翠盖珠缨八宝车，迎春、探春、惜春三人共坐一辆朱轮华盖车。然后贾母的丫头鸳鸯、鹦鹉、琥珀、珍珠，林黛玉的丫头紫鹃、雪雁、春纤，宝钗的丫头莺儿、文杏，迎春的丫头司棋、绣桔，探春的丫头待



“See how our Old Ancestress dotes on me!” Xifeng quipped.

“You must go, and your mother too,” said the Lady Dowager to Baochai. “If you stayed at home you’d only sleep the whole day long.”

Then Baochai had to agree.

The old lady sent a maid to invite Aunt Xue and to notify Lady Wang on the way that she meant to take the girls. Lady Wang had already excused herself on the grounds that she was unwell and expecting word from Yuanchun. She received this message with a smile and the comment:

“What good spirits she’s in. Go and tell them in the Garden that any of the young ladies who would like an outing may accompany the old lady on the first.”

Those most excited by this news were the young maids who normally had no chance to cross the threshold, all of whom longed to go. If their mistresses were disinclined to stir they tried in every way to persuade them, to such effect that Li Wan and the rest all agreed to the trip. This pleased the Lady Dowager even more. Meanwhile servants had been sent to make everything ready.

When the first of the fifth month arrived, the road before the Rong Mansion was thronged with carriages, sedan-chairs, attendants and horses. As this mass had been paid for by the Imperial Consort and the Lady Dowager was going in person to offer incense, and as moreover it was just before the Double Fifth Festival, all the preparations were on a more lavish scale than usual.

Presently the ladies of the house emerged. The old lady’s large sedan-chair had eight bearers; those of Li Wan, Xifeng and Aunt Xue, four apiece. The carriage shared by Baochai and Daiyu was gay with a green awning, pearl-tassels and designs of the Eight Precious Things; that shared by the three Jia girls had crimson wheels and an ornamented covering.

Behind them followed the Lady Dowager’s maids Yuanyang, Yingwu, Hupo and Zhenzhu; Daiyu’s maids Zijuan, Xueyan and Chunxian; Baochai’s maids Yinger and Wenxing; Yingchun’s maids Siqi and Xiuju; Tanchun’s maids Daishu and Cuimo; Xichun’s maids Ruhua and Caiping; and Aunt Xue’s maids Tongxi and Tonggui.

They were also accompanied by Xiangling and her maid Zhener; Li

书、翠墨，惜春的丫头入画、彩屏，薛姨妈的丫头同喜、同贵，外带着香菱，香菱的丫头臻儿，李氏的丫头素云、碧月，凤姐儿的丫头平儿、丰儿、小红，并王夫人两个丫头也要跟了凤姐儿去的是金钏、彩云，奶子抱着大姐儿带着丫头们另在一车，还有两个丫头，一共再连上各房的老嬷嬷、奶娘并跟出门的家人媳妇子，乌压压的占了一街的车。贾母等已经坐轿去了多远，这门前尚未坐完。这个说“我不同你在一处”，那个说“你压了我们奶奶的包袱”，那边车上又说“蹭了我的花儿”，这边又说“碰折了我的扇子”，咕咕呱呱，说笑不绝。周瑞家的过来过去的说道：“姑娘们，这是街上，看人家笑话。”说了几遍，方觉好了。前头的全副执事摆开，早已到了清虚观门口。宝玉骑着马，在贾母轿前。街上的人都站在两边。

将至观前，只听钟鸣鼓响，早有张法官执香披衣，带领众道士在路旁迎接。贾母的轿刚至山门以内，贾母在轿内因看见有守门大帅并千里眼、顺风耳、当方土地、本境城隍各泥胎圣像，便命住轿。贾珍带领各子侄上来迎接。凤姐儿知道鸳鸯等在后面，赶不上来搀贾母，自己下了轿，忙要上来搀。可巧有个十二三岁的小道士儿，拿着剪筒，照管剪各处蜡花，正欲得便且藏出去，不想一头撞在凤姐儿怀里。凤姐便一扬手，照脸一下，把那小孩子打了一个筋斗，骂道：“野牛食的，胡朝那里跑！”那小道士也不顾拾烛剪，爬起来往外还要跑。正值宝钗等下车，众婆娘媳妇正围随的风雨



Wan's maids Suyun and Biyue; Xifeng's maids Pinger, Fenger and Xiaohong; and Lady Wang's maids Jinchuan and Caiyun, who because they wanted to go were attending on Xifeng today.

Dajie and her wet-nurse rode in another carriage with other maids.

In addition there were two other maids and some old nurses from the different apartments, as well as some stewards' wives. The whole street was nearly hidden from sight by all their conveyances. Even after the Lady Dowager's sedan-chair had gone a considerable distance, these attendants were still mounting their carriages at the gate, where a babel of voices was heard:

"I don't want *you* in with me."

"Look out! you're sitting on my lady's things."

"Don't tread on my flowers!"

"You've gone and broken my fan."

There was no end to their noisy talk and laughter. Zhou Rui's wife went back and forth to remonstrate:

"Now, girls, don't make such laughing-stocks of yourselves out in the street."

She had to repeat this several times to make them quiet down, by which time the front part of the retinue had reached the abbey gate. And as Baoyu rode up on horseback before the Lady Dowager's sedan-chair, spectators lined the street.

As they neared the abbey gate, they heard the peal of bells and the roll of drums. Abbot Zhang in his robes of office, holding a tablet, was waiting with his priests by the roadside to welcome them. The Lady Dowager's sedan-chair had just been borne through the gate when, at sight of the clay images of gods guarding the temple gate, those of two messenger gods — one with eyes able to see a thousand *li*, the other with ears able to catch each breath of rumour — together with local tutelary gods, she ordered her bearers to halt. Jia Zhen and the young men of the family advanced to receive her. And Xifeng, knowing that Yuanyang and the others were too far behind to help the old lady alight, got down from her own chair to do this. As she did so, an acolyte of twelve or thirteen, holding a case of scissors for cutting the candle-wicks, came darting out to see the fun and ran full tilt into her. She boxed his

不透，但见一个小道士滚了出来，都喝声叫“拿，拿，拿！打，打，打！”

贾母听了忙问道：“是怎么了？”贾珍忙出来问。凤姐上去搀住贾母，就回说：“一个小道士儿，剪灯花的，没躲出去，这会子混钻呢。”贾母听说，忙道：“快带了那孩子来，别唬着他。小门小户的孩子，都是娇生惯养的，那里见的这个势派。可怜见的，倘或一时吓着他，他老子娘岂不疼的慌？”说着，便叫贾珍去好生带了来。贾珍只得去拉了那孩子来。那孩子还一手拿着蜡剪，跪在地下乱颤。贾母命贾珍拉他起来，叫他不要怕。问他几岁了，那孩子通说不出话来。贾母还说“可怜见的”，又向贾珍道：“珍哥儿，带他去罢。给他些钱买果子吃，别叫人难为了他。”贾珍答应，领他去了。这里贾母带着众人，一层一层的瞻拜观玩。外面小厮们见贾母等进入二层山门，忽见贾珍领了一个小道士出来，叫人来带去，给他几个钱，不要难为了他。家人听说，忙上来几个领了下去。

贾珍站在阶矶上，因问：“管家在那里？”底下站的小厮们见问，都一齐喝声说：“叫管家！”登时林之孝一手扣着帽子跑了来，到贾珍跟前。贾珍道：“虽说这里地方大，今儿不承望来这么些人。你使的人，你就带了往你的那院里去；使





ears so hard that he pitched to the ground.

“Look out where you’re going, little bastard!” she swore.

Too frightened to pick up his scissors, the boy scrambled to his feet to run outdoors. Just then Baochai and the other girls were dismounting from their carriages, escorted by a multitude of matrons and stewards’ wives. At sight of the little fugitive, the attendants shouted:

“Catch him! Beat him!”

“What’s happened?” asked the Lady Dowager.

Jia Zhen hurried over to make inquiries, while Xifeng gave the old lady her arm.

“It’s an acolyte who trims the wicks,” she explained. “He didn’t get out of the way in time and was rushing wildly about.”

“Bring him here. Don’t frighten him,” the Lady Dowager ordered. “Children of humble families are well sheltered by their parents, they have never seen anything so grand before. It would be too bad to frighten him out of his wits — his father and mother would never get over it.” She told Jia Zhen, “Go and bring him gently here.”

Jia Zhen had to drag the boy over. His scissors now in one hand, trembling from head to foot, he fell on his knees. The old lady made Jia Zhen help him up.

“Don’t be afraid,” she said. “How old are you?”

But he was speechless with fright.

“Poor little thing!” she exclaimed, then turned to Jia Zhen. “Take him away, Zhen, and give him some cash to buy sweetmeats. Don’t let anyone bully him.”

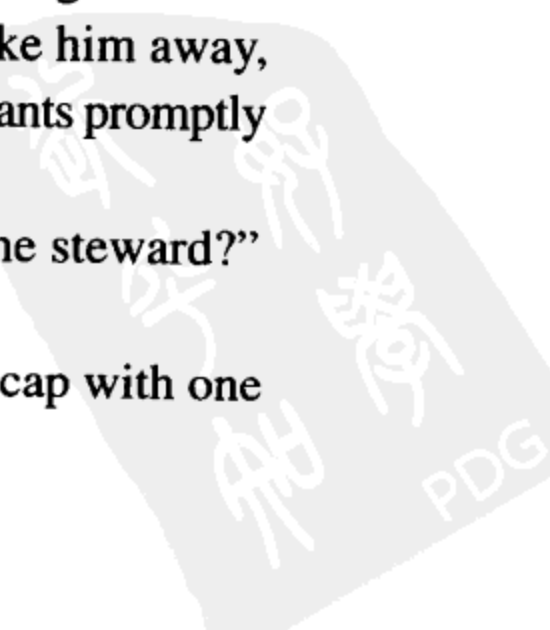
Jia Zhen assented and led the boy away, while the Lady Dowager moved on with her train to see the different shrines.

The pages outside had just observed them enter the third gate when out came Jia Zhen with the acolyte and ordered them to take him away, give him a few hundred cash and not illtreat him. Several servants promptly came forward and led him off.

Standing on the steps Jia Zhen demanded, “Where is the steward?”

All the pages shouted in unison, “Steward!”

At once Lin Zhixiao came running over, holding on his cap with one hand.



不着的，打发到那院里去，把小幺儿们挑几个在这二层门上同两边角门上，伺候着要东西传话。你可知道不知道，今儿小姐、奶奶们都出来，一个闲人也不许到这里来。”林之孝忙答应“晓得”，又说了几个“是”。贾珍道：“去罢。”又问：“怎么不见蓉儿？”一声未了，只见贾蓉扣着纽子从钟楼里跑了出来。贾珍道：“你瞧瞧他，我这里也还受着热，他倒乘凉去了！”喝命家人啐他。那小厮们都知道贾珍素日的性子，违拗不得，有个小厮便上来向贾蓉脸上啐了一口。贾珍又道：“问着他！”那小厮便问贾蓉道：“爷还不怕热，哥儿怎么先乘凉去了？”贾蓉垂着手，一声不敢说。那贾芸、贾芹、贾萍等听见了，不但他们慌了，亦且连贾璜、贾瑞、贾琮等也都忙了，一个一个从墙根下慢慢的溜上来。贾珍又向贾蓉道：“你站着作什么？还不骑了马跑到家里，告诉你娘母子去！老太太同姑娘们都来了，叫他们快来伺候。”贾蓉听说，忙跑了出来，一叠连声要马，一面抱怨道：“早都不知作什么的，这会子寻趁我。”一面又骂小子：“捆着手呢？马也拉不来。”待要打发小子去，又怕后来对出来，说不得亲自走一趟，骑马去了，不在话下。

且说贾珍方要抽身进去，只见张道士站在旁边陪笑说道：“我说论理比不得别人，应该里头伺候。只因天气炎热，众位千金都出来了，法官不敢擅入，请爷的示下。恐老



“Although this is a large place,” Jia Zhen told him, “there are more people here than we expected. Keep those you need in this courtyard, send those you don’t need to the other, and post some boys at the two main gates and side gates ready to carry out orders and run errands. You know, don’t you, that all the ladies have come today, so not a single outsider must be allowed in.”

“Yes, sir. Right, sir. Very good, sir,” agreed Lin Zhixiao hastily.

“You may go. Wait! Why isn’t Rong here?”

While he was still speaking Jia Rong hurried out from the bell-tower, buttoning his clothes.

“Look at him,” sneered Jia Zhen. “While I swelter here he finds somewhere to cool off.”

He ordered the servants to spit at him, and one of the pages spat in Jia Rong’s face.

“Ask him what he means by it,” ordered Jia Zhen.

So the page asked Jia Rong, “If His Lordship can stand the heat, why should you go to cool off?”

Jia Rong, his arms at his sides, dared not utter a word.

This had struck fear into Jia Yun, Jia Qin and Jia Ping; and even Jia Huang, Jia Bin and Jia Qiong promptly put on their caps and one by one edged forward from the shade at the foot of the wall.

“What are you standing there for?” Jia Zhen snapped at his son. “Hurry up and gallop home to tell your mother and wife that the old lady and all the young ladies are here. They should come at once and wait on them.”

Jia Rong ran off shouting repeatedly for a horse. He grumbled: “Why was this not thought of before? Now I’m the one to take the brunt.” Then he swore at a page, “Are your hands tied that you can’t bring me a horse?”

He would have sent a page in his place, if not for fear this might be discovered later. As it was, he had to ride back to town himself.

But to return to Jia Zhen. As he was turning back to the hall he found Zhang the Taoist standing beside him.

“In view of my special position I ought to attend the ladies inside,” the priest observed with a smile. “But it’s such a hot day, with so many

太太问，或要随喜那里，我只在这里伺候罢。”贾珍知道这张道士虽然是当日荣国公的替身，曾经先皇御口亲呼为“大幻仙人”，如今现掌“道录司”印，又是当今封为“终了真人”，现今王公、藩镇都称他为“神仙”，所以不敢轻慢。二则他又常往两个府里去，凡夫人、小姐都是见的。今见他如此说，便笑道：“咱们自己，你又说起这话来。再多说，我把你这胡子还捋了你的！还不跟我进来。”那张道士呵呵笑着，跟了贾珍进来。

贾珍到贾母跟前，躬身陪笑说：“这张爷爷进来请安。”贾母听了，忙道：“搀他来。”贾珍忙去搀了过来。那张道士先呵呵笑道：“无量寿佛！老祖宗一向福寿康宁？众位奶奶、小姐纳福？一向没到府里请安，老太太气色越发好了。”贾母笑道：“老神仙，你好？”张道士笑道：“托老太太万福万寿，小道也还康健。别的倒罢，只记挂着哥儿，一向身上好？前日四月二十六日，我这里做遮天大王的圣诞，人也来的少，东西也很干净，我说请哥儿来逛逛，怎么说不在家？”贾母说道：“果真不在家。”一面回头叫宝玉。谁知宝玉解手去了才来，忙上前问：“张爷爷好？”张道士忙抱住问了好，又向贾母笑道：“哥儿越发发了福了。”贾母道：“他外头好，里头





young ladies here too, that I don't like to presume without your permission. I'd better wait here in case the old lady may want me to show her round."

Jia Zhen knew that though this Taoist had been the Duke of Rongguo's substitute,<sup>1</sup> later he had been made Chief Warder of the Taoist Script, with the title "Saint of the Great Illusion" verbally conferred by the previous Emperor, and now being Keeper of the Taoist Seal and entitled "Man of Final Truth" by the Emperor he was addressed as "Immortal" by nobles and officials alike. It would not do to slight him. Besides, during his frequent visits to the two mansions he had already made the acquaintance of all the ladies there, both young and old.

So Jia Zhen responded with a smile, "What sort of talk is this among friends? Stop it at once or I shall pull out your beard. Come along in with me."

Laughing heartily the Taoist followed him in.

Jia Zhen found the Lady Dowager and with a bow informed her: "Grandfather Zhang has come to pay his respects."

"Bring him here," she rejoined at once.

Jia Zhen led in the priest, chortling.

"Buddha of Infinite Longevity!" he exclaimed. "I hope the Old Ancestress has been enjoying good fortune, long life, health and peace, and that all the ladies and young ladies have been happy too. I haven't called on you to pay my respects, but Your Ladyship looks in better health than ever."

"And are you well, Old Immortal?" she responded with a smile.

"Thanks to my share in your good fortune, yes. I keep feeling concerned about your grandson, though. How has he been keeping all this time? Not long ago, on the twenty-sixth of last month, we celebrated the birthday of the Prince who Shades the Sky. As few people would be coming and everything was quite clean, I sent to invite Master Bao to come; but they told me he wasn't at home."

"It's true, he wasn't."

The old lady called for her grandson.

Baoyu, just back from the privy, hurriedly stepped forward to say, "How do you do, Grandad Zhang?"



弱。又搭着他老子逼着他念书，生生的把个孩子逼出病来了。”张道士道：“我前日在好几处看见哥儿写的字，作的诗，都好的了不得，怎么老爷还抱怨说哥儿不大喜欢念书呢？依小道看来，也就罢了。”又叹道：“我看见哥儿的这个形容身段，言谈举动，怎么就同当日国公爷一个稿子！”说着两眼流下泪来。贾母听说，也由不得满脸泪痕，说道：

“正是呢，我养了这些儿孙子，也没一个像他爷爷的，就只这宝玉像他爷爷。”

那张道士又向贾珍道：“当日国公爷的模样儿，爷们一辈的不用说，自然没赶上，大约连大老爷、二老爷也记不清楚了。”说毕呵呵又一大笑，道：“前儿在一个人家看见一位小姐，今年十五岁了，生的倒也好个模样儿。我想着哥儿也该寻亲事了。若论这个小姐模样儿，聪明智慧，根基家当，倒也配的过。但不知老太太怎么样，小道也不敢造次。等请了老太太的示下，才敢向人去张口。”贾母道：“上回有和尚说了，这孩子命里不该早娶，等再大一大儿再定罢。你可如今也打听看，不管他根基富贵，只要模样配的上就好，来告诉我。便是那家子穷，不过给他几两银子也罢。也只是模样儿性格儿难得好的。”

说毕，只见凤姐儿笑道：“张爷爷，我们丫头的寄名符儿你也不换了去。前儿亏你还有那么大脸，打发人和我要鹅黄缎子去！要不给你，又恐怕你那老脸上过不去。”张道士呵呵大笑道：“你瞧，我眼花了，也没看见奶奶在这里，也没道多谢。符早已有了，前日原要送去的，不指望娘娘来作好事，就混忘了，还在佛前镇着。待我取来。”说着跑到大殿



The priest took him in his arms and asked after his health.

“Yes,” he remarked to the Lady Dowager, “he looks as if he’s putting on weight now.”

“He may look all right but he’s really delicate. And his father is ruining his health, the way he keeps the boy poring over his books.”

“I’ve seen some of his calligraphy and poems in different places recently. They’re so remarkably good I can’t understand why His Lordship should still complain he’s idle. I’d say he’s doing all right.” Then, with a sigh, the old Taoist observed, “To me, with his face and figure, his bearing and way of talking, Master Bao seems the image of the old duke.” Tears welled from his eyes as he spoke.

The old lady was painfully affected too.

“You’re right,” she agreed. “Of all my sons and grandsons, Baoyu is the only one who takes after his grandfather.”

The priest then remarked to Jia Zhen, “Of course, sir, your generation were born too late to see the duke. I don’t suppose even Lord She and Lord Zheng remember too well what he looked like.” He burst out laughing again before turning back to the Lady Dowager. “The other day in a certain family I saw a young lady of fifteen, a pretty girl. It seems to me time to arrange a match for the young master. And that young lady would do, as far as looks, intelligence and family go. But not knowing how Your Ladyship feels, I didn’t like to do anything rash. I can go and broach the subject if Your Ladyship gives the word.”

“A bonze told us this boy isn’t fated to marry too early,” she replied. “So we’ll wait until he’s older to settle things. But by all means keep your eyes open. Riches and rank are immaterial. Only if you find a girl pretty enough, come and let us know. Even if the family’s poor it doesn’t matter, we can always let them have a few taels of silver. But good looks and a sweet disposition are hard to find.”

At this point Xifeng joined in with a smile: “Grandfather Zhang, you still haven’t brought our daughter her new talisman, yet you had the nerve to send round the other day to ask for yellow satin. And I didn’t like to make you lose face by not giving it.”

Zhang the Taoist roared with laughter.

“My eyes are so dim, I didn’t notice you, madam, and haven’t thanked

上去，一时拿了一个茶盘，搭着大红蟒缎经袱子，托出符来。大姐儿的奶子接了符。张道士方欲抱过大姐儿来，只见凤姐儿笑道：“你就手里拿来也罢了，又用个盘子托着。”张道士道：“手里不干不净的，怎么拿，用盘子洁净些。”凤姐儿笑道：“你只顾拿出盘子来，倒唬我一跳。我不说你是为送符，倒像是和我们化布施来了。”众人听说，哄然一笑，连贾珍也掌不住笑了。贾母回头道：“猴儿猴儿，你不怕下割舌头地狱？”凤姐儿笑道：“我们爷儿们不相干。他怎么常常的说我该积阴骘，迟了就短命呢！”

张道士也笑道：“我拿出盘子来一举两用，却不为化布施，倒要将哥儿的这玉请了下来，托出去给那些远来的道友并徒子徒孙们见识见识。”贾母道：“既这们着，你老人家老天拔地的跑什么，就带他去瞧了，叫他进来，岂不省事？”张道士道：“老太太不知道，看着小道是八十多岁的人，托老太太的福倒也健壮；二则外面的人多，气味难闻，况是个暑热的天，哥儿受不惯，倘或哥儿受了腌臢气味，倒值多了。”贾母听说，便命宝玉摘下通灵玉来，放在盘内。那张道士兢兢业业的用蟒袱子垫着，捧了出去。

这里贾母与众人各处游玩了一回，方上楼去。只见贾珍





you. The talisman was ready long ago and I was meaning to send it, but when Her Highness ordered this mass to be held I forgot. It's still before the image of Buddha. I'll go and get it."

He hurried off to the main hall, returning presently with a talisman on a tray covered with a red silk sutra wrapper with a dragon design. As Dajie's nurse took this from him, he held out his arms for the child.

"Why didn't you bring it in your hands?" Xifeng wanted to know. "Why use a tray?"

"My hands are too dirty, madam. A tray seemed cleaner."

"You gave me quite a turn when you brought in that tray," she teased. "I didn't know you had the talisman on it, I thought you'd come to ask for donations."

This set the whole party laughing. Even Jia Zhen could not suppress a smile.

"What a monkey you are!" cried the Lady Dowager turning to Xifeng. "Aren't you afraid of going to the Tongue-Cutting Hell?"

"I've done him no harm," she countered. "Why is he always warning me that unless I do more good deeds I shan't live long?"

Zhang the Taoist chuckled.

"I brought the tray for two reasons," he explained. "Not to collect donations, but to borrow Master Bao's jade to show my Taoist friends and disciples."

"If that's the case," said the Lady Dowager, "there's no reason why an old man like you should run around. Take Baoyu out to show it to them all, then send him back. Wouldn't that save trouble?"

"No, Your Ladyship doesn't understand. I may be more than eighty, but thanks to your shared good fortune I'm hale and hearty; and there are so many of them out there that the place stinks. Master Bao, not being used to this heat, might be over-powered by the stench. And that would be too bad."

Accordingly the old lady told Baoyu to take off his Jade of Spiritual Understanding and put it on the tray. Zhang the Taoist laid it reverently on the silk and carried the tray respectfully out with both hands.

For their part, the Lady Dowager and her party went on strolling round the temple. They were climbing to the upper storey of one building when

回说：“张爷爷送了玉来了。”刚说着，只见张道士捧了盘子，走到跟前笑道：“众人托小道的福，见了哥儿的玉，实在希罕。都没什么敬贺之物，这是他们各人传道的法器，都愿意为敬贺之礼。哥儿便不希罕，只留着在房里玩耍赏人罢。”贾母听说，向盘内看时，只见也有金璜的，也有玉玦的，或有事事如意，或有岁岁平安，皆是珍穿宝贯，玉琢金镂，共有三五十件。因说道：“你也胡闹。他们出家人是那里来的，何必这样，这断不能收的。”张道士笑道：“这是他们一点敬心，小道也不能阻挡。老太太若不留下，岂不叫他们看着小道微薄，不像是门下出身了。”贾母听如此说，方命人接了。宝玉笑道：“老太太，张爷爷既这么说，又推辞不得，我要这个也无用，不如叫小子们捧了这个，跟着我出去散给穷了罢。”贾母笑道：“这倒说的是。”张道士又忙拦道：“哥儿虽要行好事，但这些东西虽说不甚希奇，到底也是几件器皿。若给了乞丐，一则与他们无益，二则反倒糟蹋了这些东西。要舍给穷人，何不就散钱与他们。”宝玉听说，便命收下，等晚间拿钱施舍罢了。说毕，张道士方退出去。

这里贾母与众人上了楼，贾母在正楼上坐了。凤姐等占了东楼。众丫头等在西楼，轮流伺候。贾珍一时来回：“神前拈了戏，头一本《白蛇记》。”贾母问：“《白蛇记》是什么故事？”贾珍道：“是汉高祖斩蛇方起首的故事。第二本是





Jia Zhen reported that Grandad Zhang had brought back the jade. As he spoke, Zhang appeared with the tray.

“Everyone felt most obliged to me for the chance to see Master Bao’s jade, which they think most wonderful,” he declared. “They’ve nothing else worth offering, so they’ve sent these Taoist amulets as tokens of their respect. If Master Bao thinks they’re nothing special, he can keep them as toys or give them away, just as he pleases.”

The Lady Dowager saw in the tray several dozen amulets of gold and jade engraved with the inscriptions “May All Your Wishes Come True” and “Eternal Peace.” Each was studded with pearls or jewels and finely carved.

“This won’t do,” she expostulated. “How can priests afford such things? It’s quite uncalled for. We can’t possibly accept them.”

“These are just a small token of their esteem. I couldn’t stop them,” he said. “If Your Ladyship won’t accept them, they’ll think you look down on me and don’t consider me as your protegee.”

So she had to tell a maid to take the gifts.

“Since Grandad Zhang won’t let us refuse, and these things are no use to me, madam,” said Baoyu, “why not let my pages carry them out with me now to distribute them to the poor?”

“That’s a good idea,” agreed his grandmother.

But Zhang the Taoist immediately objected, “That’s a charitable thought, Master Bao; but even if these things are of little value, some of them are well made. They’d be wasted on beggars, who’d have no use for them. If you want to help the poor, why not give them money instead?”

“All right,” said Baoyu. “We’ll keep them and distribute some alms this evening.”

Thereupon the priest withdrew, while the Lady Dowager and her party went upstairs to sit in the main balcony, Xifeng and her companions occupying that to the east. The maids, in the west balcony, took turns waiting on their mistresses.

Presently Jia Zhen came to report that lots had been drawn before the shrine for the operas, and the first was to be *The White Serpent*.

“What’s the story?” asked the old lady.

《满床笏》。”贾母笑道：“这倒在第二本上？也罢了。神佛要这样，也只得罢了。”又问第三本，贾珍道：“第三本是《南柯梦》。”贾母听了便不言语。贾珍退了下来，至外边预备着申表、焚钱粮、开戏，不在话下。

且说宝玉在楼上，坐在贾母旁边，因叫个小丫头子捧着方才那一盘子贺物，将自己的玉带上，用手翻弄寻拨，一件一件的挑与贾母看。贾母因看见有个赤金点翠的麒麟，便伸手拿了起来，笑道：“这件东西好像我看见谁家的孩子也带着这么一个的。”宝钗笑道：“史大妹妹有一个，比这个小些。”贾母道：“原来是云儿有这个。”宝玉道：“他这么住在我们家，我也没看见。”探春笑道：“宝姐姐有心，不管什么他都记得。”林黛玉冷笑道：“他在别的上心还有限，惟有这些人带的东西上越发留心。”宝钗听说，便回头装没听见。宝玉听见史湘云有这件东西，自己便将那麒麟忙拿起来揣在怀里。一面心里又想到怕人看见他听见史湘云有了，他就留这件，因此手里揣着，却拿眼睛瞟人。只见众人都倒不大理论，惟有林黛玉瞅着他点头儿，似有赞叹之意。宝玉不觉心里没好意思起来，又掏了出来，向黛玉笑道：“这个东西倒好玩，我替你留着，到了家穿上你带。”林黛玉将头一扭，说



"It's about the First Emperor of Han who killed a serpent, then founded the dynasty. The second is *Every Son a High Minister*."<sup>2</sup>

"So that's the second?" The Lady Dowager nodded, smiling. "Well, if this is the wish of the gods, what must be must be. And what's the third?"

*"The Dream of the Southern Tributary State."*<sup>3</sup>

At this she made no comment. Jia Zhen withdrew to prepare the written prayers, burn incense and order the actors to start. But no more of this.

Baoyu, seated next to his grandmother upstairs, told one of the maids to bring him the tray of gifts. Having put on his own jade again he rummaged through his presents, showing them one by one to the old lady. Her eye was struck by a gold unicorn decorated with turquoise enamel, which she picked up.

"I'm sure I've seen something like this on one of the girls," she remarked.

"Cousin Xiangyun has one like that, only a little smaller," Baochai told her.

"So that's it!" exclaimed the Lady Dowager.

"All this time she's been staying with us, how come I've never noticed it?" asked Baoyu.

"Cousin Baochai's observant," chuckled Tanchun. "She never forgets anything either."

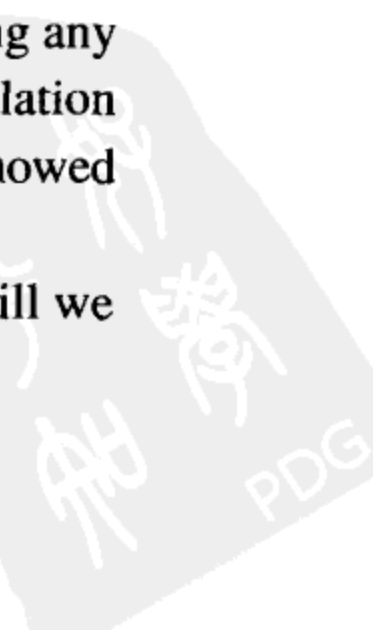
"She's not so observant about other things," remarked Daiyu cuttingly. "But she's most observant about other people's trinkets."

Baochai turned away and pretended not to have heard.

As soon as Baoyu knew that Xiangyun had a unicorn too, he picked this one up and slipped it into his pocket. Then, afraid people might see through him, he glanced surreptitiously round. The only one paying any attention was Daiyu, who was nodding at him with a look of speculation in her eyes. Embarrassed by this, he took the unicorn out again and showed it to her.

"This is rather fun," he said with a smile. "I'll keep it for you till we get home, then put it on a cord for you to wear."

Daiyu tossed her head.



道：“我不希罕。”宝玉笑道：“你果然不希罕，我少不得就拿着。”说着又复揣起来。

刚要说话，只见贾珍、贾蓉的妻子婆媳两个来了，彼此见过，贾母方说：“你们又来做什么，我不过没事来逛逛。”一句话没说完，只见人报：“冯将军家有人来了。”原来冯紫英家听见贾府在庙里打醮，连忙预备了猪羊香供茶食之类的东西送了来。凤姐儿听了，忙赶过正楼来，拍手笑道：“嗳呀！我就不防这个。只说咱们娘儿们来闲逛逛，人家只当咱们大摆斋坛的来送礼。都是老太太闹的。这又不得预备赏封儿。”刚说了，只见冯家的两个管家娘子上楼来了。冯家的两个未去，接着赵侍郎家也有礼来了。于是接二连三，都听见贾府打醮，女眷都在庙里，凡一应远亲近友、世家相与都来送礼。贾母才后悔起来，说：“又不是什么正经斋事，我们不过闲逛逛，就想不到这礼上，没的惊动了人。”因此虽看了一天戏，至下午便回来了，次日便懒待去。凤姐又说：“打墙也是动土，已经惊动了人，今儿乐得还去逛逛。”那贾母因昨日张道士提起宝玉说亲的事来，谁知宝玉一日心中不自在，回家来生气，嗔着张道士与他说了亲，口口声声说从今以后再不见张道士了，别人也不知为什么原故；二则林黛玉昨日回家又中了暑。因此二事，贾母便执意不去了。凤姐见不去，自己带了人去，也不在话下。



“I don’t fancy it.”

“If you really don’t, in that case I’ll keep it for myself.” He put it away again.

Before he could say more, Madam You and Rong’s second wife — Jia Zhen’s wife and daughter-in-law — arrived to pay their respects.

“You shouldn’t have come,” protested the old lady. “I’m just out for a little jaunt.”

The next second it was announced that messengers had come from General Feng. For as soon as Feng Ziyong heard that the Jia family were celebrating a mass in the abbey he had prepared gifts of pigs, sheep, incense, candles and sweetmeats and had them sent along. The moment Xifeng knew this she hurried over to the main balcony.

“Aiya!” she exclaimed, clapping her hands. “I wasn’t prepared for this. We just looked on this as an outing, but they’ve sent offerings under the impression that we’re making a serious sacrifice of it. It’s all our old lady’s fault. Now I shall have to prepare some tips.”

That same instant up come two stewards’ wives from the Feng family. And before they had left more presents arrived from Vice-Minister Zhao, to be followed in quick succession by gifts from all their relatives and friends who had heard that the ladies of the Jia family were holding a service in the abbey.

The Lady Dowager began to regret the whole expedition.

“This isn’t a regular sacrifice,” she said. “We just came out for fun, but we’ve put them to all this trouble.”

So after watching only one performance she went home that same afternoon and refused to go back the next day.

“Why not go the whole hog?” Xifeng reasoned. “Since we’ve already put everybody out, we may as well amuse ourselves again today.”

But Baoyu had been sulking ever since Zhang the Taoist broached the subject of his marriage to his grandmother. He was still fulminating against the priest and puzzling other people by muttering: “I never want to set eyes on him again.” As for Daiyu she had been suffering since her return from a touch of the sun. For these reasons the old lady remained adamant. When Xifeng saw that she would not go, she took some others back with her to the abbey.

且说宝玉因见林黛玉又病了，心里放不下，饭也懒去吃，不时来问。林黛玉又怕他有个好歹，因说道：“你只管看你的戏去，在家里作什么？”宝玉因昨日张道士提起说亲，心中大不受用，今听见林黛玉如此说，因想道：“别人不知道我的心还可恕，连他也奚落起我来。”因此心中更比往日的烦恼加了百倍。若是别人跟前，断不能动这肝火，只是林黛玉说了这话，倒比往日别人说这话不同，由不得立刻沉下脸来，说道：“我白认得了你。罢了，罢了！”林黛玉听说，便冷笑了两声，道：“白认得了我，那里像人家有什么配的上呢。”宝玉听了，便向前来直问到脸上：“你这么说，是安心咒我天诛地灭？”林黛玉一时解不过这个话来。宝玉又道：“昨儿我还为这个赌了几回咒，今儿你到底又准了我一句。我便天诛地灭，你又有什么益处？”林黛玉一闻此言，方想起上日的话来。今日原是自己说错了，又是着急，又是羞愧，便颤颤兢兢的说道：“我要安心咒你，我也天诛地灭。何苦来！我知道，昨日张道士说亲，你怕阻了你的好姻缘，你心里生气，来拿我杀性子。”

原来那宝玉自幼生成有一种下流痴病，况从小时和黛玉耳鬓厮磨，心情相对；及如今稍明时事，又看了那些邪书僻传，凡远亲近友之家所见的那些闺英闺秀，皆未有稍及黛玉者，所以早存了一段心事，只不好说出来，故每每或喜或怒，变尽法子暗中试探。那林黛玉偏生也是个有些痴病的，也每用假情试探。因你也将真心真意瞒了起来，只用假意，我也将真心真意瞒了起来，只用假意，如此两假相逢，终有





Baoyu was so worried on Daiyu's account that he would not touch his food and kept going over to find out how she was. Daiyu, for her part, was worried about him.

"Why don't you go and see the shows?" she asked. "Why should you stay at home?"

The Taoist's officiousness still rankled with Baoyu, and when Daiyu, said this he thought: "I could forgive others for not understanding me, but now even she is making fun of me." So his resentment increased a hundredfold. He wouldn't have flared up had it been anyone else, but Daiyu's behaving this way was a different matter. His face clouded over.

"All right, all right," he said sullenly. "We've known each other all these years in vain."

"I know that too." She laughed sarcastically. "I'm not like those others who own things which make them a good match for you."

He went up to her then and demanded to her face, "Does this mean you really want to invoke Heaven and Earth to destroy me?" Before she could fathom his meaning he went on, "Yesterday I took an oath because of this, and today you provoke me again. If Heaven and Earth destroy me, what good will it do you?"

Daiyu remembered their previous conversation and realized she had blundered. She was conscience-stricken and frantic.

"If I wish you harm, may Heaven and Earth destroy me too," she sobbed. "Why take on like this? I know. When Zhang the Taoist spoke of your marriage yesterday, you were afraid he might prevent the match of your choice. And now you're working your temper off on me."

Now Baoyu had always been deplorably eccentric. Since childhood, moreover, he had been intimate with Daiyu, finding her a kindred spirit. Thus now that he knew a little more and had read some improper books, he felt none of the fine girls he had seen in the families of relatives and friends fit to hold a candle to her. He had long since set his heart on having her, but could not admit as much. So whether happy or angry, he used every means to test her secretly.

And Daiyu, being rather eccentric too, would disguise her feelings to test him in return.

Thus each concealed his or her real sentiments to sound the other out.

一真。其间琐琐碎碎，难保不有口角之争。即如此刻，宝玉的心内想的是：“别人不知我的心，还有可恕，难道你就不想我的心里眼里只有你！你不能为我解烦恼，反来以这话奚落堵噎我。可见我心里一时一刻白有了你，你竟心里没我。”心里这意思，只是口里说不出来。那林黛玉心里想着：“你心里自然有我，虽有‘金玉相对’之说，你岂是重这邪说不重我的。我便时常提这‘金玉’，你只管了然自若无闻的，方见得是待我重，而毫无此心了。如何我只一提‘金玉’的事，你就着急，可知你心里时时有‘金玉’，见我一提，你又怕我多心，故意着急，安心哄我。”

看来两个人原本是一个心，但都多生了枝叶，反弄成两个心了。那宝玉心里又想着：“我不管怎么样都好，只要你随意，我便立刻因你死了也情愿。你知也罢，不知也罢，只由我的心，可见你方和我近，不和我远。”那林黛玉心里又想着：“你只管你，你好我自好，你何必为我而自失。殊不知你失我自失。可见是你不叫我近你，有意叫我远你了。”如此看来，却都是求近之心，反弄成疏远之意。如此之话，皆他二人素昔所存私心，也难备述。

如今只述他们外面的形容。那宝玉又听见他说“好姻缘”三个字，越发逆了己意，心里干噎，口里说不出话来，便赌气向颈上抓下通灵玉来，咬牙恨命往地下一摔，道：“什么劳什骨子，我砸了你完事！”偏生那玉坚硬非常，摔了一下，竟文风没动。宝玉见不碎，便回身找东西来砸。林黛玉见他如此，早已哭起来，说道：“何苦来，你摔砸那哑吧物件。有砸他的，不如来砸我。”二人闹着，紫鹃、雪雁等忙进来解



The proverb says, "When false meets false, the truth will out." So inevitably, in the process, they kept quarrelling over trifles.

So now Baoyu was reflecting. "I can forgive others not understanding me, but you ought to know you're the only one I care for. Yet instead of comforting me you only taunt me. It's obviously no use my thinking of you every minute of the day — you've no place for me in your heart." To tell her this, however, was beyond him.

As for Daiyu, she was reflecting, "I know I've a place in your heart. Naturally you don't take that vicious talk about gold matching jade seriously, but think of me seriously instead. Even if I raise the subject, you should take it perfectly calmly to show that it means nothing to you, that the one you really care for is me. Why get so worked up at the mention of gold and jade? This shows you're thinking about them all the time. You're afraid I suspect this when I mention them, so you put on a show of being worked up — just to fool me."

In fact, to start with their two hearts were one, but each of them was so hyper-sensitive that their longing to be close ended in estrangement.

Now Baoyu was telling himself, "Nothing else matters to me so long as you're happy. Then I'd gladly die for you this very instant. Whether you know this or not, you can at least feel that in my heart you're close to me and not distant."

Daiyu meanwhile was thinking, "Just take good care of yourself. When you're happy, I'm happy too. Why should you be upset because of me? You should know that if you're upset, so am I. It means you won't let me be close to you and want me to keep at a distance."

So their mutual concern for each other resulted in their estrangement. But as it is hard to describe all their secret thoughts, we shall have to content ourselves with recording their actions.

Those words "the match of your choice" infuriated Baoyu. Too choked with rage to speak, he tore the jade from his neck and dashed it to the floor.

"You rubbishy thing!" he cried, gnashing his teeth. "I'll smash you to pieces and have done with it."

The jade was so hard, however, that no damage was done. So he looked around for something with which to smash it.

劝。后来见宝玉下死力砸玉，忙上来夺，又夺不下来，见比往日闹的大了，少不得去叫袭人。袭人忙赶了来，才夺了下来。宝玉冷笑道：“我砸我的东西，与你们什么相干！”

袭人见他脸都气黄了，眉眼都变了，从来没气的这样，便拉着他的手，笑道：“你同妹妹拌嘴，不犯着砸他；倘或砸坏了，叫他心里脸上怎么过的去？”林黛玉一行哭着，一行听了这话说到自己心坎儿上来，可见宝玉连袭人不如，越发伤心大哭起来。心里一烦恼，方才吃的香薷饮解暑汤便承受不住，“哇”的一声都吐了出来。紫鹃忙上来用手帕子接住，登时一口一口的把一块手帕子吐湿。雪雁忙上来捶。紫鹃道：“虽然生气，姑娘到底也该保重着些。才吃了药好些，这会子因和宝二爷拌嘴，又吐出来。倘或犯了病，宝二爷怎么过的去呢？”宝玉听了这话说到自己心坎儿上来，可见黛玉不如一紫鹃。又见林黛玉脸红头胀，一行啼哭，一行气凑，一行是泪，一行是汗，不胜怯弱。宝玉见了这般，又自己后悔方才不该同他校证，这会子他这样光景，我又替不了他。心里想着，也由不的滴下泪来了。袭人见他两个哭，由不得守着宝玉也心酸起来，又摸着宝玉的手冰凉，待要劝宝玉不哭罢，一则又恐宝玉有什么委屈闷在心里，二则又恐薄了林黛玉。不如大家一哭，就丢开了手，因此也流下泪来。紫鹃一面收拾了吐的药，一面拿扇子替林黛玉轻轻的扇着，



Daiyu was already weeping.

“Why destroy that dumb object?” she sobbed. “Better destroy me instead.”

Zijuan and Xueyan dashed in to stop this quarrel. Seeing Baoyu hammering at the jade they tried to snatch it away from him but failed. And since this was more serious than usual they had to send for Xiren, who hurried in and managed to rescue the stone.

Baoyu smiled bitterly.

“I can smash what’s mine, can’t I? What business is it of yours?”

Xiren had never before seen him so livid with rage, his whole face contorted.

“Because you have words with your cousin is no reason to smash this up,” she said coaxingly, taking his hand. “Suppose you broke it, think how bad she’d feel.”

This touched Daiyu’s heart, yet it only made her more wretched to think that Baoyu had less consideration for her than Xiren. She sobbed even more bitterly, so distraught that she threw up the herbal medicine she had just taken. Zijuan hastily brought her a handkerchief which soon was completely soaked through. Xueyan meanwhile massaged her back.

“No matter how angry you are, miss, do think of your health!” Zijuan urged. “You were feeling a little better after the medicine; it’s this tiff with Master Bao that’s made you retch. If you fall ill, how upset Master Bao will be.”

This touched Baoyu’s heart, yet also struck him as proof that Daiyu had less consideration for him than Zijuan. But now Daiyu’s cheeks were flushed and swollen. Weeping and choking, her face streaked with tears and sweat, she looked most fearfully frail. The sight filled him with compunction.

“I should never have argued with her and got her into this state,” he scolded himself. “I can’t even suffer instead of her.” He, too, shed tears.

Xiren’s heart ached to see how bitterly both of them were weeping. She felt Baoyu’s hands. They were icy cold. She wanted to urge him not to cry, but feared that bottling up his resentment would be bad for him; on the other hand, comforting him might seem like slighting Daiyu. Thinking that tears might calm them all, she wept in sympathy.



见三人鸦雀无声，各自哭各自的，也由不得伤心起来，也拿手帕子擦泪。四个人都无言对泣。

一时，袭人勉强笑向宝玉道：“你不看别的，你看看这玉上穿的穗子，也不该同姑娘拌嘴。”林黛玉听了，也不顾病，赶来夺过去，顺手抓起一把剪子来要剪。袭人、紫鹃刚要夺，已经剪了几段。林黛玉哭道：“我也是白效力。他也不希罕，自有别人再给他穿好的去。”袭人忙接了玉道：“何苦来，这是我方才多嘴的不是了。”宝玉向林黛玉道：“你只管剪，我横竖不带他，也没什么。”

只顾里头闹，谁知那些老婆子们见林黛玉大哭大吐，宝玉又砸玉，不知道要闹到什么田地，倘或连累了他们，便一齐往前头回贾母、王夫人知道，好不干连他们。那贾母、王夫人见他们忙忙的作一件正经事的来告诉，也不知有了什么大祸，便一齐进园来瞧他兄妹。急的袭人抱怨紫鹃为什么惊动了老太太、太太；紫鹃又只当是袭人去告诉的，也抱怨袭人。那贾母、王夫人进来，见宝玉也无言，林黛玉也没话，问起来又没为什么事，便将这祸移到袭人、紫鹃两个人身上，说：“为什么你们不小心伏侍，这会子闹起来都不管了！”因此将他二人连骂带说教训了一顿。二人都没话，只得听着。还是贾母带出宝玉去了，方才平服。

过了一日，至初三日，乃是薛蟠生日，家里摆酒唱戏，来请贾府诸人。宝玉因得罪了林黛玉，二人总未见面，心中正自后悔，无精打采的，那里还有心肠去看戏，因而推病不去。林黛玉不过前日中了些暑溽之气，本无甚大病，听见他



Zijuan, who had cleaned up and was gently fanning Daiyu, was so affected by the sight of the three of them weeping in silence that she had to put a handkerchief to her own eyes.

So all four of them wept in silence until Xiren, forcing a smile, said to Baoyu:

“Just because of the tassel on your jade, if not for any other reason, you shouldn’t quarrel with Miss Lin.”

At this Daiyu forgot her nausea and rushed over to snatch the jade, seizing a pair of scissors to cut off the tassel. Xiren and Zijuan intervened too late to save it.

“All my work for nothing,” sobbed Daiyu. “He doesn’t care for it. He can get someone else to make him a better one.”

Xiren hastily took the jade from her.

“Why do that?” she protested. “It’s my fault. I should have held my tongue.”

“Go ahead and cut it up,” Baoyu urged Daiyu. “I shan’t wear it anyway, so it doesn’t matter.”

During this commotion, some old nurses had bustled off without their knowing to inform the Lady Dowager and Lady Wang. For having heard Daiyu crying and vomiting and Baoyu threatening to smash his jade, they did not want to be held responsible should any serious trouble come of it. Their flurried, earnest report so alarmed the old lady and Lady Wang that both came to the Garden to see what dreadful thing had happened. Xiren was frantic and blamed Zijuan for disturbing their mistresses, while Zijuan held Xiren to blame.

When the Lady Dowager and Lady Wang found both the young people quiet and were told there was nothing amiss, they vented their anger on their two chief maids.

“Why don’t you look after them properly?” they scolded. “Can’t you do something when they start quarrelling?”

The two maids had to listen meekly to a long lecture, and peace was only restored when the old lady took Baoyu away.

The next day, the third of the month, was Xue Pan’s birthday, and the whole Jia family was invited to a feast and theatricals. Baoyu had not seen Daiyu since he offended her and was feeling too remorseful and

不去，心里想道：“他是好吃酒看戏的，今日反不往他们家去，自然是因为昨儿气着了。再不然，他见我不去，他也没心肠去。只是昨儿千不该万不该剪了那玉上的穗子。管定他再不带了，还得我穿好了他才带。”因而心中十分后悔。

那贾母见他二人都生了气，只说趁今儿那边看戏，他两个见了也就完了，不想又都不去。老人家急的抱怨说：“我这老冤家是那世的孽障，偏生遇见了这么两个不省事的小冤家，没有一天不叫我操心。真是俗语说的，‘不是冤家不聚头’。几时我闭了这眼，断了这口气，凭着这两个冤家闹上天去，我眼不见心不烦，也就罢了。偏又不咽这口气。”自己抱怨着也哭了。这话传入宝、林二人耳内。原来他二人竟是从未听说过“不是冤家不聚头”的这句俗语，如今忽然得了这句话，好似参禅的一般，都低头细嚼此话的滋味，都不觉潜然泣下。虽不曾会面，然一个在潇湘馆临风洒泪，一个在怡红院对月长吁，却不是人居两地，情发一心！

袭人因劝宝玉道：“千万不是，都是你的不是。往日家里小厮们和他们的姊妹拌嘴，或是两口子分争，你听见了，你还骂小子们蠢，不能体贴女孩儿们的心肠。今儿你也这么着了。明儿初五，大节下，你们两个再这么仇人似的，老太太越发要生气，一定弄的大家不安生。依我劝，你正经下个气儿，陪个不是，大家还是照常一样，这么也好，那么也好。”那宝玉听了，不知依也不依。且听下回分解。







depressed to enjoy any show. He pleaded illness, therefore, as an excuse not to go.

Daiyu was not seriously ill, simply suffering from the heat. When she heard of Baoyu's refusal to go she thought, "He has a weakness for feasts and theatricals. If he's staying away today, it must either be because yesterday's business still rankles or because he knows I'm not going. I should never have cut that tassel off his jade. I'm sure he won't wear it again now unless I make him another." So she felt thoroughly conscience-stricken too.

The Lady Dowager had hoped they would stop sulking and make it up while watching operas together. When both refused to go she grew quite frantic.

"What sins have I committed in a past existence to be plagued with two such troublesome children?" she lamented. "Not a day goes by without something to worry about. How true the proverb is that 'Enemies and lovers are destined to meet.' Once I've closed my eyes and breathed my last, they can quarrel and storm as much as they like. What the eye doesn't see the heart doesn't grieve for. But I'm not at my last gasp just yet." With that she wept too.

When word of this reached Baoyu and Daiyu, neither of whom had heard that proverb before, they felt as if a great light had dawned on them. With lowered heads they pondered its meaning and could not hold back their tears. True, they were still apart: one weeping to the breeze in Bamboo Lodge, the other sighing to the moon in Happy Red Court. But although apart, at heart they were as one.

Xiren scolded Baoyu, "It's entirely your fault. You used to blame boys who quarrelled with their sisters, or husbands who disputed with their wives, for being too stupid to understand girl's hearts. Yet now you're being just as bad yourself. The day after tomorrow, the fifth, is the festival. If you two go on looking daggers at each other that will make the old lady even angrier and no one will have any peace. Do get over your temper and apologize! Let bygones be bygones. Wouldn't that be better for both sides?"

Whether Baoyu took her advice or not you may read in the next chapter.





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### 第三十回

宝钗借扇机带双敲 龄官划蔷痴及局外

话说林黛玉与宝玉角口后，也自后悔，但又无去就他之理，因此日夜闷闷，如有所失。紫鹃度其意，乃劝道：“若论前日之事，竟是姑娘太浮躁了些。别人不知宝玉那脾气，难道咱们也不知道的。为那玉也不是闹了一遭两遭了。”黛玉啐道：“你倒来替人派我的不是。我怎么浮躁了？”紫鹃笑道：“好好的，为什么又剪了那穗子？岂不是宝玉只有三分不是，姑娘倒有七分不是。我看他素日在姑娘身上就好，皆因姑娘小性儿，常要歪派他，才这么样。”

林黛玉欲答话，只听院外叫门。紫鹃听了一听，笑道：“这是宝玉的声音，想必是来赔不是来了。”林黛玉听了道：“不许开门！”紫鹃道：“姑娘又不是了。这么热天毒日头地下，晒坏了他如何使得呢！”口里说着，便出去开门，果然是宝玉。一面让他进来，一面笑着说道：“我只当是宝二爷再不上我们这门了，谁知这会子又来了。”宝玉笑道：“你们把极小的事倒说大了。好好的，为什么不来？我便死了，魂也要一日来一百遭。妹妹可大好了？”紫鹃道：“身上病好了，只是心里气不大好。”宝玉笑道：“我晓得有什么气。”一面说着，一面进来，只见林黛玉又在床上哭。

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## Chapter 30

### Baochai Uses a Fan to Make an Insinuation Lingguan Writes on the Ground and a Foolish Young Man Is Touched

Daiyu for her part was also remorseful after her quarrel with Baoyu, but could think of no pretext to go and make it up. So she spent all day and night in a state of depression, feeling as if bereft. Zijuan, who guessed how she felt, tried to reason with her.

"The fact is you were too hasty the other day, miss," she said. "We should know Baoyu if no one else does. After all, it's not the first time there's been a rumpus over that jade."

"So you side with the others and blame me," snapped Daiyu. "In what way was I hasty?"

"Why did you cut off the tassel for no reason? That put you more in the wrong than Master Bao. I know how devoted he is to you, miss. All this comes of your touchiness and the way you twist his words."

Before Daiyu could retort they heard someone calling at the outer gate.

"It's Baoyu's voice." Zijuan smiled. "He must be coming to apologize."

"Don't let him in."

"That wouldn't be right, miss. It's a scorching day. We don't want him to get sunstroke."

She went and opened the gate, ushering Baoyu in with a smile.

"I thought you'd never cross this threshold of ours again," she remarked. "But here you are."

"You take things far too seriously." He chuckled. "Why shouldn't I come? Even if I were dead, my ghost would haunt you a hundred times a day. Tell me, is my cousin better?"

"In her health, yes. Not in her feelings."

"I know what's the trouble with her."

He went in and found Daiyu indulging in a fresh fit of weeping on her



那林黛玉本不曾哭，听见宝玉来，由不得伤心了，止不住滚下泪来。宝玉笑着走近床来，道：“妹妹身上可大好了？”林黛玉只顾拭泪，并不答应。宝玉因便挨在床沿上坐了，一面笑道：“我知道妹妹不恼我。但只是我不来，叫旁人看着，倒像是咱们又拌了嘴的似的。若等他们来劝咱们，那时节岂不咱们倒觉生分了？不如这会子，你要打要骂，凭着你怎么样，千万别不理我。”说着，又把“好妹妹”叫了几十声。林黛玉心里原是再不理宝玉的，这会子听见宝玉说别叫人知道他们拌了嘴就生分了似的这一句话，又可见得比人原亲近，因又撑不住哭道：“你也不用哄我。从今以后，我也不敢亲近二爷，二爷也全当我是去了。”宝玉听了笑道：“你往那去呢？”林黛玉道：“我回家去。”宝玉笑道：“我跟你去。”林黛玉道：“我死了。”宝玉道：“你死了，我做和尚！”林黛玉一闻此言，登时将脸放下来，问道：“想是你要死了，胡说的是什么！你家倒有几个亲姐姐亲妹妹呢，明儿都死了，你几个身子去作和尚？明儿我倒把这话告诉别人去评评。”

宝玉自知这话说的造次了，后悔不来，登时脸上红胀起来，低着头不敢则一声。幸而屋里没人。林黛玉两眼直瞪瞪的瞅了他半天，气的一声儿说不出话来。见宝玉憋的脸上紫胀，便咬着牙用指头狠命的在他额颅上戳了一下，哼了一声，咬牙说道：“你这——”刚说了两个字，便又叹了一口气，仍拿起手帕子来擦眼泪。宝玉心里原有无限的心事，又兼说错了话，正自后悔；又见黛玉戳他一下，要说也说不出，自叹自泣，因此自己也有所感，不觉滚下泪来。要用帕子揩拭，不想又忘了带来，便用衫袖去擦。林黛玉虽然哭



bed, so much had his arrival touched her.

Walking cheerfully up to her bedside he asked, "Are you feeling a little better?"

When she simply wiped her tears without answering, he sat down on the edge of the bed.

"I know you're not really angry with me," he told her. "But if I stayed away others might think we'd quarrelled again and come to act as peacemakers, as if the two of us were strangers. So beat me or scold me as much as you like but for pity's sake don't ignore me, dear cousin, sweet cousin!"

Daiyu had in fact determined to ignore him, but this speech proving that she was dearer to him than anyone else, and all the endearments he now poured out, made her break down again.

"You needn't flatter me," she sobbed. "I shall never dare be friends with you again. Behave as if I'd gone."

"Where would you go?" Baoyu laughed.

"Home."

"I'd go with you."

"What if I should die?"

"I'd become a monk."

"What a thing to say!" She frowned sternly. "Why talk such nonsense? Think of all the sisters and girl cousins you have. Do you have so many lives that you can become a monk every time one of them dies? Wait and see what the others say when I tell them this."

Baoyu could have kicked himself for this fresh blunder. Flushing red he hung his head without a word, thankful that no one else was in the room. Too angry to speak, she fixed him with furious eyes until his cheeks were burning. Then, clenching her teeth, she stabbed with one finger at his forehead.

"You...."

But this exclamation ended in a sigh as she took out her handkerchief and wiped her tears.

Baoyu's heart was very full and he was ashamed of speaking so foolishly. When she struck him then sighed and wept without a word, he too was reduced to tears. He started to wipe them with his sleeve, having

着，却一眼看见了，见他穿着簇新藕合纱衫，竟去拭泪，便一面自己拭着泪，一面回身将枕边搭的一方绡帕拿起来，向宝玉怀里一摔，一语不发，仍掩面自泣。宝玉见他摔了帕子来，忙接住拭了泪，又挨近前些，伸手挽了林黛玉一只手，笑道：“我的五脏都碎了，你还只是哭。走罢，我同你往老太太跟前去。”林黛玉将手一摔道：“谁同你拉拉扯扯的。一天大似一天的，还这么涎皮赖脸的，连个道理也不知道。”

一句没说完，只听喊道：“好了！”宝、林两个不防，都吓了一跳，回头看时，只见凤姐儿跳了进来，笑道：“老太太在那里抱怨天抱怨地，只叫我来瞧瞧你们好了没有。我说不用瞧，过不了三天，他们自己就好了。老太太骂我，说我懒。我来了，果然应了我的话。也没见你们两个有什么可拌的，三日好了，两日恼了，越大越成了孩子了！有这会子拉着手哭的，昨儿为什么又成了乌眼鸡呢！还不跟我走，到老太太跟前，叫老人家也放些心。”说着拉了林黛玉就走。林黛玉回头叫丫头们，一个也没有。凤姐道：“又叫他们作什么，有我伏侍你呢。”一面说，一面拉了就走。宝玉在后面跟着出了园门。到了贾母跟前，凤姐笑道：“我说他们不用人费心，自己就会好的。老祖宗不信，一定叫我去说合。乃至我到那里说合，谁知两个人倒在一处对赔不是了。对笑对拆，倒像‘黄鹰抓住了鹞子的脚’，两个都扣了环了，那里还要人去说合。”说的满屋里都笑起来。

此时宝钗正在这里。那林黛玉只一言不发，挨着贾母坐下。宝玉没甚说的，便向宝钗笑道：“大哥哥好日子，偏生我又不好了，没别的礼送，连个头也不得磕去。大哥哥不知我





forgotten to bring a handkerchief, and Daiyu noticed through her own tears that he was wearing a new lilac blue linen gown. While dabbing at her own eyes she turned and took a silk handkerchief from her pillow, tossed him this in silence and covered her face again.

Baoyu took the handkerchief and wiped his tears, then stepped forward to clasp her hand.

“You’re breaking my heart with your weeping,” he declared. “Come, let’s go and see the old lady.”

“Take your hands off me!” She pulled away. “You’re not a child any more, yet you still carry on in this shameless way. Can’t you behave yourself?”

She was interrupted by the cry “Thank goodness!”

The two of them started, then turned to see Xifeng sweeping gaily in.

“The old lady’s fulminating against Heaven and Earth,” she informed them. “She insisted I come to see if you’d made it up. I told her, ‘No need, they’ll be friends again in less than three days.’ But she scolded me for being too lazy to stir, so I had to come. Well, what did I say? I can’t see what you two have to quarrel about. Friends one day, squabbling the next, you’re worse than children. Now you’re holding hands and crying, but yesterday you were like fighting cocks. Come along with me, quick, to your grandmother to set the old lady’s mind at rest.”

She caught hold of Daiyu meaning to lead her away. Daiyu turned to call her maids but not one was there.

“What do you want *them* for?” asked Xifeng. “I’ll look after you.”

With that she pulled her out. And Baoyu followed them out of the Garden to the Lady Dowager’s quarters.

“I said don’t worry, they’ll make it up themselves,” announced Xifeng cheerfully. “Our Old Ancestress didn’t believe me, and insisted I go along as peacemaker. I found they’d already asked each other’s forgiveness, and were clinging together like an eagle sinking its talons into a hawk. They didn’t need any help.”

This set the whole room laughing. Baochai was also there. Daiyu said nothing but took a seat by the Lady Dowager.

To make conversation Baoyu told Baochai: “I would have to be out of sorts on your brother’s birthday; that’s why I haven’t sent any present



病，倒像我懒，推故不去的。倘或明日恼了，姐姐替我分辨分辨。”宝钗笑道：“这也多礼。你便要去也不敢惊动，何况身上不好。弟兄们日日一处，要存这个心倒生分了。”宝玉又笑道：“姐姐知道体谅我就好了。”又道：“姐姐怎么不看戏去？”宝钗道：“我怕热，看了两出，热的很。要走，客又不散。我少不得推身上不好，就来了。”宝玉听说，便由不得脸上没意思，只得又搭讪笑道：“怪不得他们拿姐姐比杨妃，原来也体丰怯热。”宝钗听说，不由的大怒，待要怎样，又不好怎样。回思了一回，脸红起来，便冷笑了两声，说道：“我倒像杨妃，只是没一个好哥哥好兄弟可以作得杨国忠的！”二人正说着，可巧小丫头靛儿因不见了扇子，和宝钗笑道：“必是宝姑娘藏了我的。好姑娘，赏了我罢。”宝钗指他道：“你要仔细！我和你玩过，你再疑我。和你素日嘻皮笑脸的那些姑娘们跟前，你该问她们去。”说的个靛儿跑了。宝玉自知又把话说造次了，当着许多人，更比才在林黛玉跟前更不好意思，便急回身又同别人搭讪去了。

林黛玉听见宝玉奚落宝钗，心中着实得意，才要搭言也趁势儿取个笑，不想靛儿因找扇子，宝钗又发了两句话，他便改口笑道：“宝姐姐，你听了两出什么戏？”宝钗因见林黛玉面上有得意之态，一定是听了宝玉方才奚落之言，遂了





over or even gone to offer congratulations. If he doesn't know I'm unwell, he may think I couldn't be bothered and be offended. Do explain to him, will you, cousin?"

"You're over-punctilious," said Baochai. "We wouldn't dare put you to any trouble even if you wished to go, much less so when you're unwell. As cousins you're always seeing so much of each other, you've no call to behave like strangers."

"So long as you understand and will overlook it." He added, "But why aren't you watching the operas, cousin?"

"I feel the heat. After watching two pieces I couldn't stand it any longer. But as the guests hadn't left, I had to pretend to be feeling unwell in order to slip away."

This sounded to Baoyu like a reflection on him. In his embarrassment he said with a sheepish smile:

"No wonder they compare you to Lady Yang, you're both 'plump and sensitive to the heat.'"<sup>1</sup>

Baochai was so enraged by this remark that she could have flown into a temper, but she restrained herself. This quip rankled so much, however, that she reddened and laughed sarcastically.

"If I'm so like Lady Yang," she retorted, "it's too bad I've no brother or cousin able to be another Yang Guozhong."<sup>2</sup>

She was interrupted by one of the young maids, Dianer, who had mislaid her fan.

"You must have hidden it, miss," she said playfully. "Do let me have it back."

"Behave yourself!" cried Baochai sharply, wagging one finger at her. "Have I ever played such tricks with you, that you should suspect me? You should ask the other young ladies who are always joking with you."

This rebuff frightened Dianer away.

Baoyu knew he had made another gaffe, in public too. Even more embarrassed than earlier on with Daiyu, he turned away to talk to the others.

Daiyu had been delighted to hear him make fun of Baochai. She would, indeed, have joined in if not for Baochai's retort regarding the fan. She decided, as it was, to change the subject.

他的心愿，忽又见问他这话，便笑道：“我看的是李逵骂了宋江，后来又赔不是。”宝玉便笑道：“姐姐通今博古，色色都知道，怎么连这一出戏的名字也不知道，就说了这么一串子。这叫《负荆请罪》。”宝钗笑道：“原来这叫《负荆请罪》！你们通今博古，才知道‘负荆请罪’，我不知道什么是‘负荆请罪’！”一句话未说了，宝玉、林黛玉二人心里有病，听了这话早把脸羞红了。凤姐于这些上虽不通达，但只见他三人形景，便知其意，便也笑着问人道：“你们大暑天，谁还吃生姜呢？”众人不解其意，便说道：“没有吃生姜。”凤姐故意用手摸着腮，诧异道：“既没人吃生姜，怎么这么辣辣的？”宝玉、黛玉二人听见这话，越发不好过了。宝钗再要说话，见宝玉十分惭愧，形景改变，也就不好再说，只得一笑收住。别人总未解得他四个人的言语，因此付之流水。

一时宝钗、凤姐去了，林黛玉笑向宝玉道：“你也试着比我利害的人了。谁都像我心拙口笨的，由着人说呢。”宝玉正因宝钗多了心，自己没趣，又见林黛玉来问着他，越发没好气起来。待要说两句，又恐林黛玉多心，说不得忍着气，无精打采一直出来。

谁知目今盛暑之际，又值早饭已过、各处主仆人等多半都因日长神倦，宝玉背着手，到一处，一处鸦雀无闻。从贾母这里出来，往西走过了穿堂，便是凤姐的院落。到他们院



“What were the two operas you saw, cousin?” she asked.

Daiyu’s enjoyment of her discomfiture at Baoyu’s remark had not escaped Baochai, who smiled at this question.

“One was that piece,” she answered, “in which Li Kui abuses Song Jiang and then apologizes.”

Baoyu laughed.

“Why, cousin,” he cried, “surely you’re sufficiently well versed in ancient and modern literature to know the title of that opera. Why do you have to describe it? It’s called *Abject Apologies*.”

“*Abject Apologies*, is it?” retorted Baochai. “You two are the ones well versed in ancient and modern literature, so of course you know all about ‘abject apologies’ — that’s something quite beyond *me*.”

As both Baoyu and Daiyu were conscience-stricken, they immediately blushed. And Xifeng, although she did not understand such allusions, could guess from their expressions what was afoot.

“Who’s been eating ginger in such hot weather?” she asked. The others were mystified.

“No one’s been eating ginger.”

Xifeng put both hands to her cheeks with a show of astonishment.

“In that case, why are some people so red in the face?”

This embarrassed Baoyu and Daiyu even more. And when Baochai saw Baoyu so out of countenance, she simply smiled and let the matter drop. So did the others, who had not caught on to this exchange between the four of them.

Presently Baochai and Xifeng left. Then Daiyu turned with a smile to Baoyu.

“Now you’ve come up against someone with a sharper tongue than mine. Not everyone’s as simple and tongue-tied as I am, so easy to tease.”

Baoyu was already put out by Baochai’s annoyance, and this fresh provocation added to his ill humour. But not wanting to annoy Daiyu too, he kept his temper and sulkily left the room.

It was now mid-summer. The days were so long that after lunch masters and servants alike were exhausted. His hands behind his back, Baoyu strolled through the grounds and did not hear a sound. From the Lady Dowager’s quarters he wandered west through the passage hall to

门前，只见院门掩着。知道凤姐素日的规矩，每到天热，午间要歇一个时辰的，进去不便，遂进角门，来到王夫人上房内。只见几个丫头手里拿着针线，却打盹儿呢。王夫人在里间凉榻上睡着，金钏儿坐在旁边捶腿，也斜着眼乱恍。

宝玉轻轻的走到跟前，把他耳上带的坠子一拨，金钏儿睁开眼，见是宝玉。宝玉悄悄的笑道：“就困的这么着？”金钏抿嘴一笑，摆手令他出去，仍合上眼。宝玉见了他，就有些恋恋不舍的，悄悄的探头瞧瞧王夫人合着眼，便自己向身边荷包里带的香雪润津丹掏了出来，便向金钏儿口里一送。金钏儿并不睁眼，只管噙了。宝玉上来便拉着手，悄悄的笑道：“我明日和太太讨你，咱们在一处罢。”金钏儿不答。宝玉又道：“不然，等太太醒了我就讨。”金钏儿睁开眼，将宝玉一推，笑道：“你忙什么！‘金簪子掉在井里头，有你的只是有你的’，连这句话语难道也不明白？我倒告诉你个巧宗儿，你往东小院子里拿环哥儿同彩云去。”宝玉笑道：“凭他怎么去罢，我只守着你。”只见王夫人翻身起来，照金钏儿脸上就打了个嘴巴子，指着骂道：“下作小娼妇，好好的爷们，都叫你们教坏了。”宝玉见王夫人起来，早一溜烟去了。

这里金钏儿半边脸火热，一声不敢言语。登时众丫头听见王夫人醒了，都忙进来。王夫人便叫玉钏儿：“把你妈叫上来，带出你姐姐去。”金钏儿听说，忙跪下哭道：“我再不敢了。太太要打骂，只管发落，别叫我出去就是天恩了。我跟了太太十来年，这会子撵出去，我还见人不见人呢！”王夫



Xifeng's compound; but the gate there was closed and he knew he had better not call as she usually took a nap after lunch in the summer. So he sauntered through a side gate to his mother's apartments, where some maids were dozing with needlework in their hands while Lady Wang slept on a couch in the inner room. Jinchuan, sitting by her to massage her legs, was nodding drowsily too.

Baoyu tiptoed up to her and flicked one of her earrings, whereupon she opened her eyes.

"You sleepy-head!" he whispered.

She pouted, smiled and motioned him away, then closed her eyes again; but Baoyu was reluctant to leave her. He stole a glance at his mother. Her eyes were closed. Then he took a peppermint pastille from his pouch and slipped it between Jinchuan's lips. She accepted it without opening her eyes. At that Baoyu pressed closer and took her hand.

"I'll ask your mistress for you tomorrow," he said softly. "Then we can be together."

Jinchuan made no reply.

"Or rather I'll ask her as soon as she wakes."

The girl opened her eyes then and pushed him away.

"What's the hurry? 'A gold pin may fall into the well, but if it's yours it remains yours.' Can't you understand that proverb? I'll tell you something amusing to do. Go to the small east courtyard and see what your brother Huan and Caiyun are up to."

"I don't care what they're up to. It's *you* I'm interested in."

At this point Lady Wang sat up and slapped Jinchuan's face.

"Shameless slut!" she scolded. "It's low creatures like you who lead the young masters astray."

Baoyu had vanished like smoke as soon as his mother sat up. Jinchuan's cheek was tingling but she dared say nothing and the other maids, hearing their mistress's voice, hurried in.

"Yuchuan!" ordered Lady Wang. "Go and tell your mother to come at once and take your sister away."

At these words Jinchuan fell on her knees and burst into tears.

"I shan't let it happen again, madam," she cried. "Whip me, scold me or punish me as you please, but for pity's sake don't send me away!"

人固然是个宽仁慈厚的人，从来不曾打过丫头们一下，今忽见金钏儿行此无耻之事，此乃平生最恨者，故气忿不过，打了一下，骂了几句。虽金钏儿苦求，亦不肯收留，到底唤了金钏儿之母白老媳妇来领了下去。那金钏儿含羞忍辱的出去，不在话下。

且说那宝玉见王夫人醒来，自己没趣，忙进大观园来。只见赤日当空，树阴合地，满耳蝉声，静无人语。刚到了蔷薇花架，只听见有人哽噎之声。宝玉心中疑惑，便站住细听，果然架下那边有人。如今五月之际，那蔷薇正是花叶茂盛之时，宝玉便悄悄的隔着篱笆洞儿一看，只见一个女孩子蹲在花下，手里拿着根绾头的簪子在地下掘土，一面悄悄的流泪。宝玉心中想道：“难道这也是个痴丫头，又像颦儿来葬花不成？”因又自叹道：“若真也葬花，可谓‘东施效颦’，不但不为奇特，且更可厌了。”想毕，便要叫那女子，说：“你不用跟着那林姑娘学了。”话未出口，幸而再看时，这女孩子面生，不是个侍女，倒像是那十二个学戏的女孩子之内的，却辨不出他是生旦净丑那一个角色来。宝玉忙把舌头一伸，将口掩住，自己想道：“幸而不曾造次。上两次皆因造次了，颦儿也生气，宝钗也多心，如今再得罪了他们，越发没意思了。”

一面想，一面又恨认不得这个是谁。再留神细看，只见这女孩子眉蹙春山，眼颦秋水，面薄腰纤，袅袅婷婷，大有林黛玉之态。宝玉早又不忍弃他而去，只管痴看。只见他虽然用金簪划地，并不是掘土埋花，竟是向土上画字。宝玉用眼随着簪子的起落，一直一画一点一勾的去，数一数，十八





I've been with Your Ladyship more than ten years. If you dismiss me now, how can I look anyone in the face again?"

Lady Wang was generally speaking too good-natured and easy-going to beat the maids; but the shameless way in which Jinchuan had behaved was the one thing she could not abide. That was why, flaring up, she had slapped and cursed her. Although the maid pleaded hard she refused to keep her, and her mother, old Mrs. Bai, had to take her away. So Jinchuan went home in disgrace.

Meanwhile Baoyu had scuttled back to Grand View Garden. The sun was high in the sky, trees cast ample shade and the air was full of the shrilling of cicadas, but no human voice could be heard. However, as he approached a trellis of roses, he heard sobbing and stopped in his surprise to listen. Yes, there was someone on the other side of the trellis. As it was now the fifth month, the roses were in full bloom. Peeping through the lattice-work, he saw a girl crouching below the flowers and weeping all alone as she scratched the ground with a hairpin.

"Can this be another absurd maid come to bury flowers like Daiyu?" he wondered in some amusement. "If so, she's 'Dong Shi imitating Xi Shi,'<sup>3</sup> which isn't original but rather tiresome."

He was on the point of calling out to the girl, "It's no use your trying to copy Miss Lin!" when he realized she was not one of the maids but looked like one of the twelve actresses, although he could not remember which role she played. He grimaced then hastily covered his mouth.

"It's a good thing I held my tongue," he told himself. "I've already annoyed Daiyu and hurt Baochai's feelings by my tactlessness. It would be still more senseless to offend any of these girls."

With these reflection, he felt put out at not being able to identify the girl and he studied her more closely. With her finely arched eyebrows and limpid eyes, her delicate features, slender waist and graceful movements, she bore a striking resemblance to Daiyu. He stood staring, unable to tear himself away. And now he observed that instead of using her hairpin to bury flowers she was writing something with it on the ground.

Baoyu followed the pin with his eyes as it moved up and down. He counted the strokes — vertical, horizontal, dotted and curved — there



笔。自己又在手心里用指头按着他方才下笔的规矩写了，猜是个什么字。写成一想，原来就是个蔷薇花的“蔷”字。宝玉想道：“必定是他也要作诗填词。这会子见了这花，因有所感，或者偶成了两句，一时兴至恐忘了，故在地下画着推敲，也未可知。且看他底下再写什么。”一面想，一面又看，只见那女孩子还在那里画呢，画来画去，还是个“蔷”字。再看，还是个“蔷”字。里面的原是早已痴了，画完一个“蔷”又画一个“蔷”，已经画了有几千个。外面的不觉也看痴了，两个眼睛珠儿只管随着簪子动，心里却想：“这女孩子一定有什么话说不出来的大心事，才这么个形景。外面既是这个形景，心里不知怎么熬煎。看他的模样儿这般单薄，心里那里还搁得住熬煎。可恨我不能替你分些过来。”

伏中阴晴不定，片云可致雨，忽一阵凉风过来，唰唰的落下一阵雨来。宝玉看着那女子头上滴下水来，纱衣裳登时湿了。宝玉想道：“这时下雨，他这个身子，如何禁得骤雨一激！”因此禁不住便说道：“不用写了。你看下大雨，身上都湿了。”那女孩子听说倒唬了一跳，抬头一看，只见花外一个人叫他不要写了，下大雨了。一则宝玉脸面俊秀；二则花叶繁茂，上下俱被枝叶隐住，刚露着半边脸，那女孩子只当是个丫头，再不想是宝玉，因笑道：“多谢姐姐提醒了我。难道姐姐在外头有什么遮雨的？”一句提醒了宝玉，“嗳哟”了一声，才觉得浑身冰凉。低头一看，自己身上也都湿了。说声“不好了”，只得一气跑回怡红院去了，心里却还记挂着那女孩子没处避雨。

原来明日是端午节，那文官等十二个女子都放了学，进



were seventeen in all. Then he traced them in the same order on his palm and discovered that this was the character *Qiang* for “rose.”

“She must be trying to write a poem,” he thought, “and these flowers have suggested the idea for a couple of lines. For fear of forgetting it, she’s tracing the character while she thinks it out. Yes, that may be it. Let me see what else she writes.”

He went on watching as the girl went on writing, but she merely repeated the same character.

Lost in thought, the girl by the trellis traced one *Qiang* after another until she had written several dozen, while Baoyu watched raptly from the other side, following the movements of the pin with his eyes.

“She must have some secret anxiety preying on her mind to carry on like this,” he reflected. “Yet she looks too delicate to stand much anxiety. I wish I could share her troubles.”

Mid-summer weather is unpredictable: a passing cloud may bring rain. Now a cool breeze sprang up and there was a sudden shower. Seeing that water dripped off the girl’s head and in no time had wet her gauze clothes, he thought: It’s raining. She’s too frail to stand such a downpour. Impulsively he called out:

“Do stop writing! Look, you’re getting drenched.”

The girl raised her head with a start at hearing this shout from the other side of the trellis. As Baoyu was finely-featured and as the thick foliage screened all but the top of his face, she took him for a maid.

“Thanks, sister,” she said with a smile. “You don’t seem to have much shelter out there yourself either.”

Baoyu uttered an exclamation of dismay as it came home to him how cold he was. Looking down he saw that his clothes were wet through.

“Bother it!” he cried.

He set off at a run then towards Happy Red Court, still worrying over the girl out in the rain.

Now as this was the eve of the Double Fifth Festival, the twelve young actresses had been given a holiday and were amusing themselves in different parts of the Garden. Baoguan who played young scholars and Yuguan who played young ladies were enjoying themselves in Happy

园来各处玩耍。可巧小生宝官、正旦玉官两个女孩子，正在怡红院和袭人玩笑，被大雨阻住。大家把沟堵了，水积在院内，把些绿头鸭、花鹈鹕、彩鸳鸯，捉的捉，赶的赶，缝了翅膀，放在院内玩耍，将院门关了。袭人等都在游廊上嘻笑。

宝玉见关着门，便以手扣门，里面诸人只顾笑，那里听见。叫了半日，拍的门山响，里面方听见了，估谅着宝玉这会子再不回来的。袭人笑道：“谁这会子叫门，没人开去。”宝玉道：“是我。”麝月道：“是宝姑娘的声音。”晴雯道：“胡说！宝姑娘这会子做什么来。”袭人道：“让我隔着门缝儿瞧瞧，可开就开，要不可开，叫他淋着去。”说着，便顺着游廊到门前，往外一瞧，只见宝玉淋的雨打鸡一般。袭人见了又是着忙又是可笑，忙开了门，笑的弯腰拍手道：“你这么大的雨里跑什么？那里知道是爷回来了。”

宝玉一肚子没好气，满心里要把开门的踢几脚，及开了门，并不看真是谁，还只当是那些小丫头子们，便抬腿踢在肋上。袭人“嗳哟”了一声。宝玉还骂道：“下流东西们！我素日担待你们得了意，一点儿也不怕，越发拿我取笑儿了。”口里说着，一低头见是袭人哭了，方知踢错了，忙笑道：“嗳哟，原来是你！踢在那里了？”袭人从来不曾受过一句大话的，今儿忽见宝玉生气踢他一下，又当着许多人，又是羞，又是气，又是疼，真一时置身无地。待要怎么样，料着宝玉未必是安心踢他，少不得忍着说道：“没有踢着。还不换衣裳去。”宝玉一面进房来解衣，一面笑道：“我长了这么大，今日头一遭儿生气打人，不想就偏遇见了你！”袭人一



Red Court with Xiren, when it came on to rain. They stopped up the drain to make water collect in the yard and caught some water-fowl-green-headed ducks, speckled mallards and mandarin ducks. Having tied their wings they let these loose in the yard, after which they bolted the gate.

While they stood on the verandah enjoying the fun, Baoyu arrived back only to find the gate closed. The girls were laughing too much to hear his knock, so that he shouted and pounded for a long time before they finally heard. And of course they were not expecting him back at this time.

“Who’s that at the gate?” asked Xiren. “Who’ll go and see?”

“It’s I!” cried Baoyu.

“Sounds like Miss Baochai,” said Sheyue.

“Nonsense!” exclaimed Qingwen. “Miss Baochai wouldn’t come at this hour.”

“I’ll peep through a crack,” offered Xiren, “to see if it’s somebody we should let in. If it’s not, we’ll let whoever it is get a soaking.”

She went along the covered corridor to the gate and discovered Baoyu there, drenched as a drowned cock. Torn between concern and amusement she hastily opened the gate, then doubled up with laughter, clapping her hands.

“How were we to know you were back?” she spluttered. “Where have you been, running about in such a downpour?”

Baoyu, in a foul temper, had decided to punish whoever opened the gate. Without waiting to see who it was, and assuming that this was one of the younger girls, he kicked Xiren so hard in the side that she let out a cry.

“You low creatures!” he stormed. “I treat you so well that you’ve lost all sense of respect. Now you dare make fun of me!”

At this point he lowered his head and heard Xiren’s cry. He realized then what a blunder he had made.

“Oh, is it you?” He smiled apologetically. “Where did I kick you?”

Xiren had never had so much as a harsh word from Baoyu. Now that he had lost his temper and kicked her — in public too — she felt overwhelmed with shame, resentment and pain. But sure that he hadn’t done this deliberately, she did her best to control herself.



面忍痛换衣裳，一面笑道：“我是个起头儿的人，不论事大事小是好是歹，自然也该从我起。但只是别说打了我，明儿顺了手也打起别人来。”宝玉道：“我才刚也不是安心。”袭人道：“谁说你是安心了！素日开门关门，都是那起小丫头子们的事。他们是憨皮惯了的，早已恨的人牙痒痒，他们也没个怕惧儿。你当是他们，踢一下子，吓吓他们也好些。才刚是我淘气，不叫开门的。”

说着，那雨已住了，宝官、玉官已早去了。袭人只觉肋下疼的心里发闹，晚饭也不曾好生吃。至晚间洗澡时脱了衣服，只见肋上青了碗大一块，自己倒吓了一跳，又不好声张。一时睡下，梦中作痛，由不得“暖哟”之声从睡中哼出。宝玉虽说不是安心，因见袭人懒懒的，也睡不稳。忽夜间听见“暖哟”，便知踢重了，自己下床悄悄的秉灯来照。刚到床前，只见袭人嗽了两声，吐出一口痰来，“暖哟”一声，睁开眼见了宝玉，倒吓了一跳道：“作什么？”宝玉道：“你梦里‘暖哟’，必定我踢重了。我瞧瞧。”袭人道：“我头上发晕，嗓子里又腥又甜，你倒照一照地下罢。”宝玉听说，果然持灯向地下一照，只见一口鲜血在地。宝玉慌了，只说“了不得了！”袭人见了，也就心冷了半截。要知端的，且听下回分解。





"It's all right," she answered. "Go in and change your clothes."

Once inside he said contritely, "This is the first time in my life I've lashed out in a temper — and it had to be at you."

Still wincing she helped him out of his wet clothes.

"I'm your number one maid," she answered jokingly, "So I should have first share of everything big or small, good or bad. I just hope you won't make a habit of kicking people."

"I didn't mean to do it."

"I'm not saying you did. Usually it's the younger ones who go to the gate. They're all so spoilt that nobody can stand them, and they're not afraid of anyone either. It would have served them right if you'd kicked one of them to frighten them. Today I'm to blame for not letting them open the gate."

By now the rain had stopped. Both Baoguan and Yuguan had left. What with the pain in her side and her vexation, Xiren ate nothing that evening. And when she undressed to have her bath she was frightened by the bruise, the size of a bowl, below her ribs, but could hardly remark on it. The pain continued after she was in bed and made her groan in her sleep.

Though Baoyu had not kicked her deliberately, Xiren's obvious discomfort disturbed him. And hearing her cry out during the night he realized how badly he must have hurt her. He slipped out of bed, took the lamp, and went over to have a look. Just as he reached her bedside she coughed, then brought up some phlegm and opened her eyes with a gasp.

"What are you doing?" she asked in surprise when she saw him.

"You were groaning in your sleep. I must have hurt you badly. Let me have a look."

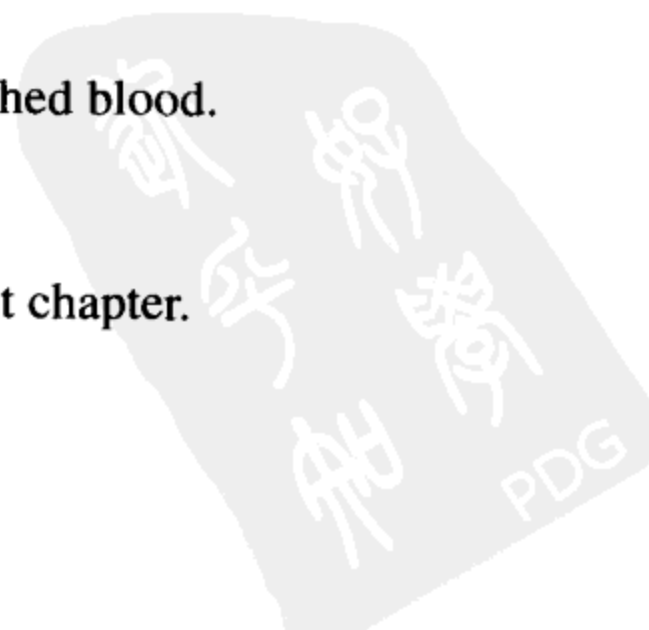
"I feel dizzy and there's a bitter-sweet taste in my throat. Throw the light on the floor, will you?"

Baoyu did as she asked and saw that she had coughed blood.

"How dreadful!" he exclaimed.

Xiren's heart failed her at the sight of the blood.

But to know what followed, you must read the next chapter.









子撕  
作扇  
千金一笑



## 第三十一回

撕扇子作千金一笑 因麒麟伏白首双星

话说袭人见了自己吐的鲜血在地，也就冷了半截，想着往日常听人说：“少年吐血，年月不保，纵然命长，终是废人了。”想起此言，不觉将素日想着后来争荣夸耀之心尽皆灰了，眼中不觉滴下泪来。宝玉见他哭了，也不觉心酸起来，因问道：“你心里觉的怎么样？”袭人勉强笑道：“好好的，觉怎么呢？”宝玉的意思即刻便要叫人烫黄酒，要山羊血黎洞丸来。袭人拉了他的手，笑道：“你这一闹不打紧，闹起多少人来，倒抱怨我轻狂。分明人不知道，倒闹的人知道了，你也不好，我也不好。正经明儿你打发小子，问问王太医去，弄点子药吃吃就好了。人不知鬼不觉的可不好？”宝玉听了有理，也只得罢了，向案子斟了茶来，给袭人漱了口。袭人知宝玉心内是不安稳的，待要不叫他伏侍，他又必不依；二则定要惊动别人，不如由他去罢，因此只在榻上由宝玉去伏侍。一交五更，宝玉也顾不的梳洗，忙穿衣出来，将王济仁叫来，亲自确问。王济仁问其原故，不过是伤损，便说了个丸药的名字，怎么服，怎么敷。宝玉记了，回园依方调治，不在话下。

这日正是端阳佳节，蒲艾簪门，虎符系臂。午间，王夫人治了酒席，请薛家母女等赏午。宝玉见宝钗淡淡的，也不



## Chapter 31

### A Torn Fan Wins a Smile from a Maid A Pair of Unicorns Suggest a Match

When Xiren saw the blood on the floor her heart failed her, for she had often heard tell: Spitting blood while young means an early death or infirmity for life. So her dreams of future honour and splendour had gone up in smoke! She could not help shedding tears. Baoyu's heart ached too.

"How are you feeling?" he asked.

She forced a smile.

"All right."

He would have called someone at once to heat Shaoxing wine and fetch pills compounded with goat's blood, but Xiren restrained him.

"If you make such a fuss that people come flocking in, they'll blame me for getting above myself," she explained. "At present not a soul knows, but to noise it abroad would be damaging for us both. Just send a boy tomorrow to ask Doctor Wang for some medicine, and that will set me right. Far better keep the whole business quiet."

Since this made sense Baoyu had to agree. He fetched tea for Xiren to rinse her mouth and, knowing how worried he was, she lay there quietly letting him wait on her, for otherwise he would have roused the others.

Next day, at the crack of dawn, Baoyu scrambled into his clothes. Not stopping to wash or comb his hair, he went off to find Wang Jiren whom he plied with questions. When the doctor heard what had happened, he assured him it was simply a contusion and prescribed some pills, giving directions as to their use which Baoyu carried out on his return to the Garden. But no more of this.

This was the day of the Double Fifth Festival. The doors were hung with mugwort and rushes, everyone wore tiger-charms, and Lady Wang

和他说话，自知是昨儿的原故。王夫人见宝玉没精打彩，也只当是金钊儿昨日之事，他没好意思的，越发不理他。林黛玉见宝玉懒懒的，只当是他因为得罪了宝钗的原故，心中不自在，形容也就懒懒的。凤姐昨日晚间王夫人就告诉了他宝玉、金钊的事，知道王夫人不自在，自己如何敢说笑，也就随着王夫人的气色行事，更觉淡淡的。贾迎春姊妹见众人无意思，也都无意思了。因此，大家坐了一坐，就散了。

林黛玉天性喜散不喜聚，他想的也有个道理。他说：“人有聚就有散，聚时欢喜，到散时岂不清冷？既清冷则生伤感，所以不如倒是不聚的好。比如那花开时令人爱慕，谢时则增惆怅，所以倒是不开的好。”故此人以为喜之时，他反以为悲。那宝玉的情性只愿常聚，生怕一时散了添悲；那花只愿常开，生怕一时谢了没趣；只到筵散花谢，虽有万种悲伤，也就无可如何了。因此，今日之筵，大家无兴散了，林黛玉倒不觉得，倒是宝玉心中闷闷不乐，回至自己房中长嗟短叹。偏生晴雯上来换衣服，不防又把扇子失手跌在地下，将股子跌折。宝玉因叹道：“蠢才，蠢才！将来怎么样？明儿你自己当家立事，难道也是这么顾前不顾后的？”晴雯冷笑道：“二爷近来气大的很，行动就给脸子瞧。前儿连袭人都打了，今儿又来寻我们的不是。要踢要打凭爷去！就是跌了扇子，也是平常的事。先时连那么样的玻璃缸、玛瑙碗不知弄坏了多少，也没见个大气儿，这会子一把扇子就这么着了。何苦来！要嫌我们就打发我们，再挑好的使。好离好散的，倒不好？”宝玉听了这些话，气的浑身发颤，因说道：



gave a family feast at midday to which Aunt Xue and her daughter were invited.

Baoyu noticed that Baochai was cold-shouldering him because of what had happened the previous day. His own low spirits were ascribed by his mother to embarrassment over yesterday's episode with Jinchuan, and therefore she deliberately ignored him. Daiyu, for her part, assumed that his dejection was the result of having offended Baochai, and that displeased her too. As for Xifeng, she had heard the evening before from Lady Wang about Baoyu and Jinchuan, and in deference to her aunt's displeasure was not her usual cheerful, laughing self, making the atmosphere even more constrained. As Yingchun and the other Jia girls were affected by the general lack of spirits, the company soon dispersed.

Now Daiyu naturally preferred solitude to society. She reasoned, "Coming together can only be followed by parting. The more pleasure people find in parties, the more lonely and unhappy they must feel when the parties break up. So better not forgather in the first place. The same is true of flowers: they delight people when in bloom, but it's so heart-rending to see them fade that it would be better if they never blossomed." For this reason she grieved over what others enjoyed.

Baoyu, on the other hand, wished that parties need never break up, flowers never fade; and although he could neither stop a feast from ending nor flowers from withering, he grieved every time this happened.

So whereas Daiyu did not care when the feasters parted in low spirits today, Baoyu went back to his room feeling so gloomy that he did nothing but sigh. When Qingwen, who was helping him change, dropped his fan and broke it he sighed:

"How stupid you are! What's to become of you when in future you have a home of your own? Surely you can't go on being so careless then."

"How bad-tempered you've grown lately," she retorted with a snigger. "Always throwing your weight about. The other day you even beat Xiren, and now you're picking on me. You can kick or beat us as much as you like, of course, but what's so dreadful about dropping a fan? Plenty of glass vases and agate bowls have been smashed before without your flaring up. It seems pointless to make such a fuss over a fan. If you're fed up with us, you can send us packing and get some better attendants."

“你不用忙，将来有散的日子！”

袭人在那边早已听见，忙赶过来，向宝玉道：“好好的，又怎么了？可是我说的‘一时我不到，就有事故儿’。”晴雯听了冷笑道：“姐姐既会说，就该早来，也省了爷生气。自古以来，就是你一个人伏侍爷的，我们原没伏侍过。因为你伏侍的好，昨日才挨过窝心脚；我们不会伏侍的，明儿还不知是个什么罪呢！”袭人听了这话，又是恼，又是愧，待要说几句话，又见宝玉已经气的黄了脸，少不得自己忍了性子，推晴雯道：“好妹妹，你出去逛逛，原是我们的不是。”晴雯听他说“我们”两个字，自然是他和宝玉了，不觉又添了醋意，冷笑几声，道：“我倒不知道你们是谁，别叫我替你们害臊了！便是你们鬼鬼祟祟干的那事儿，也瞒不过我去，那里就称起‘我们’来了？正明公道，连个姑娘还没挣上去呢，也不过和我似的，那里就称上‘我们’了！”袭人羞的脸紫胀起来，想一想，原是自己把话说错了。宝玉一面说：“你们气不忿，我明儿偏抬举他。”袭人忙拉了宝玉的手道：“他一个糊涂人，你和他分证什么？况且你素日又是有担待的，比这大的过去了多少，今儿是怎么了？”晴雯冷笑道：“我原是糊涂人，那里配和我说话呢！”袭人听说道：“姑娘倒底是和我拌嘴呢，是和二爷拌嘴呢？要是心里恼我，你只和我说，不犯着当着二爷吵；要是恼二爷，不该这么吵的万人知道。我才也不过为了事，进来劝开了，大家保重。姑娘倒寻上我的晦气。又不像是恼我，又不像是恼二爷，夹枪带棒，终久是个什么主意？我就不多说，让你说去！”说着便往外走。宝玉向晴雯道：“你也不用生气，我也猜着你的心事了。我回太



But why not part company in a peaceful, friendly way?"

"Don't worry," he cried, fairly trembling with rage. "We shall part sooner or later."

Xiren, who had overheard them, now hurried in.

"Why take on again for no reason?" she asked Baoyu. "Didn't I tell you, the moment my back's turned there's trouble."

"If you're so clever," sneered Qingwen, "you should have come earlier to prevent this tantrum. You're the one who's looked after him since ancient times — I never did. It's because you're so *good* at it that you got kicked right under your heart yesterday. Heaven knows what punishment is waiting tomorrow for *me*, unfit as I am to wait on him."

Annoyance and mortification tempted Xiren to make a sharp retort. She only controlled herself because Baoyu was already livid with rage.

"Run along and amuse yourself outside, good sister," she said, pushing Qingwen away. "*We're* the ones to blame." This "we," obviously meaning Baoyu and herself, made Qingwen even more jealous.

"I don't know what you mean by 'we,'" she cried with a scornful laugh. "Don't make me blush for you. What you're up to on the sly is no secret to me. The fact of the matter is, you've not even earned the grade of a concubine yet, so you're no better than I am. How can you talk of 'we'?"

Xiren flushed crimson over her indiscretion.

"If the rest of you are so jealous," raged Baoyu, "I'll raise her status just to spite you."

Xiren caught him by the hand to restrain him.

"Why argue with a silly girl? You're usually broad-minded enough to overlook plenty of worse things than this. What's got into you today?"

"I'm too silly to be up to talking to you," snorted Qingwen.

"Are you quarrelling with me, miss, or with Master Bao? If I annoy you just tell me, instead of squabbling with him. If Master Bao annoys you, don't make such a row that everybody hears. I came in to try to smooth things over and save everybody's face, but then you set on *me*. Which of us are you mad at, him or me? What's the idea, lashing out in all directions? Well, I'll say no more. It's up to you now."

With that she walked away.

太去，你也大了，打发你出去好不好？”晴雯听见了这话，不觉又伤起心来，含泪说道：“为什么我出去？要嫌我，变着法儿打发我出去，也不能够。”宝玉道：“我何曾经过这个吵闹？一定是你要出去了。不如回太太，打发你去吧。”说着，站起来就要走。袭人忙回身拦住，笑道：“往那里去？”宝玉道：“回太太去。”袭人笑道：“好没意思！真个的去回，你也不怕臊了？便是他认真要去，也等他把这气下去了，等无事中说话儿回了太太也不迟。这会子急急的当作一件正经事去回，岂不叫太太犯疑？”宝玉道：“太太必不犯疑，我只明说是他闹着要去的。”晴雯哭道：“我多早晚闹着要去了？饶生了气，还拿话压派我。只管去回，我一头碰死了也不出这门儿。”宝玉道：“这又奇了。你又不去，你又闹些什么？我经不起这吵，不如去了倒干净。”说着一定要去回。袭人见拦不住，只得跪下了。碧痕、秋纹、麝月等众丫鬟见吵闹，都鸦雀无闻的在外头听消息，这会子听见袭人跪下央求，便一齐进来都跪下了。宝玉忙把袭人扶起来，叹了一口气，在床上坐下，叫众人起去，向袭人道：“叫我怎么样才好！这个心使碎了，也没人知道。”说着，不觉滴下泪来。袭人见宝玉流下泪来，自己也就哭了。

晴雯在旁哭着，方欲说话，只见林黛玉进来，便出去了。林黛玉笑道：“大节下怎么好好的哭起来？难道是为争粽子吃争恼了不成？”宝玉和袭人“嗤”的一笑。黛玉道：“二哥哥不告诉我，问你就知道了。”一面说，一面拍着袭人的肩，笑道：“好嫂子，你告诉我。必定是你们两个拌了嘴，告





"There was no need to fly into such a temper," said Baoyu to Qingwen. "I know what's on your mind. I'll tell the mistress you've reached the age to be sent home. How about that?"

"Why should I go home?" Tears of distress welled up in Qingwen's eyes. "How can you trump up an excuse to get rid of me just because you've taken a dislike to me?"

"I've never been through such a scene before. You're obviously set on going. So I'd better ask my mother to send you away."

He was starting out when Xiren barred the way.

"Where are you off to?" she asked.

"To tell my mother."

"What nonsense!" She smiled at him coaxingly. "How can you have the heart to shame her so? Even if she really wanted to leave, you should wait until she's cooled down and then mention it to the mistress casually. If you rush over now as if this were something urgent, Her Ladyship's bound to start imagining things."

"Not her. I'll just tell her that she insists on leaving."

"When did I insist on leaving?" sobbed Qingwen. "You fly into a rage, then put words into my mouth. All right, go and report it. But I'll dash out my brains sooner than leave this house."

"That's strange!" he fumed. "If you won't go, what's all this fuss about? I can't stand these rows. Far simpler if you left."

He was so set on telling his mother that Xiren saw no way to stop him. She fell on her knees to plead. This was the signal for Bihen, Qiuwen and Sheyue, who had been listening with bated breath outside, to rush in and kneel down beside her.

Baoyu pulled Xiren to her feet, sank with a sigh on to his bed, and sent the other girls out.

"What am I to *do*?" he demanded. "I've worn my heart out, yet nobody cares."

He wept and Xiren shed tears in sympathy. Qingwen beside them was trying to speak through her sobs when Daiyu's arrival made her slip away.

"What's all this crying during the festival?" asked Daiyu mockingly. "Are you fighting for sticky rice dumplings?"

诉妹妹，替你们和劝和劝。”袭人推他道：“林姑娘你闹什么？我们一个丫头，姑娘只是混说。”黛玉笑说：“你说你是丫头，我只拿你当嫂子待。”宝玉道：“你何苦来替他招骂名儿。饶这么着，还有人说闲话，还搁的住你来说他。”袭人笑道：“林姑娘，你不知道我的心事，除非一口气不来，死了倒也罢了。”林黛玉笑道：“你死了，别人不知怎么样，我先就哭死了。”宝玉笑道：“你死了，我作和尚去。”袭人笑道：“你老实些罢，何苦还说这些话！”林黛玉将两个指头一伸，抿嘴笑道：“作了两个和尚了。我从今以后都记着你作和尚的遭数儿。”宝玉听得，知道是他点前日的话，自己一笑也就罢了。

一时黛玉去后，就有人说“薛大爷请”，宝玉只得去了。原来是吃酒，不能推辞，只得尽席而散。晚间回来，已带了几分酒，踉跄来至自己院内，只见院中早把乘凉枕榻设下，榻上有个人睡着。宝玉只当是袭人，一面在榻沿上坐下，一面推他，问道：“疼的好些了？”只见那人翻身起来，说：“何苦又来招我！”宝玉一看，原来不是袭人，却是晴雯。宝玉将他一拉，拉在身旁坐下，笑道：“你的性子越发娇惯了。早起就是跌了扇子，我不过说了那两句，你就说上那些话。你说我也罢了，袭人好意来劝，你又括上他。你自己想想，该不该？”晴雯道：“怪热的，拉拉扯扯作什么！叫人来看像什么！我这身子也不配坐在这里。”宝玉笑道：“你既

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The two of them laughed.

“Since *you* won’t tell me I’ll find out from *her*.” Daiyu patted Xiren’s shoulder. “What’s happened, dear sister-in-law? I suppose you two have been squabbling again. Tell me what’s wrong and I’ll act as peacemaker.”

“You’re joking, miss.” Xiren pushed her away. “Don’t talk such nonsense to us servant-girls.”

“You may call yourself a servant-girl, but I regard you as my sister-in-law.”

“Why give her another name for people to jeer at?” protested Baoyu. “There’s enough gossip already without *your* joining in.”

“You don’t know how I feel, miss,” said Xiren. “I’ll never have any peace until I can die and be done with it!”

“I can’t say what *others* would do if you died.” Daiyu smiled. “I’d die first of crying.”

“I’d become a monk if you died,” Baoyu declared.

“Do be quiet,” cried Xiren. “That’s no way to talk.”

Daiyu held out two fingers with a smile.

“That’s twice, so far, you’ve become a monk. I must keep track of how many times you do it.”

Baoyu knew she was referring to their conversation the other day, and with a smile he let the matter drop.

Soon after that Daiyu left and Baoyu received an invitation from Xue Pan, which he could hardly decline, to a drinking party. He was unable to leave before the end. Dusk had fallen by the time he came back, slightly tipsy, and as he lurched into his courtyard he noticed someone lying on a couch there. Assuming that it was Xiren, he sat down beside her and nudged her.

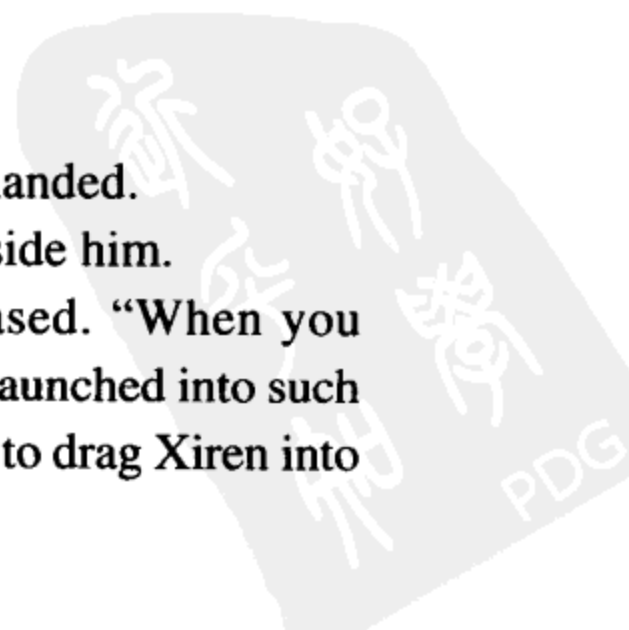
“Has the pain stopped?” he asked.

The figure on the couch sat up.

“Why are you back to plague me again?” she demanded.

It was not Xiren but Qingwen. He made her sit beside him.

“You’re growing more and more spoilt,” he teased. “When you dropped that fan and I just said a couple of words, you launched into such a tirade. I don’t mind your scolding *me*, but was it right to drag Xiren into





知道不配，为什么睡着呢？”晴雯没的话，“嗤”的又笑了，说：“你不来，便使得；你来了，就不配了。起来！让我洗澡去。袭人、麝月都洗了澡，我叫了他们来。”宝玉笑道：“我才又吃了好些酒，还得洗一洗。你既没有洗，拿了水来，咱们两个洗。”晴雯摇手笑道：“罢，罢，我不敢惹爷。还记得碧痕打发你洗澡，足有两三个时辰，也不知道作什么呢。我们也不好进去的。后来洗完了，进去瞧瞧，地下的水淹着床腿，连席子上都汪着水，也不知是怎么洗了，笑了几天。我也没那工夫收拾，也不用同我洗去。今儿也凉快，那会子洗了，可以不用再洗。我倒舀一盆水来，你洗洗脸，通通头。才刚鸳鸯送了好些果子来，都湃在那水晶缸里呢，叫他们打发你吃。”宝玉笑道：“既这么着，你也不许洗去，只洗洗手来，拿果子吃罢。”晴雯笑道：“我慌张的很，连扇子还跌折了，那里还配打发吃果子？倘或再打破了盘子，还更了不得呢。”宝玉笑道：“你爱打就打，这些东西原不过是借人所用，你爱这样，我爱那样，各自性情不同。比如那扇子原是扇的，你要撕着玩也可以使得，只是不可生气时拿他出气。就如杯盘，原是盛东西的，你喜听那声响，就故意的打碎了也可以使得，只是别在生气时拿他出气。这就是‘爱物’了。”晴雯听了，笑道：“既这么说，你就拿了扇子来我撕。我最喜欢撕的。”宝玉听了，便笑着递与他。晴雯果然接过来，“嗤”的一声，撕了两半，接着“嗤嗤”，又听几





it too when she meant so well?"

"It's so hot, keep your hands to yourself," countered Qingwen. "What would people think if they saw? I'm not fit to be sitting here with you anyway."

"Then why were you sleeping here?" he asked with a grin.

She giggled.

"It was all right before you came, but not now that you're here. Get up and let me have my bath. I'll call Xiren and Sheyue — they've already had theirs."

"After all the wine I've drunk I need a bath too. If you've not had yours, fill the tub and we'll bath together."

Qingwen waved this proposal aside with a laugh.

"Not I. I wouldn't dare. I remember what happened that time Bihen helped you bath. Two or three hours it took and we couldn't go in — heaven knows what you were up to. When you'd finished and we had a look, the floor right up to the legs of the bed was all over water — even the bed mat was sopping. Goodness knows what sort of bath you had! It kept us laughing for days. I haven't the time to mop up after you, and see no need for you to bath with me. Besides, it's so cool now I don't think you ought to have a bath; I'll just get you a basin of water to wash your face and comb your hair. Yuanyang brought in a lot of fruit not long ago which is being chilled in that crystal bowl. I'll tell them to bring it for you."

"In that case, you mustn't bath either. Just wash your hands and bring the fruit."

Qingwen laughed.

"If I'm so careless that I even break fans, how can I fetch fruit? If I broke a plate too, I'd never hear the end of it."

"You can if you want. Such things are meant to be used. You may like one thing, I another. People's tastes differ. For instance, fans are meant for fanning; but if I choose to break one for fun, what's wrong with that? But we shouldn't break things to work off a fit of temper. It's the same with cups or plates which are for serving things in. If you smash them because you like the sound, all right. Just don't work off your temper on them. That's what's called caring for things."

"If that's so, get me a fan to tear up. I love ripping things apart."

声。宝玉在旁笑着说：“响的好！再撕响些！”正说着，只见麝月走过来，笑道：“少作些孽罢。”宝玉赶上来，一把将他手里的扇子也夺了，递与晴雯。晴雯接了，也撕了几半子，二人都大笑。麝月道：“这是怎么说，拿我的东西开心儿？”宝玉笑道：“打开扇子匣子你拣去，什么好东西！”麝月道：“既这么说，就把匣子搬了出来，让他尽力的撕，岂不好？”宝玉笑道：“你就搬去。”麝月说：“我可不造这孽。他也没折了手，叫他自己搬去。”晴雯笑着，倚在床上说道：“我也乏了，明儿再撕罢。”宝玉笑道：“古人云‘千金难买一笑’，几把扇子能值几何！”一面说着，一面叫袭人。袭人才换了衣服走出来，小丫头佳蕙过来拾去破扇，大家乘凉，不消细说。

至次日午间，王夫人、薛宝钗、林黛玉众姊妹正在贾母房内坐着，就有人回：“史大姑娘来了。”一时，果见史湘云带领众多丫鬟、媳妇走进院来。宝钗、黛玉等忙迎至阶下相见。青年姊妹间经月不见，一旦相逢，其亲密自不消说得。一时进入房中，请安问好，都见过了。贾母因说：“天热，把外头的衣服脱了罢。”史湘云忙起身宽衣。王夫人因笑道：“也没见穿上这些作什么？”史湘云笑道：“都是二婶婶叫穿的，谁愿意穿这些。”宝钗在旁笑道：“姨妈不知道，他穿衣



With a smile he handed her his own. Sure enough, she ripped it in two, then tore it to pieces.

Baoyu chuckled.

“Well done! Try and make a bigger noise.”

Just then along came Sheyue.

“What a wicked waste!” she cried. “Stop it.”

Baoyu’s answer was to snatch her fan from her and give it to Qingwen, who promptly tore it up and joined in his loud laughter.

“What’s the idea?” demanded Sheyue. “Spoiling my fan — is that your idea of fun?”

“Just pick another from the fan case,” Baoyu told her. “What’s so wonderful about a fan?”

“You’d better bring the case out here then and let her tear the whole lot up.”

“You bring it.” Baoyu chuckled.

“I won’t do anything of the sort. She’s not broken her wrist, let *her* fetch it.”

“I’m tired.” Qingwen lay back laughing. “I’ll tear up some more tomorrow.”

“You know the ancient saying,” put in Baoyu. “‘A thousand pieces of gold can hardly purchase a smile.’ And what are a few fans worth?”

He called for Xiren, who came out having just changed into clean clothes and got little Jia Hui to clear away the broken fans. Then they sat outside for a while enjoying the cool.

At noon the next day Lady Wang and the girls were gathered in the Lady Dowager’s room when the arrival of Shi Xiangyun was announced. She entered the courtyard presently with a troop of maids and nurses, to be greeted by her cousins at the foot of the steps. As the girls had not seen each other for a month they naturally had a most affectionate reunion, after which Xiangyun went in to pay her respects to the others.

“It’s hot,” said the Lady Dowager. “Do take off your outer garments.”

As Xiangyun did so Lady Wang remarked, “What a lot you’re wearing, child.”

裳还更爱穿别人的衣裳。可记得旧年三四月里，他在这里住着，把宝兄弟的袍子穿上，靴子也穿上，额子也勒上，猛一瞧倒像是宝兄弟，就是多两个坠子。他站在那椅子后边，哄的老太太只是叫‘宝玉，你过来，仔细那上头挂的灯穗子招下灰来迷了眼。’他只是笑，也不过去。后来大家撑不住笑了，老太太才笑了，说‘倒扮上小子好看了’。”林黛玉道：“这算什么。惟有前年正月里接了他来，住了没两日就下起雪来，老太太和舅母那日想是才拜了影回来，老太太的一个簇新的大红猩猩毡斗篷放在那里，谁知眼错不见他就披了，又大又长，他就拿了个汗巾子，拦腰系上，和丫头们在后院子里扑雪人儿去，一跤栽在沟跟前，弄了一身泥水。”说着，大家想着前情，都笑了。宝钗笑向周奶妈道：“周妈，你们姑娘还那么淘气不淘气了？”周奶娘也笑了。迎春笑道：“淘气也罢了，我就嫌他爱说话。也没见睡在那里还是咕咕呱呱，笑一阵，说一阵，也不知那里来的那些话？”王夫人道：“只怕如今好了。前日有人家来相看，眼见有婆婆家了，还是那么着？”贾母因问：“今儿还是住着，还是家去呢？”周奶娘笑道：“老太太没有看见衣服都带了来，可不住两天？”





“My second aunt made me,” she replied. “I didn’t want to put on so much.”

“If you only knew, aunt, she loves dressing up in other people’s clothes,” said Baochai with a smile. “During her visit here in the third or fourth month last year, she put on Cousin Bao’s gown and boots, as well as his chaplet, and stood behind that chair. At a casual glance she looked so like him — except for two extra earrings — that the old lady was quite taken in.

“‘Baoyu, come here,’ she cried. ‘Don’t let the dust from the lantern tassels over your head get in your eyes.’

“The little wretch just smiled and didn’t stir. Then we all burst out laughing and the old lady had to laugh too.

“‘Well, you look even better dressed up as a boy,’ she said.”

“You don’t know the half of it,” put in Daiyu. “The year before last she was fetched in the first month, and she’d only been here a couple of days when it started to snow. I believe my grandmother and aunt had just come back from bowing to the ancestral portraits, and the old lady’s new red woollen cape was lying there. Cousin Shi put it on without anyone noticing, tying it at the waist with a handkerchief because it was too big and long for her. Then she went with the maids to the back yard to make a snow-man and fell flat on her face by the drain, covering herself with mud.”

At the recollection of this everybody laughed.

“Nanny Zhou,” asked Baochai, “does your young lady still get up to pranks like that?”

Xiangyun’s nanny only smiled.

“I don’t mind her pranks,” said Yingchun, “But she chatters too much for me. Even in her sleep she rattles away, laughing and chattering. All the nonsense she talks — I don’t know where she gets it from!”

“I expect she’s better now,” remarked Lady Wang. “The other day a match was proposed for her, and she’ll soon be going to live with her mother-in-law. Then she’ll have to change her ways.”

“Are you staying here or going back today?” asked the Lady Dowager.

“Your Ladyship hasn’t seen all the clothes we’ve brought,” replied Nanny Zhou with a smile. “Oh yes, we mean to stay for a couple of

史湘云问道：“宝玉哥哥不在家么？”宝钗笑道：“他再不想着别人，只想宝兄弟，两个人好憨的。这可见还没改了淘气。”贾母道：“如今你们大了，别提小名儿了。”

刚只说着，只见宝玉来了，笑道：“云妹妹来了。怎么前儿打发人接你去，怎么不来？”王夫人道：“这里老太太才说这一个，他又来提名道姓的了。”林黛玉道：“你哥哥得了好东西，等着你呢。”史湘云道：“什么好东西？”宝玉笑道：

“你信他呢！几日不见，越发高了。”湘云笑道：“袭人姐姐好？”宝玉道：“多谢你记挂。”湘云道：“我给他带了好东西来了。”说着，拿出手帕子来，挽着一个疙瘩。宝玉道：

“什么好的？你倒不如把前儿送来的那种绛纹石的戒指儿带两个给他。”湘云笑道：“这是什么？”说着便打开。众人看时，果然就是上次送来的那绛纹戒指，一包四个。林黛玉笑道：“你们瞧瞧，他这主意！前儿一般的打发人给我们送了来，你就把他的也带来，岂不省事？今儿巴巴的自己带了来，我当又是什么新奇东西，原来还是他！真真你是糊涂了。”史湘云笑道：“你才糊涂呢！我把这理说出来，大家评一评，谁糊涂？给你们送东西，就是使来的人不用说话，拿进来一看，自然就知是送姑娘们的了；若带他们的东西，这得我先告诉来人，这是那一个丫头的，那是那一个丫头的，那使来的人明白还好，再糊涂些，丫头的名字他也不记得，混闹胡说的，反连你们的東西都搅糊涂了。若是打发个女人





days.”

“Isn’t Cousin Bao at home?” Xiangyun now asked.

“Cousin Bao’s the only one she thinks of.” Baochai laughed. “It’s because they’re both fond of pranks. That shows she hasn’t changed her mischievous ways.”

“You’re getting too big to go on calling each other by your pet names,” said the Lady Dowager.

Just then Baoyu walked in.

“So Cousin Yun’s here!” he exclaimed. “Why didn’t you come last time we sent to invite you?”

“The old lady said you must stop that,” Lady Wang told him. “But there you go using pet names again.”

Daiyu told Xiangyun, “He has something nice for you.”

“Something nice for me?”

“Don’t believe her.” Baoyu laughed. “How tall you’ve grown in the short time you’ve been away.”

“And how is Sister Xiren?” she asked him.

“Very well, thank you.”

“I’ve brought her a little present.”

With that she produced a handkerchief tied in a knot.

“What is it?” he asked. “Why didn’t you bring her a couple of red cornelian rings like those you sent over the other day?”

“What do you think these are?” Xiangyun unwrapped the handkerchief with a smile, disclosing four more rings of the same sort.

“Look at the girl!” cried Daiyu. “Why didn’t you give the servant these to bring too, when you sent those rings to us? Wouldn’t that have been simpler? Now you turn up with more yourself. I thought it was something different, but it’s only the same again. How silly you are!”

“Silly yourself!” Xiangyun smiled. “Let me explain and the rest of you shall judge which of us is silly. I sent those rings to you by the page you’d dispatched. The messenger needn’t say a word, once you saw the rings you’d know that they were for the young ladies. Whereas if I’d sent some for the maids as well, I’d have had to tell him which was for which. If he’d been intelligent, all right; but if he’d been stupid he couldn’t have remembered the names and would have mixed everything up, in-

素日知道的还罢了，偏生前儿又打发小子来，可怎么说丫头的名字呢？横竖我来给他们带来，岂不清白。”说着，把四个戒指放下，说道：“袭人姐姐一个，鸳鸯姐姐一个，金钏儿姐姐一个，平儿姐姐一个：这倒是四个人的，难道小子们也记得这么清白？”众人听了都笑道：“果然明白。”宝玉笑道：“还是这么会说话，不让人。”林黛玉听了，冷笑道：

“他不会说话，他的金麒麟也会说话。”一面说着，便起身走了。幸而诸人都不曾听见，只有薛宝钗抿嘴一笑。宝玉听见了，倒自己后悔又说错了话，忽见宝钗一笑，由不得也笑了。宝钗见宝玉笑了，忙起身走开，找了林黛玉去说话。

贾母因向湘云道：“吃了茶歇一歇，瞧瞧你的嫂子们去。园里也凉快，同你姐姐们去逛逛。”湘云答应了，将三个戒指儿包上，歇了一歇，便起身要瞧凤姐等人去，众奶娘、丫头跟着。到了凤姐那里，说笑了一回，出来便往大观园来，见过了李宫裁，少坐片时，便往怡红院来找袭人。因回头说道：“你们不必跟着，只管瞧你们的朋友、亲戚去，留下翠缕伏侍就是了。”众人听了，自去寻姑舅嫂，早剩下湘云、翠缕两个人。翠缕道：“这荷花怎么还不开？”史湘云道：“时候没到。”翠缕道：“这也和咱们家池子里的一样，也是楼子花？”湘云道：“他们这个还不如咱们的。”翠缕道：“他们那边有棵石榴，接连四五枝，真是楼子上起楼子，这也难为他长。”史湘云道：“花草也是同人一样，气脉充足，长的就





cluding *your* rings. A matron who knew the maids would have managed all right, but that day it happened to be a page who couldn't possibly be told the maids' names. So wasn't it simpler for me to bring them here myself?"

She put the four rings down.

"One for Xiren, one for Yuanyang, one for Jinchuan, one for Pinger," she announced. "Could a page have remembered the four of them so clearly?"

Everyone laughed.

"Now she's cleared the matter up."

"Still such a talker!" cried Baoyu. "She's never at a loss."

"Even if *she* couldn't talk, her golden unicorn could."

With this thrust Daiyu rose and left the room.

Luckily her remark had been heard only by Baoyu and Baochai. When the latter smiled Baoyu had to smile too, conscience-stricken as he was. And seeing him smile, Baochai went off hurriedly to join Daiyu.

"Have some tea and rest," the Lady Dowager urged Xiangyun. "Then you can go and see your sisters-in-law and stroll with your cousins in the Garden where it's cool."

Xiangyun did as she was told. After a short rest she wrapped up three of the rings and, accompanied by her nurses and maids, called on Xifeng and chatted for a while with her before going on to visit Li Wan in the Garden. And after a little conversation there she set off to see Xiren in Happy Red Court.

"You needn't all come with me," She told her nurses and maids. "Go and see your friends and relatives. It'll be enough if I have Cuilu."

So the others went off, leaving just the two of them.

"Why isn't the lotus in bloom yet?" asked Cuilu.

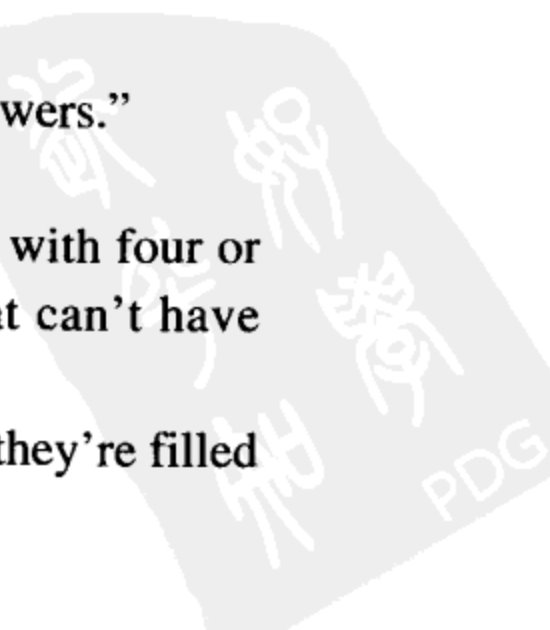
"It isn't time yet."

"Their lotus is like that in our pool — it has double flowers."

"Theirs isn't as good as ours."

"Look, they have a pomegranate-tree over there, miss, with four or five branches trained together, one above the other. That can't have been easy to grow."

"Plants are like human beings," said Xiangyun. "When they're filled





好。”翠缕把脸一扭，说道：“我不信这话。若说同人一样，我怎么不见头上又长出一个头来的人？”湘云听了，由不得一笑，说道：“我说你不用说话，你偏好说。这叫人怎么好答言？天地间都赋‘阴、阳’二气所生，或正或邪，或奇或怪，千变万化，都是‘阴、阳’顺逆。多少一生出来，人罕见的就奇，究竟理还是一样。”翠缕道：“这么说起来，从古至今，开天辟地，都是‘阴、阳’了？”湘云笑道：“糊涂东西，越说越放屁。什么‘都是些阴、阳’，难道还有个‘阴、阳’不成！‘阴’、‘阳’两个字还只是一字，‘阳’尽了就成了‘阴’，‘阴’尽了就成了‘阳’，不是‘阴’尽了又有个‘阳’生出来，‘阳’尽了又有个‘阴’生出来。”翠缕道：“这糊涂死了我！什么是个‘阴、阳’，没影没形的。我只问姑娘，这‘阴、阳’是怎么个样儿？”湘云道：“‘阴、阳’可有怎么样儿，不过是个气，器物赋了成形。比如天是‘阳’，地就是‘阴’；水是‘阴’，火就是‘阳’；日是‘阳’，月就是‘阴’。”翠缕听了，笑道：“是了，是了，我今儿可明白了。怪道人都管着日头叫‘太阳’呢，算命的管着月亮叫什么‘太阴星’，就是这个理了。”湘云笑道：“阿弥陀佛！刚刚的明白了。”翠缕道：“这些大东西有‘阴、阳’也罢了，难道那些蚊子、蛇蚤、蠓虫儿、花儿、草儿、瓦片儿、砖头儿也有‘阴、阳’不成？”湘云道：“怎么没有呢？比如那一个树叶儿还分‘阴、阳’呢，那边向上朝阳的便是‘阳’，这边背阴覆下的便是‘阴’”。翠缕听了，点头笑道：“原来这样，我可明白了。只是咱们这手里的扇子，怎么是‘阳’，怎么是‘阴’呢？”湘云道：“这边正面就是‘阳’，那边反面就为‘阴’。”翠缕



with vital force they grow well.”

“I don’t believe it.” Cuilu shook her head. “If human beings and plants are alike, why haven’t I seen a man with one head growing on top of another?”

Xiangyun had to smile at this.

“Can’t you ever keep quiet?” she scolded. “How can I explain this to you? All things between heaven and earth are born from the dual principles *yin* and *yang*. So whether good or bad, weird or wonderful, everything that comes into being depends on the favourable or unfavourable influence of these two forces. This is true of even the rarest, strangest things.”

“Do you mean to say everything’s been a *yin* or a *yang* ever since Creation and the beginning of time?”

“What nonsense you do talk, you stupid thing.” Xiangyun couldn’t help laughing. “How could there be so many *yins* and *yangs*? *Yin* and *yang* are one. Where one ends, the other begins. It’s not that after a *yang* is exhausted a *yin* comes into being, or the other way round.”

“I find this *terribly* muddling,” complained Cuilu. “What *are yin* and *yang*? Have they no shape or form, miss? Do just tell me what they look like.”

“They’re simply natural forces, but whatever they enter assumes a form. Heaven is *yang* and the earth *yin*, for instance. Water is *yin*, fire *yang*; the sun is *yang*; the moon *yin*.”

“I see.” Cuilu’s face lit up. “Now I understand. No wonder people call the sun the ‘great *yang*’ and fortune-tellers call the moon the ‘great *yin* star.’ This explains it.”

“Buddha be praised. So you’ve caught on at last.”

“It’s all very well for these big things to have *yin* and *yang*, but what about mosquitoes, fleas and midges? What about flowers and grass, or bricks and tiles? Do they have *yin* and *yang* too?”

“Of course they do. That leaf, for instance, has its *yin* and *yang*. The side facing the light is *yang*, the side underneath *yin*.”

“So that’s how it is.” Cuilu nodded. “I see. But which is *yang* and which *yin* in these fans we’re holding?”

“The front is *yang* and the back *yin*.”

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又点头笑了，还要拿几件东西问，因想不起个什么来，猛低头就看见湘云宫绦上系的金麒麟，便提起来笑道：“姑娘，这个难道也有‘阴、阳’？”湘云道：“走兽飞禽，雄为‘阳’，雌为‘阴’；牝为‘阴’，牡为‘阳’。怎么没有呢！”翠缕道：“这是公的，到底是母的呢？”湘云道：“这连我也不知道。”翠缕道：“这也罢了，怎么东西都有‘阴、阳’，咱们人倒没有‘阴、阳’呢？”湘云照脸啐了一口道：“下流东西，好生走罢！越问越问出好的来了！”翠缕笑道：“这有什么不告诉我的呢？我也知道了，不用难我。”湘云笑道：“你知道什么？”翠缕道：“姑娘是‘阳’，我就是‘阴’。”说着，湘云拿手帕子握着嘴，“呵呵”的笑起来。翠缕道：“说是了，就笑的这样。”湘云道：“很是，很是。”翠缕道：“人规矩，主子为‘阳’，奴才为‘阴’。我连这个大道理也不懂得？”湘云笑道：“你很懂得。”

一面说，一面走，刚到蔷薇架下，湘云道：“你瞧那是谁掉的首饰，金晃晃在那里。”翠缕听了，忙赶上拾在手里攥着，笑道：“可分出‘阴、阳’来了。”说着，先拿史湘云的麒麟瞧。史湘云要他拣的瞧，翠缕只管不放手，笑道：“是件宝贝，姑娘瞧不得。这是从那里来的？好奇怪！我从来在这里，没见有人有这个。”湘云道：“拿来我瞧瞧。”翠缕将手一撒，笑道：“请看。”湘云举目一验，却是文彩辉煌的一个





After nodding again Cuilu lowered her head to think up some more questions, and her eye fell on the golden unicorn which her young mistress was wearing as a pendant.

“Does this have *yin* and *yang* too, miss?” she asked.

“Of course it has. The male of all beasts and birds is *yang* and the female *yin*.”

“Is it male or female then?”

“Not even I know that.”

“Never mind. If all other things have *yin* and *yang*, why don't human beings?”

“Get away, you low creature!” Xiangyun spat in disgust. “You're going too far.”

“Why don't you tell me, miss? I know anyway, so don't think you can hide it from me.”

“What do you know?” Xiangyun giggled.

“You're *yang*, miss, and I'm *yin*”

Xiangyun put her handkerchief to her mouth and burst out laughing.

“I get the point,” insisted Cuilu. “Why should you find it so funny?”

“Quite right, quite right.”

“People say that masters are *yang* and slaves are *yin*. Do you think I don't know an important rule like that?”

“You know all about it,” replied Xiangyun with a smile.

By now they had reached the rose trellis.

“Look, what's that thing glittering like gold?” exclaimed Xiangyun. “Has someone dropped a trinket here?”

Cuilu quickly picked up the object and closed her fingers round it.

“Now we'll see which is *yang* and which *yin*,” she cried with a laugh.

With that she took Xiangyun's unicorn to examine it. But asked to show what she had in her hand, she refused to let go of it.

“I can't let you see this treasure, miss,” she teased. “I wonder where it comes from. How very odd! I've never seen anyone here with such a thing.”

“Let me have a look.”

At last Cuilu held out her hand.



金麒麟，比自己佩的又大又有文彩。湘云伸手擎在掌上，只是默默不语，正自出神，忽见宝玉从那边来了，笑问道：“你两个在这日头底下作什么呢？怎么不找袭人去了？”湘云连忙将那麒麟藏起，道：“正要去呢。咱们一处走。”说着，大家进入怡红院来。袭人正在阶下倚槛追风，忽见湘云来了，连忙迎下来，携手笑说一向别情景况。一时进来归坐，宝玉因笑道：“你该早来，我得了一件好东西，专等你呢。”说着，一面在身上摸掏，掏了半天，“阿呀”了一声，便问袭人：“那个东西你收起来了么？”袭人道：“什么东西？”宝玉道：“前儿得的麒麟。”袭人道：“你天天带在身上的，怎么问我？”宝玉听了，将手一拍，说道：“这可丢了，往那里找去！”就要起身自己寻去。史湘云听了，方知是他遗落的，便笑问道：“你几时也有了麒麟了？”宝玉道：“前儿好容易得的呢，不知多早晚丢了，我也糊涂了。”史湘云笑道：“幸而是玩的东西，还是这么慌张。”说着，将手一撒，“你瞧瞧，是这个不是？”宝玉一见，由不得欢喜非常，因说道……不知是如何，且听下回分解。





“There you are.”

Xiangyun saw it was a splendid gold unicorn, even bigger and handsomer than the one she wore. As she reached out for it and held it on her palm, a strange fancy crossed her mind. And just at that moment they were joined by Baoyu.

“What are you doing here in the sun?” he asked. “Why don’t you go and see Xiren?”

“We’re on our way there,” replied Xiangyun, hiding the unicorn. “Let’s go together.”

They went on to Happy Red Court, where Xiren was leaning on the balustrade at the foot of the steps in the breeze. She made haste to greet Xiangyun and led her inside to sit down, asking what she had been doing since last they met.

“You should have come earlier,” remarked Baoyu. “I’ve got something nice which I’ve been keeping for you.” He rummaged in his pockets for a while. “Aiya!” Then turning to Xiren he asked, “Did you put that thing away?”

“What thing?”

“That unicorn I got the other day.”

“You’ve been carrying it on you all the time, why ask *me*?”

“I’ve lost it.” He clapped his hands. “Where can I find it?”

He was about to go off in search of it. Xiangyun guessed that he was referring to her find.

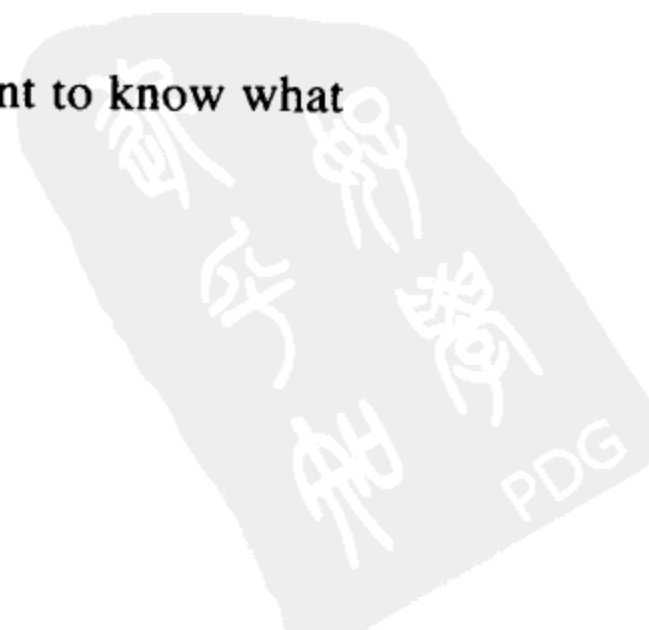
“When did *you* get hold of a unicorn?” she asked.

“Only the other day, and I didn’t come by it easily either. I can’t think when I lost it. How stupid of me.”

Xiangyun laughed.

“It’s lucky it’s just a toy, yet see what a state you’re in!” With that she unclenched her fingers. “Look, is this it?”

Baoyu was overjoyed to see she had it. If you want to know what happened next, read on.



## 第三十二回

诉肺腑心迷活宝玉 含耻辱情烈死金钏

话说宝玉见那麒麟，心中甚是欢喜，便伸手来拿，笑道：“亏你拣着了。你是那里拣的？”史湘云笑道：“幸而是这个，明儿倘或把印也丢了，难道也就罢了不成？”宝玉笑道：“倒是丢了印平常，若丢了这个，我就该死了。”袭人斟了茶来与史湘云吃，一面笑道：“大姑娘，听见前儿你大喜了。”史湘云红了脸，吃茶不答。袭人道：“这会子又害臊了。你还记得十年前，咱们在西边暖阁住着，晚上你同我说的话儿？那会子不害臊，这会子怎么又害臊了？”史湘云笑道：“你还说呢，那会子咱们那么好，后来我们太太没了，我家去住了一程子，怎么就把你派了跟二哥哥；我来了，你就不像先待我了。”袭人笑道：“你还说呢，先姐姐长、姐姐短哄着我替你梳头洗脸，作这个，弄那个；如今大了，就拿出小姐的款来。你既拿小姐的款，我怎么敢亲近呢？”史湘云道：“阿弥陀佛，冤枉冤哉！我要这样，就立刻死了。你瞧瞧，这么大热天，我来了，必定赶来先瞧瞧你。你不信，你问问缕儿，我在家时时刻刻，那一回不念你几声？”话未了，忙的袭人和宝玉都劝道：“玩话你又认真了，还是这么性急！”史湘云道：“你不说你的话噎人，倒说人性急。”一面

## Chapter 32

### An Avowal Leaves Baoyu Bemused Disgrace Drives Jinchuan to Suicide

Baoyu was overjoyed to see the gold unicorn.

“Thank you!” He reached out for it, laughing. “Where did you find it?”

“It’s lucky it was only this.” Xiangyun smiled. “Will you let it go at that if you lose your official seal in future?”

“Losing an official seal is nothing.” He grinned. “But I deserve death for losing this.”

Meanwhile Xiren had poured out tea which she offered to Xiangyun.

“Miss Shi, I heard the other day that you’re engaged now,” she remarked with a smile.

Xiangyun blushed and said nothing, simply sipping her tea.

“So coy!” cried the maid. “Remember what you told me one evening some ten years ago when we were staying in the alcove on the west side? You weren’t coy then; why be so bashful now?”

“The things you say!” Xiangyun expostulated. “How friendly we were then! But after my mother died and I went home they sent you here to wait on Second Brother, and now when I come you’re no longer the same to me.”

“Well I never!” Xiren protested. “In those days I was ‘sister’ and ‘dear sister’ to you when you wanted me to comb your hair, wash your face and dance attendance on you. Now you’ve grown up, you’ve put on the airs of a young lady. If *you* stand on your dignity, how dare *I* take liberties?”

“Amida Buddha! That’s not fair,” cried Xiangyun. “May I drop dead if I ever give myself airs. Look how hot it is today, yet as soon as I arrive I hurry straight over to see you. If you don’t believe me, ask Cuilu. At home I’m always saying how much I miss you.”



说，一面打开手帕子，将戒指递与袭人。袭人感谢不尽，因笑道：“你前儿送你姐姐们的，我已得了；今儿你亲自又送来，可见是没忘了我。只这个就试出你来了。戒指儿能值多少，可见你的心真。”史湘云道：“是谁给你的？”袭人道：

“是宝姑娘给我的。”湘云笑道：“我只当林姐姐给你的，原来是宝钗姐姐给了你。我天天在家里想着，这些姐姐们再没一个比宝姐姐好的。可惜我们不是一个娘养的，我但凡有这么个亲姐姐，就是没了父母，也是没妨碍的。”说着，眼睛圈儿就红了。宝玉道：“罢，罢！不用提这话。”史湘云道：

“提这个便怎么？我知道你的心病，恐怕你的林妹妹听见，又怪嗔我赞了宝姐姐。可是为这个不是？”袭人在旁“嗤”的一笑，说道：“云姑娘，你如今大了，越发心直口快了。”宝玉笑道：“我说你们这几个人是难说话，果然不错。”史湘云道：“好哥哥，你不必说了，叫我恶心。只会在我们跟前说话，见了你林妹妹，又不知怎么了！”

袭人道：“且别说玩话，正有一件事还要求你呢。”史湘云便问：“什么事？”袭人道：“有一双鞋，抠了垫心子。我这两日身上不好，不得做，你可有工夫替我做？”史湘云笑道：“这又奇了，你家放着这些巧人不算，还有什么针线上的，裁剪上的，怎么叫我做起来？你的活计叫谁做，谁好意思不做呢。”袭人笑道：“你又糊涂了。你难道不知道，我们这屋里的针线，是不要那些针线上的人做的。”史湘云听了，便





“Can’t you take a joke?” Xiren and Baoyu remonstrated. “You still flare up so easily.”

“You won’t admit how provoking you are, yet scold me for flaring up.”

As Xiangyun said this she unwrapped her handkerchief from which she took a ring and passed it to Xiren, who was loud in her thanks.

“Actually, I was given one of those you sent your cousins,” she remarked. “And now you’ve brought me one yourself — a sure sign that you hadn’t forgotten me. It’s not the rings I value, it’s the thought that counts.”

“Who gave you one?” asked Xiangyun.

“Miss Baochai.”

“I thought it was Miss Lin. So it was Baochai.” Xiangyun sighed. “At home every day I often think that of all my cousins Baochai is the best. What a pity we aren’t real sisters! If we were, it wouldn’t be so bad being an orphan.” Her eyes were brimming with tears.

“All right, all right,” cried Baoyu. “No more of this.”

“What’s wrong?” demanded Xiangyun. “I know what’s worrying you. You’re afraid your Cousin Lin may hear and be cross with me for singing Baochai’s praises — right?”

“Miss Yun!” Xiren burst out laughing. “The older you grow the more outspoken you get.”

Baoyu chuckled.

“I always say you girls are hard to talk with. And this proves it.”

“Don’t make me sick, dear cousin, speaking like that. You can keep your end up with us, but what happens when you cross swords with Daiyu?”

“That’s enough,” interposed Xiren. “I’ve a favour to ask you.”

“What is it?” inquired Xiangyun.

“I’ve started on a pair of slippers but haven’t been able to finish them because I’ve been poorly for the last couple of days. Have you time to do them for me?”

“Well, well,” exclaimed Xiangyun. “This house is full of clever girls, to say nothing of sewing-women and tailors. Why pick on me? How can anyone who’s asked possibly refuse?”

“Are you so dense?” parried Xiren with a smile. “Don’t you know that none of the needlework for *our* apartments is done by sewing-

知是宝玉的鞋了，因笑道：“既这么说，我就替你做了罢。只是一件，你的我才作，别人的我可不能。”袭人笑道：“又来了！我是个什么，就烦你做鞋了？实告诉你，可不是我的。你别管是谁的，横竖我领情就是了。”史湘云道：“论理，你的东西也不知烦我做了多少，今儿我倒不做了的原故，你必定也知道。”袭人道：“倒也不知道。”史湘云冷笑道：“前儿我听见把我做的扇套子拿着和人家比，赌气又较了。我早就听见了，你还瞒我？这会子又叫我做，我成了你们的奴才了？”宝玉忙笑道：“前儿的那事，本不知是你做的。”袭人也笑道：“他本不知是你做的。是我哄他的话，说是新近外头有个会做活计的女孩子，说扎的出奇的花，我叫他们拿了一个扇套子试试看好不好。他就信了，拿出去给这个瞧给那个看的。不知怎么又惹恼了林姑娘，便较了两段。回来他还叫着做去，我才说了是你做了，他后悔的什么似的。”史湘云道：“这越发奇了。林姑娘他也犯不上生气，他既会剪，就叫他做。”袭人道：“他可不做呢。饶这么着，老太太还怕他劳碌呢。大夫又说好生静养才好，谁还烦他做？旧年好一年的工夫，做了个香袋儿；今年半年，还没见拿针线呢。”

正说着，有人来回说：“兴隆街的大爷来了，老爷叫二爷出去会。”宝玉听了，便知是贾雨村来了，心中好不自在。袭人忙去拿衣服。宝玉一面蹬着靴子，一面抱怨道：“有老爷





women?"

Realizing that the shoes were for Baoyu, Xiangyun chuckled.

"In that case I'll do it — but on one condition. I'll make slippers for *you*, not for anybody else."

"There you go again," protested Xiren. "Who am I to ask you to make slippers for me? The fact is they're not mine. but don't ask whose they are. At any rate I'd take it kindly of you."

"Of course, I've done plenty of sewing for you in the past. But you'll understand why I can't do it this time."

"Indeed, I *don't* understand."

Xiangyun laughed sarcastically.

"I heard the fan-sheath I made the other day was taken to compare with someone else's, and in a tantrum that someone cut it to pieces. I know all about it, so don't try to fool me. Am I your slave to be given tasks like this?"

Baoyu cut in with a disarming smile, "I didn't know that sheath was your work."

"He honestly didn't know," Xiren assured her. "I told him that recently there was a girl outside who did wonderful embroidery, and suggested trying her out with a fan-sheath. He took me at my word, then showed it off right and left. For some reason it upset Miss Lin again and she snipped it in two. When he came back to ask for another like it, and I told him you'd made it, he was ever so sorry."

"Stranger and stranger!" cried Xiangyun. "Why should Miss Lin be angry? If she can snip, ask *her* to make another."

"Out of the question," said Xiren. "Even as it is, the old lady's afraid of her overtiring herself and the doctor has prescribed her a good rest. Who'd dream of troubling her with needlework? Last year it took her a whole year to finish one scented pouch. And this year I've not yet seen needle or thread in her hands."

As they were talking a servant came to announce: "Mr. Jia of Prosperity Street has called. The master wants the young gentleman to go and see him."

Knowing that it was Jia Yucun, Baoyu was most reluctant to go, but Xiren lost no time in fetching his formal clothes. As he pulled on his boots

和他坐着就罢了，回回定要见我。”史湘云一边摇着扇子，笑道：“自然你能会宾接客，老爷才叫你出去呢。”宝玉道：“那里是老爷？都是他自己要请我去见的。”湘云笑道：“‘主雅客来勤’，自然你有些警动他的好处，他才只要会你。”宝玉道：“罢，罢，我也不敢称雅，俗中又俗的一个俗人，并不愿同这些人往来。”湘云笑道：“还是这个情性，改不了。如今大了，你就不愿读书去考举人进士的，也该常会会这些为官做宰的人们，谈谈讲讲些仕途经济的学问，也好将来应酬世务，日后也有个朋友。没见你成年家只在我们队里搅些什么！”宝玉听了，道：“姑娘请别的姊妹屋里坐坐，我这里仔细脏了你知经济学问的。”袭人道：“云姑娘，快别说这话。上回也是宝姑娘也说过一回，他也不管人脸上过的去过不去，就‘咳’了一声，拿起脚来走了。这里宝姑娘的话也没说完，见他走了，登时羞得脸通红，说又不是，不说又不是。幸而是宝姑娘，那要是林姑娘，不知又闹到怎么样，哭的怎么样呢。提起这些话来，真真宝姑娘教人敬重，自己讪了一会子去了。我倒过不去，只当他恼了。谁知道后来还是照旧一样，真真有涵养，心地宽大。谁知这一个反倒同他生分了。那林姑娘见你赌气不理他，你得赔多少不是呢。”宝玉道：“林姑娘从来说过这些混帐话不曾？若他也说过这些混帐话，我早和他生分了。”袭人和湘云都点头笑道：“这原是混帐话？”



he grumbled:

“Surely it’s enough if my father keeps him company. Why must he see *me* each time?”

Fanning herself, Xiangyun replied with a smile, “It must be because uncle thinks you’re a good host. Otherwise he wouldn’t send for you.”

“It’s not my father’s idea. It’s that fellow who asks for me each single time.”

“When the host is cultured, guests frequent his house,” quoted Xiangyun. “He likes seeing you, surely, because he can learn something from you.”

“Don’t call me cultured,” begged Baoyu. “I’m the most vulgar of the vulgar herd, and I’ve no desire at all to mix with such people.”

“You haven’t changed one bit,” sighed Xiangyun. “But now you’re growing up. Even if you don’t want to study and sit for the examinations, you should at least associate with officials and learn something about the world and administration. That’ll help you to manage your own affairs in future and make some friends. What other young gentleman spends all his time, the way you do, playing about with us girls?”

“Please go and call on some of your other cousins, young lady,” he retorted. “People with worldly wisdom like yours will be polluted here.”

“Don’t say such things to him, miss,” Xiren interposed. “Last time Miss Baochai gave him the same advice he just snorted and walked away without any regard for her feelings. In the middle of what she was saying he marched off. She flushed crimson and hardly knew whether to go on or not. Thank goodness it was Miss Baochai and not Miss Lin — *she’d* have made a fearful scene, weeping and sobbing. But there you are, it’s true that nobody can help admiring Miss Baochai. She just blushed and went away. *I* felt very bad, sure she must be offended; but later she behaved as if nothing had happened. She’s really good natured and tolerant. He’s the one, believe it or not, who has since kept his distance. If you sulked and ignored Miss Lin like that,” she asked Baoyu, “how many apologies would you have to make her?”

“Has Miss Lin ever talked such disgusting nonsense?” demanded Baoyu. “If she had, I’d have stopped having anything to do with her long ago.”

原来林黛玉知道史湘云在这里，宝玉又赶来，一定说麒麟的原故。因此心下忖度着，近日宝玉弄来的外传野史，多半才子佳人，都因小巧玩物上撮合，或有鸳鸯，或有凤凰，或玉环金珮，或鲛帕鸾绦，皆由小物而遂终身。今忽见宝玉亦有麒麟，便恐因此生隙，同史湘云也做出那些风流佳事来。因而悄悄走来，见机行事，以察二人之意。不想刚走来，正听见史湘云说“经济”事，宝玉又说：“林妹妹不说这样混帐话，若说这话，我也和他生分了。”林黛玉听了这话，不觉又喜又惊，又悲又叹。所喜者，果然自己眼力不错，素日认他是个知己，果然是个知己。所惊者，他在人前一片私心称扬于我，其亲热厚密，竟不避嫌疑。所叹者，你既为我之知己，自然我亦可为你之知己矣；既你我为知己，则又何必有金玉之论哉；既有金玉之论，亦该你我有之，则又何必来一宝钗哉！所悲者，父母早逝，虽有铭心刻骨之言，无人为我主张。况近日每觉神思恍惚，病已渐成，医者更云气弱血亏，恐致劳怯之症。你我虽为知己，但恐自不能久待；你纵为我知己，奈我薄命何！想到此间，不禁滚下泪来。待要进去相见，自觉无味，便一面拭泪，一面抽身回去了。

这里宝玉忙忙的穿了衣裳出来，忽抬头见林黛玉在前面慢慢的走着，似有拭泪之状，便忙赶上来，笑道：“妹妹往那里去？怎么又哭了？又是谁得罪了你？”林黛玉回头见是宝玉，便勉强笑道：“好好的，我何曾哭了。”宝玉笑道：“你瞧瞧，眼睛上的泪珠儿未干，还撒谎呢。”一面说，一面禁不住抬起手来替他拭泪。林黛玉忙向后退了几步，说道：“你又



Xiren and Xiangyun nodded and laughed.

“So nonsense is the name for it.”

Now Daiyu had discovered Xiangyun’s whereabouts and knew that Baoyu had hurried back, no doubt to talk about the gold unicorns. That set her thinking. In most of the romances Baoyu had recently acquired, a young scholar and beautiful girl came together and fell in love thanks to lovebirds, phoenixes, jade rings, gold pendants, silk handkerchiefs, embroidered girdles or other baubles of the sort. So Baoyu’s possession of a gold unicorn like Xiangyun’s might lead to a romance between them. She slipped over to see what was happening and judge of their feelings for each other, arriving just as Xiangyun was speaking of worldly affairs, and in time to hear Baoyu answer, “Miss Lin never talks such disgusting nonsense. If she did, I’d have stopped having anything to do with her.”

This surprised and delighted Daiyu but also distressed and grieved her. She was delighted to know she had not misjudged him, for he had now proved just as understanding as she had always thought. Surprised that he had been so indiscreet as to acknowledge his preference for her openly. Distressed because their mutual understanding ought to preclude all talk about gold matching jade, or she instead of Baochai should have the gold locket to match his jade amulet. Grieved because her parents had died, and although his preference was so clear there was no one to propose the match for her. Besides, she had recently been suffering from dizzy spells which the doctor had warned might end in consumption, as she was so weak and frail. Dear as she and Baoyu were to each other, she might not have long to live. And what use was their affinity if she were fated to die? These thoughts sent tears coursing down her cheeks. And therefore instead of entering she turned away, wiping her tears.

Baoyu hurried out after changing his clothes to see Daiyu walking slowly ahead, apparently wiping her tears. He overtook her.

“Where are you going, cousin?” he asked with a smile. “What, crying again? Who’s offended you this time?”

Daiyu turned and saw who it was.

“I’m all right.” She gave a wan smile. “I wasn’t crying.”

“Don’t fib — your eyes are still wet.”

He raised his hand instinctively to wipe away her tears. At once she



要死了!作什么这么动手动脚的!”宝玉笑道:“说话忘了情,不觉的动了手,也就顾不的死活。”林黛玉道:“你死了倒不值什么,只是丢下了什么金,又是什么麒麟,可怎么样呢?”一句话又把宝玉说急了,赶上来问道:“你还说这话,到底是咒我还是气我呢?”林黛玉见问,方想起前日事来,遂自悔自己又说造次了,忙笑道:“你别着急,我原说错了。这有什么的,筋都暴起来,急的一脸汗。”一面说,一面禁不住近前伸手替他拭面上的汗。宝玉瞅了半天,方说道“你放心”三个字。林黛玉听了,怔了半天,方说道:“我有什么不放心的?我不明白这话。你倒说说怎么放心不放心?”宝玉叹了一口气,问道:“你果不明白这话?难道我素日在你身上的心都用错了?连你的意思若体贴不着,就难怪你天天为我生气了。”林黛玉道:“果然我不明白放心不放心的话。”宝玉点头叹道:“好妹妹,你别哄我。果然不明白这话,不但我素日之意白用了,且连你素日待我之意也都辜负了。你皆因总是不放心的原故,才弄了一身病。但凡宽慰些,这病也不得一日重似一日。”林黛玉听了这话,如轰雷掣电,细细思之,竟比自己肺腑中掏出来的还觉恳切,竟有万句言语,满心要说,只是半个字也不能吐,却怔怔的望着他。此时宝玉心中也有万句言语,一时不知从那一句上说起,却也怔怔的望着黛玉。两个人怔了半天,林黛玉只咳了一声,两眼不觉





recoiled a few steps.

“Are you crazy? Can’t you keep your hands to yourself?”

“I did it without thinking.” Baoyu laughed. “I was dead to all around me.”

“No one will care when *you’re* dead, but what about the gold locket and unicorn you’ll have to leave behind?”

This remark made Baoyu frantic.

“How can you talk like that! Are you trying to put me under a curse, or set on annoying me?”

Reminded of what had happened the previous day, Daiyu regretted her thoughtlessness.

“Don’t get so excited,” she begged. “Why work yourself up over a slip of the tongue? The veins on your forehead are all swollen with anger, and what a sweat you’re in!”

So saying, she too stepped forward without thinking and reached out her hand to wipe his perspiring face. Baoyu fixed his eyes on her. After a while he said gently, “You mustn’t worry.”

Daiyu gazed at him in silence.

“Worry?” she repeated at last. “I don’t understand. What do you mean?”

“Don’t you really understand?” He sighed. “Could it be that since I’ve known you all my feelings for you have been wrong? If I can’t even enter into *your* feelings, then you’re quite right to be angry with me all the time.”

“I really don’t understand what you mean by telling me not to worry.”

“Dear cousin, don’t tease.” Baoyu nodded and sighed. “If you really don’t understand, all my devotion’s been wasted and even your feeling for me has been thrown away. You ruin your health by worrying so much. If you’d take things less to heart, your illness wouldn’t be getting worse every day.”

These words struck Daiyu like a thunderbolt. As she turned them over in her mind, they seemed closer to her innermost thoughts than if wrung from her own heart. There were a thousand things she longed to say, yet she could not utter a word. She just stared at him in silence. As Baoyu was in similar case, he too stared at her without a word. So they

滚下泪来，回身便要走。宝玉忙上前拉住，说道：“好妹妹，且略站住，我说一句话再走。”林黛玉一面拭泪，一面将手推开，说道：“有什么可说的？你的话我早知道了！”口里说着，却头也不回，竟去了。

宝玉站着，只管发起呆来。原来方才出来慌忙，不曾带得扇子，袭人怕他热，忙拿了扇子赶来送与他，忽抬头见了林黛玉和他站着。一时林黛玉走了，他还站着不动，因而赶上来说道：“你也不带了扇子去，亏我看见，赶了送来。”宝玉出了神，见袭人和他说话，并未看出是何人来，便一把拉住，说道：“好妹妹，我的这心事，从来也不敢说，今儿我大胆说出来，死也甘心！我为你也弄了一身的病在这里，又不敢告诉人，只好掩着。只等你的病好了，只怕我的病才得好呢。睡里梦里也忘不了你！”袭人听了这话，吓得魄消魂散，只叫“神天菩萨，坑死我了！”便推他道：“这是那里的话！敢是中了邪？还不快去！”宝玉一时醒过来，方知袭人送扇子来，羞得满面紫胀，夺了扇子，便忙忙的抽身跑了。

这里袭人见他去了，自思方才之言，一定是因黛玉而起，如此看来，将来难免不才之事，令人可惊可畏。想到此间，也不觉怔怔的滴下泪来，心下暗度，如何处治方免此丑祸。正裁疑间，忽有宝钗从那边走来，笑道：“大毒日头地下，出什么神呢？”袭人见问，忙笑道：“那边两个雀儿打架，倒也好玩，我就看住了。”宝钗道：“宝兄弟这会子穿了衣服，忙忙的那里去了？我才看见走过去，倒要叫住问他呢。他如今说话越发没了经纬，我故此没叫他了，由他过去





stood transfixed for some time. Then Daiyu gave a choking cough and tears rolled down her cheeks. She was turning to go when Baoyu caught hold of her.

“Dear cousin, wait. Just let me say one word.”

She dried her tears with one hand, repulsing him with the other.

“What more is there to say? I understand.”

She hurried off without one look behind, while he just stood there like a man in a trance.

Now Baoyu in his haste had forgotten his fan, and as Xiren ran after him with it she caught sight of Daiyu face to face with him. As soon as Daiyu left, the maid walked up to Baoyu, still standing there as if rooted to the ground.

“You forgot your fan,” she said. “Luckily I noticed it. And here it is.”

Too bemused still to know who was speaking, he seized her hands.

“Dear cousin, I never ventured before to bare my heart to you,” he declared. “Now that I’ve summoned up courage to speak, I’ll die content. I was making myself ill on account of you, but I dared not tell anyone and hid my feelings. I shan’t recover till you’re better too, I can’t forget you even in my dreams.”

“Merciful Buddha, save me!” cried Xiren in consternation. Shaking him she asked, “What sort of talk is this? Has some evil spirit taken possession of you? Go quickly!”

When Baoyu came to himself and saw Xiren there, blushing all over his face he snatched the fan and ran off without a word.

As the maid watched him go it dawned on her that his avowal had been meant for Daiyu, in which case it must surely lead to trouble and scandal. That would be truly fearful. She wondered how best to avert such a dreadful calamity.

She was still lost in thought when Baochai appeared.

“Why are you standing here dreaming?” asked Baochai. “This sun is scorching.”

“Two sparrows were fighting over there,” improvised Xiren hastily. “It was so amusing that I stayed to watch.”

“Where has Cousin Bao rushed off to all dressed up? I saw him passing and thought of stopping him; but because nowadays he often

罢。”袭人道：“老爷叫他出去。”宝钗听了，忙道：“嗳哟！这么黄天暑热的，叫他做什么！别是想起什么来生了气，叫他出去教训一场。”袭人笑道：“不是这个，想是有客要会。”宝钗笑道：“这个客也没意思，这么热天，不在家里凉快，还跑些什么！”袭人笑道：“倒是你说的是。”

宝钗因而问道：“云丫头在你们家做什么呢？”袭人笑道：“才说了一会子闲话。你瞧，我前儿粘的那双鞋，明儿叫他做去。”宝钗听见这话，便两边回头，看无人来往，便笑道：“你这么个明白人，怎么一时半刻的就不会体谅人情。我近来看云丫头的神情，再风里言风里语的听起来，那云丫头在家里竟一点儿作不得主。他们家嫌费用大，竟不用那些针线上的人，差不多的东西都是他们娘儿们动手。为什么这几次他来了，他和我说话儿，见没人在跟前，他就说家里累的很。我再问他两句家常过日子的话，他就连眼圈儿都红了，口里含含糊糊，待说不说的。想其形景来，自然从小儿没爹娘的苦。我看着他，也不觉的伤起心来。”袭人见说这话，将手一拍，说：“是了，是了。怪道上月我烦他打十根蝴蝶结子，过了那些日子才打发人送来，还说‘这是粗打的，且在别处将就着使罢；要匀净的，等明儿来住着，再好生打罢’。如今听宝姑娘这话，想来我们烦他他不好推辞，不知他在家里怎么三更半夜的做呢。可是我也糊涂了，早知是这样，我也不烦他了。”宝钗道：“上次他告诉我，在家里做活计做到三更天，若是替别人做一点半点，他家的那些奶奶、太太们还不受用呢。”袭人道：“偏生我们那个牛心左性的小



talks so wildly, I decided not to call out.”

“The master sent for him.”

“Aiya! On such a sweltering day. What for? Could it be that something’s made him angry and he’s sent for Cousin Bao to lecture him?”

“It’s nothing like that,” replied Xiren with a laugh. “I think a guest wants to see him.”

“A guest with no sense.” Baochai appeared amused. “Why gad about in such hot weather instead of staying indoors and keeping cool?”

“Why indeed?”

“And what was Xiangyun doing in your compound?”

“She just dropped in for a chat. You know that pair of shoes I started the other day? I’ve asked her to finish them for me.”

Baochai glanced around to make sure no one was about.

“How could someone with your good sense suddenly be so inconsiderate?” she asked. “Piecing together what I’ve seen and heard recently, I guess Yun’s a nobody at home. To save expense, her people no longer employ sewing-women but make practically everything they need themselves. That’s why, during her last few visits, she’s confided to me when nobody was about that she gets quite tired out at home. And when I asked about their daily life, her eyes filled with tears and she made some evasive answer. So I gather she’s having a hard time of it because she lost her parents so early on. I can’t help feeling sorry for her.”

“That’s it, that’s it.” Xiren clapped her hands. “No wonder when I asked her last month to make ten butterfly knots, it took her so long to send them.

“I’ve stitched them just anyhow,” she told me. ‘I hope they’ll do. If you want better ones, wait until I come to stay with you.’

“After what you’ve said, miss, I realize she couldn’t very well refuse but she probably has to work late into the night at home. How stupid of me! If I’d known, I wouldn’t have asked her.”

“Last time she did tell me she has to work till midnight at home, and if she does the least bit of work for other people the ladies of the house don’t like it.”

“But we have such a stubborn, wayward young master he won’t let

爷，凭着小的大的活计，一概不要家里这些活计上的人作。我又弄不开这些。”宝钗笑道：“你理他呢！只管叫人做去，只说是你做的就是了。”袭人道：“那里哄的信他？他才是认得出来呢。说不得，我只好慢慢的累去罢了。”宝钗笑道：“你不必忙，我替你作些如何？”袭人笑道：“当真的这样，就是我的福了。晚上我亲自送过来。”

一句话未了，忽见一个老婆子忙忙走来，说道：“这是那里说起！金钏儿姑娘好好的投井死了！”袭人唬了一跳，忙问“那个金钏儿？”那老婆子道：“那里还有两个金钏儿呢？就是太太屋里的。前儿不知为什么撵他出去，在家里哭天哭地的，也都不理会他，谁知找他不见了。刚才打水的人在那东南角上井里打水，见一个尸首，赶着叫人打捞起来，谁知是他。他们家里还只管乱着要救活，那里中用了！”宝钗道：“这也奇了。”袭人听说，点头赞叹，想素日同气之情，不觉流下泪来。宝钗听见这话，忙向王夫人处来安慰。这里袭人回去不提。

却说宝钗来至王夫人房中，只见鸦雀无闻，独有王夫人在里间房内坐着垂泪。宝钗便不好提这事，只得在旁坐了。王夫人便问：“你从那里来？”宝钗道：“从园里来。”王夫人道：“你从园里来，可见你宝兄弟？”宝钗道：“才倒看见了，他穿了衣服出去了，不知那里去。”王夫人点头哭道：“你可知道一桩奇事？金钏儿忽然投井死了！”宝钗见说，道：“怎么



the sewing-women make any of his things, big or small, and I haven't the time for it all."

"Never mind him. Just get the other girls to do it, and tell him you did it yourself."

"There's no fooling him. He'd know at once. No, I shall just have to slave away myself."

"Wait a bit." Baochai smiled. "Suppose I help you?"

"Will you really? What luck for me." Xiren beamed. "I'll bring the shoes over this evening."

While she was speaking an old maid-servant came panting up to them.

"Just imagine!" she gasped. "That girl Jinchuan, for no reason at all, has drowned herself in the well."

Xiren gave a start.

"Which Jinchuan?"

"How many Jinchuans are there? The girl who worked for the mistress, of course. The other day, we don't know why, she was dismissed. She wept and sobbed at home but no one took any notice, till they found she'd disappeared. Just now one of the water-carriers was drawing water from that well in the southeast corner when he discovered a corpse. He fetched people to get it out, and it was Jinchuan. Her family's trying frantically to bring her round, but of course it's too late."

"This is rather odd!" exclaimed Baochai.

Xiren nodded and sighed, and the thought of her friendship with Jinchuan made tears run down her cheeks. She went back to Happy Red Court while Baochai hurried off to condole with Lady Wang.

All was strangely quiet in Lady Wang's apartments, where she sat in the inner chamber shedding tears all by herself. Not wanting to mention the maid's suicide, Baochai sat by her aunt in silence until asked where she had come from.

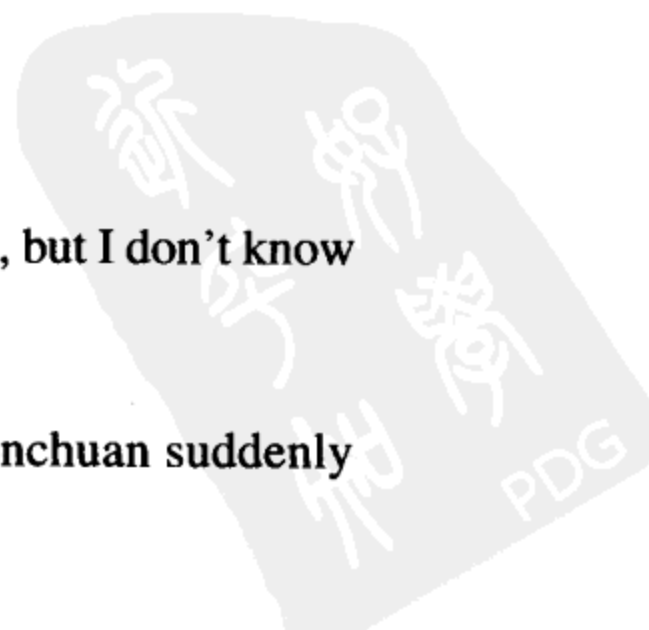
"From the Garden," was her reply.

"Did you see your Cousin Bao?"

"Yes, I saw him just now going out in formal clothes, but I don't know where he's gone."

Lady Wang nodded tearfully.

"Did you hear this extraordinary business about Jinchuan suddenly



好好的投井？这也奇了。”王夫人道：“原是前儿他把我一件东西弄坏了，我一时生气，打了他几下，撵了他下去。只说气他两天，还叫他上来，谁知他这么气性大，就投井死了，岂不是我的罪过。”宝钗叹道：“姨妈是慈善人，固然是这么想。据我看来，他并不是赌气投井。多半他下去住着，或是在井跟前憨玩，失了脚掉下去的。他在上头拘束惯了，这一出去，自然要到各处去玩玩逛逛，岂有这样大气的理！纵然有这样大气，也不过是个糊涂人，也不为可惜。”王夫人点头叹道：“这话虽然如此说，到底我心不安。”宝钗叹道：“姨妈也不必劳神念念于兹，十分过不去，不过多赏他几两银子发送他，也就尽主仆情了。”王夫人道：“才刚我赏了他娘五十两银子，原要还把你妹妹们的新衣服拿两套给他妆裹。谁知凤丫头说可巧都没有什么新做的衣服，只有你林妹妹作生日的两套。我想你林妹妹那个孩子素日是个有心的，况且他也三灾八难的，既说了给他过生日，这会子又给人去妆裹，岂不忌讳。因为这么样，我现叫裁缝赶两套给他。要是别的丫头，赏他几两银子也就完了，只是金钏儿虽然是个丫头，素日在我跟前比我的女儿也差不多。”口里说着，不觉流下泪来。宝钗忙道：“姨妈这会子又何用叫裁缝赶去，我前儿倒做了两套，拿来给他岂不省事？况且他活着的时候也穿过我的旧衣服，身量又相对。”王夫人道：“虽然这样，难道你不忌讳？”宝钗笑道：“姨妈放心，我从来不计较这些。”一面说，一面起身就走。王夫人忙叫了两个人来跟宝姑娘去。



drowning herself in the well?"

"Why should she do a thing like that for no reason? It's very strange."

"The other day she broke something of mine, and in a fit of anger I struck her and sent her away. I was meaning to punish her for a couple of days and then to have her fetched back. I'd no idea she'd fly into such a passion she'd jump into the well. This is all my fault."

"You feel that way, auntie, because you're so kind-hearted. But I can't believe she drowned herself in a tantrum. She was playing by the well, more likely, and fell in. After being rather confined in your rooms she'd want to play around once she left, stands to reason. How could she work herself into such a passion? If she did, that was very foolish. She doesn't deserve any pity."

Lady Wang nodded.

"But even if you're right," she sighed, "I still feel bad about it."

"Don't take it so much to heart, auntie. If you feel bad about it, just give them a few extra taels of silver for her burial and you'll be doing all a kind mistress could."

"Just now I gave her mother fifty taels. I wanted to give them two sets of your cousins' new clothes to lay her out in as well; but according to Xifeng the only ones ready are two new sets for your Cousin Lin's birthday. She's such a sensitive child, so delicate too, that wouldn't she think it unlucky to have the clothes made for her birthday made over to a dead girl? So I've told the tailors to make two new sets as fast as they can. If it had been any other maid, I'd have felt a few taels of silver would be enough; but Jinchuan was with me for some time and was just like a daughter to me." As she was speaking she could not help shedding more tears.

"There's no need to hurry the tailors," said Baochai. "The other day I had two sets made. I can easily fetch them for her. That would save lots of trouble. When she was alive she wore my old clothes and they were a perfect fit."

"But aren't you afraid it may bring bad luck?"

Baochai smiled.

"Don't worry, auntie. I'm not superstitious."

She rose to go, and Lady Wang sent two maids along with her.

一时宝钗取了衣服回来，只见宝玉在王夫人旁边坐着垂泪。王夫人正才说他，因宝钗来了，却掩了口不说了。宝钗见此光景，察言观色，早知觉了八分，于是将衣服交割明白。王夫人将他母亲叫来拿了去。再听下回分解。





When Baochai returned with the clothes a little later she found Baoyu sitting in tears beside his mother. Lady Wang had been scolding him, but at Baochai's entrance she stopped. The girl was shrewd enough to guess pretty well what had happened. She handed over the clothes to Lady Wang who sent for Jinchuan's mother and gave them to her.

What happened next is related in the following chapter.



### 第三十三回

手足耽耽小动唇舌 不肖种种大承笞挞

却说王夫人唤上他母亲来，拿几件簪环当面赏与，又吩咐请几众僧人念经超度。他母亲磕头谢了出去。

原来宝玉会过雨村回来听见了，便知金钏儿含羞赌气自尽，心中早又五内摧伤，进来被王夫人数落教训，也无可回说。见宝钗进来，方得便出来，茫然不知何往，背着手，低头一面感叹，一面慢慢的走着，信步来至厅上。刚转过屏门，不想对面来了一人正往里走，可巧儿撞了个满怀。只听那人喝一声“站住！”宝玉吓了一跳，抬头一看，不是别人，却是他父亲，早不觉倒抽了一口气，只得垂手一旁站了。贾政道：“好端端的，你垂头丧气咳些什么？方才雨村来了要见你，叫你那半天才出来；既出来了，全无一点慷慨挥洒谈吐，仍是葳葳蕤蕤。我看你脸上一团思欲愁闷气色，这会子又咳声叹气。你那些还不足，还不自在？无故这样，却是为何？”宝玉素日虽是口角伶俐，只是此时一心总为金钏儿感伤，恨不得此时也身亡命殒，跟了金钏儿去。如今见了他父亲说这些话，究竟不曾听见，只是怔怔的站着。

贾政见他惶悚应对，不似往日，原本无气的，这一来倒生了三分气。方欲说话，忽有回事人来回：“忠顺亲王府里有人来，要见老爷。”贾政听了，心下疑惑，暗暗思忖道：“素日并不与忠顺府来往，为什么今日打发人来？”一面想，一



## Chapter 33

### A Jealous Younger Brother Tells Tales A Worthless Son Receives a Fearful Flogging

Lady Wang, having summoned Jinchuan's mother and given her some trinkets, issued orders then and there for monks to be called in to say masses for the dead girl. Then the mother kowtowed her thanks and left the house.

Now Baoyu, on his return from seeing Yucun, had been cut to the heart by the news that her disgrace had driven Jinchuan to suicide. He had nothing to say in reply to his mother's scolding, but Baochai's arrival gave him a chance to slip out. He wandered aimlessly along, his hands behind his back, hanging his head and sighing, until he found himself by the front hall. He was skirting the door-screen when as ill luck would have it he bumped full tilt into someone who shouted to him to stop.

Baoyu started and, looking up, saw to his dismay that it was no other than his father. He had to stand aside respectfully, gasping with fright.

"Why are you moping like this?" demanded Jia Zheng. "It took you a long time to come out when Yucun asked for you; and when you did come, you had nothing spirited or cheerful to say but looked quite down in the mouth, the picture of gloom. And now you're sighing again. What have you to moan about? Is anything wrong? Why are you carrying on in this way?"

Baoyu normally had a ready tongue, but now he was so distressed by Jinchuan's death that he wished he could follow her straight to the other world. He heard not a word his father said but just stood there in a daze. His stupefied silence — so unlike Baoyu — exasperated Jia Zheng, who had not to begin with been angry. Before he could say more, however, an officer from the household of Prince Zhongshun was announced.

Somewhat taken aback Jia Zheng wondered what this meant, for in general they had no dealings with this prince. He ordered the man to be

面命“快请”。急走出来看时，却是忠顺府长史官，忙接进厅上坐了献茶。未及叙谈，那长史官先就说道：“下官此来，并非擅造潭府，皆因奉王命而来，有一件事相求。看王爷面上，敢烦老大人作主，不但王爷承情，且连下官辈亦感谢不尽。”贾政听了这话，抓不着头脑，忙陪笑起身问道：“大人既奉王命而来，不知有何见谕，望大人宣明，学生好遵谕承办。”那长史官冷笑道：“也不必承办，只用大人一句话就完了。我们府里有一个做小旦的琪官，一向好好在府里，如今竟三五日不见回去，各处去找，又摸不着他的道路，因此各处察访。这一城内，十停人倒有八停人都说，他近日和衔玉的那位令郎相与甚厚。下官辈听了，尊府不比别家，可以擅来索取，因此启明王爷。王爷亦云：‘若是别的戏子呢，一百个也罢了；只是这琪官随机应答，谨慎老成，甚合我老人家的心，竟断断少不得此人。’故此求老大人转谕令郎，请将琪官放回，一则可慰王爷谆谆奉恳，二则下官辈也可免操劳求觅之苦。”说毕，忙打一躬。

贾政听了这话，又惊又气，即命唤宝玉来。宝玉也不知是何原故，忙赶来时，贾政便问：“该死的奴才！你在家不读书也罢了，怎么又做出这些无法无天的事来！那琪官现是忠顺王爷驾前承奉的人，你是何等草芥，无故引逗他出来，如今祸及于我。”宝玉听了，唬了一跳，忙回道：“实在不知此事。究竟连‘琪官’两个字不知为何物，岂更又加‘引逗’





shown in at once and, hurrying to meet him, found that it was the chief steward of the prince's household. He hastily offered him a seat in the reception hall and tea was served.

The chief steward did not beat about the bush.

"Excuse the presumption of this intrusion," he said. "I come at the order of the prince to request a favour. If you, my lord, will grant it, His Highness will remember your kindness and I shall be infinitely indebted to you."

More mystified than ever, Jia Zheng rose to his feet with a smile.

"What instructions have you for me, sir, from the prince?" he asked. "I beg to be enlightened so that I may do my best to carry them out."

The chief steward gave a faint smile.

"There is no need for you, my lord, to do more than say one word," he answered. "There is in our palace an actor by the name of Qiguan, who plays female roles. He had never previously given any trouble, but several days ago he disappeared. After searching the city for him without success, we instituted careful inquiries. We are told by eight out of every ten persons questioned that he has recently been on the closest terms with your esteemed son who was born with jade in his mouth. Of course, we could not seize him from your honourable mansion as if it were an ordinary household. So we reported the matter to His Highness, who says he would rather lose a hundred other actors than Qiguan, for this clever well-behaved lad is such a favourite with our master's father that he cannot do without him. I beg you, therefore, to ask your noble son to send Qiguan back, in compliance with the prince's earnest request and to save me from wearing myself out in a fruitless search."

He concluded this speech with a bow.

Alarmed and scandalized, Jia Zheng summoned Baoyu, who hurried in without knowing why he was wanted.

"You scoundrel!" thundered his father. "Not content with shirking your studies at home, you commit such wicked crimes outside! Qiguan is in the service of Prince Zhongshun; how dare a wretch like you lure him away and bring calamity on me?"

Baoyu on hearing this was consternated.

"I know nothing about it," he cried. "I've never even heard the name Qiguan, let alone lured him away."

二字!”说着便哭了。贾政未及开言,只见那长史官冷笑道:“公子也不必掩饰。或隐藏在家,或知其下落,早说了出来,我们也少受些辛苦,岂不念公子之德?”宝玉连说不知,“恐是讹传,也未见得。”那长史官冷笑道:“现有据证,何必还赖?必定当着老大人说了出来,公子岂不吃亏?既云不知此人,那红汗巾子怎么到了公子腰里?”宝玉听了这话,不觉轰去魂魄,目瞪口呆,心下自思:“这话他如何得知!既连这样机密事都知道了,大约别的瞒他不过,不如打发他去了,免的再说出别的事来。”因说道:“大人既知他的底细,如何连他置买房舍这样大事倒不晓得了?听得说,他如今在东郊离城二十里有个什么紫檀堡,他在那里置了几亩田地、几间房舍。想是在那里也未可知。”那长史官听了,笑道:“这样说,一定是在那里。我且去找一回,若有了,便罢;若没有,还要来请教。”说着,便忙忙的走了。

贾政此时气的目瞪口呆,一面送出那长史官,一面回头命宝玉:“不许动!回来有话问你!”一直送那官员去了。才回身,忽见贾环带着几个小厮一阵乱跑。贾政喝令小厮:“快打,快打!”贾环见他父亲,唬的骨软筋酥,忙低头站住。贾政便问道:“你跑什么?跟着你的那些人都不管你,不知往



He burst into tears.

Before Jia Zheng could speak again the chief steward said with a sardonic smile:

“It is useless to keep it a secret, sir. Tell us whether he is hiding here or where else he has gone. A prompt avowal will save us trouble and win you our gratitude.”

Still Baoyu denied any knowledge of the matter.

“You may have been misinformed, I’m afraid,” he muttered.

The steward gave a scornful laugh.

“Why deny it when we have proof? What good can it do you to force me to speak out before your noble father? If you never heard of this actor, how is it that you wear his red sash round your waist?”

Baoyu was thunderstruck and stood aghast. “How did they find out?” he wondered. “If they’ve even found out such secrets, it’s not much use trying to keep the rest from them. Better send him off before he does any more blabbing.”

So he said, “If you know so much, sir, how is it you are ignorant of something as important as his purchase of property? I am told that twenty *li* to the east of the city, in a place called Sandalwood Castle, he has bought a house and a few *mu* of land. I should think he might possibly be there.”

The chief steward’s face brightened.

“He must be there if you say so. I shall go and investigate. If we find him, well and good. If not, we shall come back for further enlightenment.”

He took a hasty leave.

Jia Zheng’s eyes were nearly bursting from his head with rage. As he followed the chief steward out, he turned to order Baoyu:

“Stay where you are. I shall deal with you presently.”

He escorted the steward all the way to the gate, and was just starting back when he saw Jia Huan racing past with a few pages. In his fury he ordered his own pages to beat them.

The sight of his father paralysed Huan with fright. He pulled up short, hanging his head.

“What are you rushing about for?” demanded Jia Zheng. “Where



那里逛去，由你野马一般！”喝命叫跟上学的人来。贾环见他父亲盛怒，便乘机说道：“方才原不曾跑，只因从那井边一过，那井里淹死了一个丫头，我看见人头这样大，身子这样粗，泡的实在可怕，所以才赶着跑了过来。”贾政听了惊疑，问道：“好端端的，谁去跳井？我家从无这样事情，自祖宗以来，皆是宽柔以待下人。大约我近年于家务疏懒，自然执事人操克夺之权，致使生出这暴殄轻生的祸患。若外人知道，祖宗颜面何在！”喝令快叫贾琏、赖大、来兴。小厮们答应了一声，方欲去叫，贾环忙上前拉住贾政袍襟，贴膝跪下道：“父亲不用生气。此事除太太房里的人，别人一点也不知道。我听见我母亲说……”说到这里，便回头四顾一看。贾政知意，将眼一看众小厮，小厮们明白，都往两边后面退去。贾环便悄悄说道：“我母亲告诉我说，宝玉哥哥前日在太太屋里，拉着太太的丫头金钏儿强奸不遂，打了一顿。那金钏儿便赌气投井死了。”话未说完，把个贾政气的面如金纸，大喝：“快拿宝玉来！”一面说，一面便往里边书房去，喝令：“今日再有人劝我，我把这冠带家私一应就交与他与宝玉过去！我免不得做个罪人，把这几根烦恼鬓毛剃去，寻个干净去处自了，也免得上辱先人下生逆子之罪。”众门客、仆从见贾政这个形景，便知又是为宝玉了，一个个都是啖指咬舌，连忙退出。那贾政喘吁吁的，直挺挺坐在椅子上，满







are all the people supposed to look after you? Have they gone off to amuse themselves while you run wild?"

As he shouted for the servants who accompanied Huan to school, the boy saw a chance to divert his father's anger.

"I wasn't running to begin with," he said. "Not until I passed the well where that maid drowned herself. Her head's swollen up like this, and her body's all bloated from soaking in the water. It was such a horrible sight that I ran away as fast as ever I could."

Jia Zheng was astounded.

"What maid here had any reason to throw herself into a well?" he wondered. "Such a thing has never happened before in this house. Since the time of our ancestors we have always treated our subordinates well. Of late, though, I've neglected household affairs and those in charge must have abused their power, resulting in this calamitous suicide. If word of this gets out, it will disgrace our ancestors' good name."

He called for Jia Lian, Lai Da and Lai Xing.

Some pages were going to fetch them when Huan stepped forward and caught hold of his father's gown, then fell on his knees.

"Don't be angry, sir!" he begged. "No one knows about this except those in my lady's apartment. I heard my mother say...."

He stopped and looked around, and Jia Zheng understood. At a glance from him the servants on both sides withdrew.

"My mother told me," Huan went on in a whisper, "that the other day Brother Baoyu grabbed hold of Jinchuan in my lady's room and tried to rape her. When she wouldn't let him, he beat her. That's why she drowned herself in a fit of passion."

Before he had finished Jia Zheng was livid with fury.

"Fetch Baoyu! Quick!" he roared.

He strode to his study fuming, "If anybody tries to stop me *this* time, I'll make over to him my official insignia and property and let him serve Baoyu! How can I escape blame? I'll shave off these few remaining hairs and retire to a monastery, there to atone for disgracing my ancestors by begetting such a monster."

His secretaries and attendants bit their lips or fingers in dismay and hastily withdrew as they heard him raging at Baoyu again. Then Jia Zheng,

面泪痕，一叠声“拿宝玉！拿大棍！拿索子捆上！把各门都关上！有人传信往里头去，立刻打死！”众小厮们只得齐声答应，有几个来找宝玉。

那宝玉听见贾政吩咐他“不许动”，早知凶多吉少，那里承望贾环又添了许多的话。正在厅上干转，怎得个人来往里头去捎信，偏生没个人，连焙茗也不知在那里。正盼望时，只见一个老妈妈出来。宝玉如得了珍宝，便赶上来拉他，说道：“快进去告诉，老爷要打我呢！快去，快去！要紧，要紧！”宝玉一则急了，说话不明白；二则老婆子偏生又聋，竟不曾听见是什么话，把“要紧”二字只听作“跳井”二字，便笑道：“跳井让他跳去，二爷怕什么？”宝玉见是个聋子，便着急道：“你出去叫我的小厮来罢。”那婆子道：“有什么不了的事，老早的完了。太太又赏了衣服，又赏了银子，怎么不了事的！”

宝玉急的跺脚，正没抓寻处，只见贾政的小厮走来，逼着他出去了。贾政一见，眼都红紫，也不暇问他在外流荡优伶，表赠私物，在家荒疏学业，淫辱母婢等语，只喝令：“堵起嘴来，着实打死！”小厮们不敢违拗，只得将宝玉按在凳上，举起大板打了十来下。贾政犹嫌打轻了，一脚踢开掌板的，自己夺过来，咬着牙狠命盖了三四十下。众门客见打的不像了，忙上前夺劝。贾政那里肯听，说道：“你们问问他干的勾当可饶不可饶！素日皆是你们这些人把他酿坏了，到这





panting hard, his cheeks wet with tears, sat stiffly erect in his chair.

“Bring Baoyu in!” he bellowed. “Fetch the heavy rod! Tie him up! Close all the doors. Anyone who sends word to the inner apartments will be killed on the spot.”

The servants had to obey. Some pages went to fetch Baoyu.

Baoyu knew he was in for trouble when ordered by his father to wait, but he had no idea of the tale Huan had since told. He paced helplessly up and down the hall, wishing someone would carry the news to the inner apartments; but it so happened that nobody was about — even Beiming had disappeared. As he was looking round anxiously, an old nanny finally appeared. He seized on her as if she were a treasure.

“Go in quick!” he cried. “Tell them the master’s going to beat me. Do hurry! This is urgent!”

He was too terrified to speak distinctly and the old woman, being hard of hearing, mistook the word “urgent” for “drowning.”

“She chose drowning herself,” she told him soothingly. “What does it matter to you?”

Her deafness made Baoyu frantic.

“Go and get my page to come,” he begged.

“It’s over now. Over and done with. And the mistress has given them clothes and silver too. Don’t fret.”

Baoyu was stamping his foot in desperation when his father’s servants arrived and he had perforce to go with them.

Jia Zheng’s eyes blazed at the sight of him. He did not even ask his son what he meant by playing about outside and exchanging gifts with actors, or by neglecting his studies at home and attempting to rape his mother’s maid.

“Gag him!” he roared. “Beat him to death!”

The attendants dared not disobey. They thrust Baoyu down on a bench and gave him a dozen strokes with the heavy rod. His father, thinking these strokes too light, kicked aside the man with the rod and snatched it up himself. With clenched teeth he rained down dozens of vicious blows until his secretaries, foreseeing serious consequences, stepped forward to intervene. But Jia Zheng refused to listen.

“Ask *him* if such conduct as his can be pardoned,” he cried. “You’re



步田地还来解劝!明日酿到他弑君杀父,你们才不劝不成!”

众人听这话不好听,知道气急了,忙又退出,只得觅人进去给信。王夫人不敢先回贾母,只得忙穿衣出来,也不顾有人没人,忙忙赶往书房中来,慌的众门客、小厮等避之不及。王夫人一进房来,贾政更如火上浇油一般,那板子越发下去的又狠又快。按宝玉的两个小厮忙松了手走开,宝玉早已动弹不得了。贾政还欲打时,早被王夫人抱住板子。贾政道:“罢了,罢了!今日必定要气死我才罢!”王夫人哭道:“宝玉虽然该打,老爷也要自重。况且炎天暑日的,老太太身上也不大好,打死宝玉事小,倘或老太太一时不自在了,岂不事大!”贾政冷笑道:“倒休提这话。我养了这不肖的孽障已不孝,教训他一番,又有众人护持,不如趁今日一发勒死了,以绝将来之患!”说着,便要绳索来勒死。王夫人连忙抱住哭道:“老爷虽然应当管教儿子,也要看夫妻分上。我如今已将五十岁的人,只有这个孽障。必定苦苦的以他为法,我也不敢深劝。今日越发要他死,岂不是有意绝我。既要勒死他,快拿绳子来先勒死我,再勒死他。我们娘儿们不敢含怨,到底在阴司里得个依靠。”说毕,爬到宝玉身上大哭起来。贾政听了此话,不觉长叹一声,向椅子上坐下,泪如雨





the ones who've been spoiling him. When it comes to this do you still intercede for him? Will you still persist when he commits regicide or parricide?"

Realizing from this tirade that their master was quite beside himself with rage, they hurried away, feeling constrained to send word to the inner apartments. Lady Wang dared not tell her mother-in-law at once. Having dressed in haste she ran towards the study, regardless of who was about, while men-servants and secretaries fled out of her way in confusion.

His wife's arrival roused Jia Zheng to still greater fury and he belaboured his son yet more mercilessly. The two servants holding Baoyu instantly withdrew, but the boy was already incapable of moving. Before his father could beat him any further, Lady Wang seized the rod with both hands.

"This is the end!" roared Jia Zheng. "You're determined to be the death of me today."

"I know Baoyu deserves a beating," sobbed Lady Wang. "But you mustn't wear yourself out, sir. It's a sweltering day and the old lady isn't well. Killing Baoyu is a small matter, but should anything happen to the old lady that would be serious."

"Spare me this talk." Jia Zheng gave a scornful laugh. "I've already proved an unfilial son by begetting this degenerate. When I discipline him all of you protect him. I'd better strangle him now to avoid further trouble."

With that he called for a rope. Lady Wang hastily threw her arms around him.

"You're right to chastise your son, sir, but have pity on your wife!" she cried. "I'm getting on for fifty and this wretch is my only son. If you insist on making an example of him, how dare I dissuade you? But if you kill him today, it means you want *me* to die too. If strangle him you must, take this rope and strangle me first, then strangle him. Mother and son, we won't dare hold it against you, and at least I shall have some support in the nether world."

She threw herself down on Baoyu and gave way to a storm of weeping.

Jia Zheng heaved a long sigh and sat down, his tears falling like rain.

下。王夫人抱着宝玉，只见他面白气弱，底下穿着一条绿纱小衣，皆是血渍，禁不住解下汗巾看，由臀至胫，或青或紫，或整或破，竟无一点好处，不觉失声大哭起来：“苦命的儿吓！”因哭出“苦命儿”来，忽又想起贾珠来，便叫着“贾珠”哭道：“若有你活着，便死一百个我也不管了。”此时里面的人闻得王夫人出来，那李宫裁、王熙凤与迎春姊妹早已出来了。王夫人哭着贾珠的名字，别人还可，惟有宫裁禁不住也放声哭了。贾政听了，那泪珠更似滚瓜一般滚了下来。

正没开交处，忽听丫鬟来说：“老太太来了。”一句话未了，只听窗外颤巍巍的声气说道：“先打死我，再打死他，岂不干净了！”贾政见他母亲来了，又急又痛，连忙迎接出来。只见贾母扶着丫头，喘吁吁的走来。贾政上前躬身陪笑，说道：“大暑热天，母亲有何生气，亲自走来？有话只该叫了儿子进去吩咐。”贾母听说，便止住步喘息一回，厉声道：“你原来是和我说话！我倒有话吩咐，只是可怜我一生没养个好儿子，却叫我和谁说去！”贾政听这话不像，忙跪下含泪说道：“为儿的教训儿子，也为的是光宗耀祖。母亲这话，我做儿的如何禁得起？”贾母听说，便啐了一口，说道：“我说了一句话，你就禁不起；你那样下死手的板子，难道宝玉就禁得起了？你说教训儿子是光宗耀祖，当初你父亲怎么教训你来！”说着，也不觉滚下泪来。贾政又陪笑道：“母亲也不必伤感，皆是作儿的一时性起，从此以后再不打他



Lady Wang, clasping Baoyu in her arms, saw that his face was white, his breathing weak, and his green linen underclothes were soaked with blood. When she undid them she cried out in distress at the sight of his buttocks and legs beaten black and blue, with every inch bruised or bleeding. "Ah, my poor child!" she wailed.

As she wept for her "poor child" she remembered her first son and called Jia Zhu's name.

"If you were still living," she sobbed, "I shouldn't care if a hundred others died."

Lady Wang's departure had roused the inner apartments, and she had been joined by Li Wan and Xifeng as well as Yingchun and Tanchun. Jia Zhu's name did not affect the others so much, but it reduced his widow to sobs. And the chorus of lamentation made Jia Zheng weep more bitterly himself.

In the middle of this commotion a maid suddenly announced, "The old lady is coming!"

And they heard her quavering voice outside the window, "Kill me first and then kill him. That will be a clean sweep."

Jia Zheng rose in dismay and distress to greet his mother, who entered on a maid's arm, gasping for breath. At once he stepped forward to bow respectfully.

"Why should you vex yourself, mother, and come over on such a hot day? If you have any instructions, just send for your son."

The Lady Dowager halted to catch her breath.

"Were you addressing me?" she demanded sternly. "Yes, I have some instructions. The pity is I've borne no filial son to whom I can speak."

Appalled by this rebuke, Jia Zheng fell on his knees, tears in his eyes.

"If your son disciplines *his* son, it is for the honour of our ancestors," he pleaded. "How can I bear your reproaches?"

The Lady Dowager spat in disgust.

"So you can't bear one word from me, eh? Then how does Baoyu bear your lethal rod? You talk of disciplining your son for the honour of your ancestors, but how did your father discipline you in the past?"

Her eyes filled with tears.

"Don't grieve, mother," he begged. "I was wrong to lose my temper."

了。”贾母便冷笑道：“你也不必和我使性子赌气的。你的儿子，我也不该管你打不打。我猜着你也厌烦我们娘儿们，不如我们早离了你，大家干净！”说着便令人看轿马，“我和你太太、宝玉立刻回南京去！”家下人只得干答应着。贾母又叫王夫人道：“你也不必哭了。如今宝玉年纪小，你疼他，他将来长大成人，为官作宰的，也未必想着你是他母亲了。你如今倒不要疼他，只怕将来还少生一口气呢。”贾政听说，忙叩头哭道：“母亲如此说，贾政无立足之地。”贾母冷笑道：“你分明使我无立足之地，你反说起你来！只是我们回去了，你心里干净，看有谁来许你打。”一面说，一面只命快打点行李车轿回去。贾政苦苦叩求认罪。

贾母一面说话，一面又记挂宝玉，忙进来看时，只见今日这顿打不比往日，又是心疼，又是生气，也抱着哭个不了。王夫人与凤姐等解劝了一会，方渐渐的止住。早有丫鬟媳妇等上来，要搀宝玉，凤姐便骂道：“糊涂东西，也不睁开眼瞧瞧！打的这么个样儿，还要搀着走！还不快进去把那藤屉子春凳抬出来呢。”众人听说连忙进去，果然抬出春凳来，将宝玉抬放凳上，随着贾母、王夫人等进去，送至贾母房中。

彼时贾政见贾母气未全消，不敢自便，也跟了进去。看看宝玉，果然打重了。再看看王夫人，“儿”一声，“肉”一





I shall never beat him again.”

The old lady snorted.

“You needn’t try to work off your rage on me. It’s not for me to stop you beating your son. I suppose you’re tired of us all, and we’d better leave now to save trouble all round.”

She ordered the servants to prepare sedan-chairs and horses, telling them, “Your mistress and Baoyu are going back to Nanjing with me this instant.”

The attendants had to make a show of complying with her orders. Then the Lady Dowager turned to her daughter-in-law.

“Don’t cry,” she urged Lady Wang. “Baoyu’s still a child now and you love him; but when he grows up and becomes a high official he may not have any consideration for his mother either. Better not be too fond of him now if you want to avoid heartache later.”

When Jia Zheng heard this he knocked his head on the floor.

“What place is there for me on earth, mother,” he wailed, “if you reproach me like this?”

The Lady Dowager smiled sarcastically.

“You’re making it clear that there’s no place for *me*, and yet *you* start complaining. We are simply going away to save you trouble and leave you free to beat anyone you please.”

She ordered attendants to pack up at once and make ready for the journey, while Jai Zheng kowtowed and earnestly begged her forgiveness.

But while storming at her son the old lady was worried about her grandson, and now she hurried over to look at the boy. She was further pained and enraged by the severity of his flogging today. Clasp ing him to her she wept bitterly. Lady Wang and Xifeng were hard put to it to soothe her. Then some of the maids who had assembled there took Baoyu’s arms, meaning to help him out.

“Stupid creatures!” scolded Xifeng. “Have you no eyes? He’s in no state to walk. Go and fetch that wicker couch.”

They hastily did as they were told. Baoyu was laid on the couch and carried to the old lady’s room accompanied by his grandmother and mother. As the Lady Dowager was still incensed Jia Zheng dared not

声，“你替珠儿早死了，留着珠儿，免你父亲生气，我也不白操这半世的心了。这会子你倘或有个好歹，丢下我，叫我靠那一个！”数落一场，又哭“不争气的儿”。贾政听了，也就灰心，自悔不该下毒手打到如此地步。先劝贾母，贾母含泪道：“你不出去，还在这里做什么！难道于心不足，还要眼看着他死了才去不成！”贾政听说，方退了出去。

此时薛姨妈同宝钗、香菱、袭人、史湘云也都在这里。袭人满心委屈，只不好十分使出来，见众人围着，灌水的灌水，打扇的打扇，自己插不下手去，便越性走出来到二门前，令小厮们找了焙茗来细问：“方才好端端的，为什么打起来？你也不早来透个信儿！”焙茗急的说：“偏生我不在跟前，打到半中间我才听见了。忙打听原故，却是为琪官同金钏姐姐的事。”袭人道：“老爷怎么得知的？”焙茗道：“那琪官的事，多半是薛大爷素日吃醋，没法儿出气，不知在外头挑唆了谁来，在老爷跟前下的火。那金钏儿的事是三爷说的，我也是听见老爷的人说的。”袭人听了这两件事都对景，心中也就信了八九分。然后回来，只见众人都替宝玉疗治。调停完备，贾母命：“好生抬到他房内去。”众人答应，七手八



withdraw but followed them, aware from a glance at Baoyu that this time he had flogged him too severely. He turned to his wife, who was now lamenting even more bitterly.

“My child, my darling!” she wailed. “Why didn’t you die as a baby in Zhu’s place? Then your father wouldn’t be so angry, and all my trouble wouldn’t have been in vain. If anything happens to you now I shall be left all alone, with no one to depend on in my old age!”

These lamentations interspersed with reproaches against her “worthless son” dismayed Jia Zheng and made him repent that he had beaten Baoyu so mercilessly. But when he tried to mollify his mother she rounded on him with tears in her eyes.

“Why don’t you leave us? What are you hanging around for? Won’t you be satisfied until you’ve made sure that he dies?”

Then Jia Zheng was forced to withdraw.

By now Aunt Xue, Baochai, Xiangling, Xiren and Xiangyun had gathered there too. Xiren was simmering with indignation which she could not express outright. And since Baoyu was surrounded by people, some giving him water to drink, some fanning him, there seemed nothing for her to do. She therefore slipped out and went to the inner gate, where she told some pages to go and fetch Beiming.

“There was no sign of trouble earlier on. How did this start?” she asked him. “And why didn’t you come to report it earlier?”

“It just happened that I wasn’t there,” explained Beiming frantically. “I only heard about it half-way through the beating. At once I asked people how the trouble had started. It was over the business of Qiguan and Sister Jinchuan.”

“How did the master come to hear about it?”

“In the case of Qiguan, it looks as if Master Xue Pan was behind it. Having no other way to vent his jealous spite, he got somebody from outside to come and tell His Lordship — then the fat was in the fire. As for Jinchuan, it was young Master Huan who blabbed. Or so His Lordship’s men told me.”

Both stories seemed likely and Xiren was convinced. She went back to find everyone ministering to Baoyu. When there was no more to be done for him, the Lady Dowager ordered them to carry him carefully

脚，忙把宝玉送入怡红院内自己床上卧好。又乱了半日，众人渐渐散去，袭人方进前来经心伏侍。问他端的，且听下回分解。



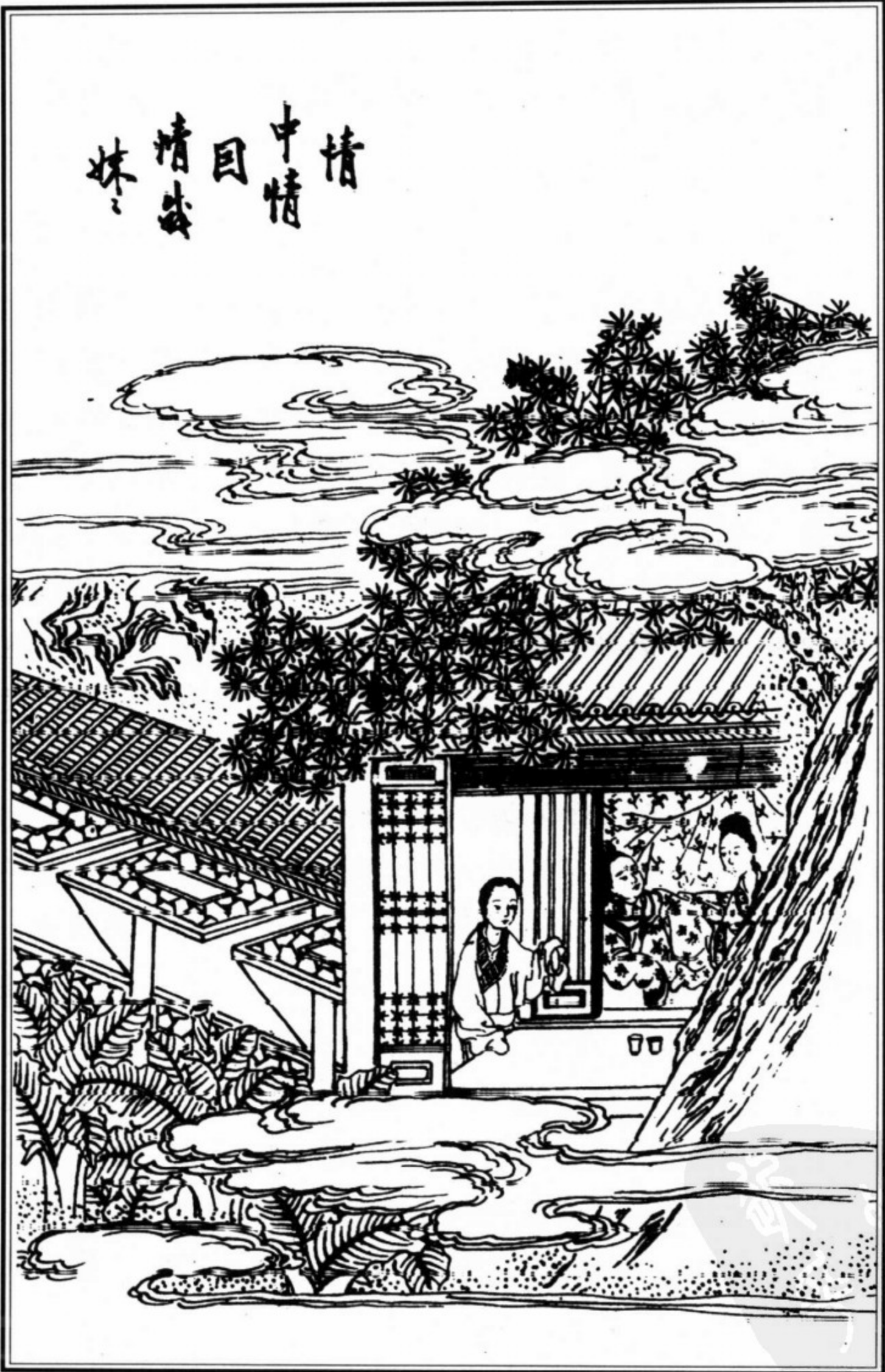
back to his own room. All lent a hand to convey him to Happy Red Court, where they laid him on his own bed. And after some further bustle the others gradually dispersed, leaving Xiren able at last to wait on him hand and foot.

The next chapter tells how Baoyu answered her questions.



紅樓夢  
第卅三回  
PDG





## 第三十四回

情中情因情感妹妹 错里错以错劝哥哥

话说袭人见贾母、王夫人等去后，便走来宝玉身边坐下，含泪问他：“怎么就打到这步田地？”宝玉叹气说道：“不过为那些事，问他做什么！只是下半截疼的很，你瞧瞧打坏了那里？”袭人听说，便轻轻的伸手进去，将中衣褪下。宝玉略动一动，便咬着牙叫“暖哟”，袭人连忙停住手，如此三四次才褪了下来。袭人看时，只见腿上半段青紫，都有四指阔的僵痕高了起来。袭人咬着牙说道：“我的娘，怎么下这般的狠手！你但凡听我一句话，也不得到这步地位。幸而没动筋骨，倘或打出个残疾来，可叫人怎么样呢！”

正说着，只听丫鬟们说：“宝姑娘来了。”袭人听见，知道穿不及中衣，便拿了一床夹纱被替宝玉盖了。只见宝钗手里托着一丸药走进来，向袭人说道：“晚上把这药用酒研开，替他敷上，把那淤血的热毒散开，可以就好了。”说毕，递与袭人，又问道：“这会子可好些？”宝玉一面道谢说“好了”，又让坐。宝钗见他睁开眼说话，不像先时，心中也宽慰了好些，便点头叹道：“早听人一句话，也不至今日。别说老太太、太太心疼，就是我们看着，心里也疼……”刚说了半句又忙掩住，自悔说的话急速了，不觉红了脸，低下头





## Chapter 34

### Moved by Affection, Baoyu Moves His Cousin A Wrong Report Makes Baochai Wrong Her Brother

As soon as the others had left, Xiren sat down by Baoyu's side and with tears in her eyes asked the reason for this fearful beating.

"Oh, nothing special. What's the use of asking?" Baoyu sighed. "The lower part of my body hurts terribly. Do see how serious the damage is."

Xiren gently set about removing his underwear, but the least movement made him grit his teeth and groan so much that she stopped. Only after three or four attempts did she succeed in undressing him. Then she clenched her teeth at the sight of his thighs, all black and purple with weals four fingers wide.

"Heavens! How could he be so cruel?" she exclaimed. "But, you know, this would never have happened if you'd paid the least attention to my advice. Well, it's lucky no bones are broken. What if you'd been maimed for life?"

Just then Baochai was announced. As there was no time to clothe Baoyu again, Xiren threw a lined gauze coverlet over him as Baochai walked in, a pill in one hand.

"Dissolve this drug in wine this evening and apply it as a salve," she told Xiren. "That will draw the heat and poison from the bruise and help to cure him."

Having handed her the pill, she asked, "Is he any better?"

Baoyu gratefully assured her that he was and asked her to take a seat. Seeing he was now able to open his eyes and talk, Baochai nodded in relief.

"If you'd listened to our advice, this wouldn't have happened," she sighed. "Now you've not only upset the old lady and your mother; when the rest of us see you like this, our hearts ache too...."

She broke off abruptly, regretting her indiscretion, and hung her head



来。宝玉听得这话如此亲切、稠密，大有深意，忽见他又掩住不往下说，红了脸，低下头只管弄衣带，那一种娇羞怯怯，非可形容得出者，不觉心中大畅，将疼痛早丢在九霄云外。心中自思：“我不过捱了几下打，他们一个个就有这些怜惜悲感之态露出，令人可玩可观，可怜可敬。假若我一时竟遭殃横死，他们还不知是何等悲感呢！既是他们这样，我便一时死了，得他们如此，一生事业纵然尽付东流，亦无足叹惜，冥冥之中若不怡然自得，亦谓糊涂鬼祟矣。”想着，只听宝钗问袭人道：“怎么好好的动了气，就打起来了？”袭人便把焙茗的话说了出来。宝玉原来还不知道贾环的话，见袭人说出方才才知道。因又拉上薛蟠，惟恐宝钗沉心，忙又止住袭人道：“薛大哥哥从来不这样的，你们别混猜度。”宝钗听说，便知宝玉是怕他多心，用话拦袭人，因心中暗暗想道：“打的这个形象，疼还顾不过来，还是这样细心，怕得罪了人，可见在我们身上也算是用心了。你既这样用心，何不在外头大事上做工夫，老爷也欢喜了，也不能吃这样亏。但你固然怕我沉心，所以拦袭人的话，难道我就不知我的哥哥素日恣心纵欲，毫无防范的那种心性？当日为一个秦钟，还闹的天翻地覆，自然如今比先更利害了。”想毕，因笑道：“你们也不必怨这个，怨那个。据我想，到底宝兄弟素日不正，肯和那些人来往，老爷才生气。就是我哥哥说话不防头，一时说出宝兄弟来，也不是有心调唆。一则也是本来的实话，二则他原不理论这些防嫌小事。袭姑娘从小儿只见宝兄弟这么样细心的人，你何曾见过天不怕地不怕，心里有什么口里就说什么的人。”袭人因说出薛蟠来，见宝玉拦他的话，早



with a blush.

She had spoken with such intimate, tender concern, although attempting to hide her deep emotion, and she looked so indescribably charming in her bashful confusion as she hid her blushing face and fingered her sash, that Baoyu completely forgot his pain in his elation. "I just get given a few strokes," he thought, "and they show such sweet distress and sympathy. How good and kind they are! How admirable! If I were to meet with some accident and die, they'd surely be quite overcome with grief. But it would be worth dying, even with nothing to show for my life, provided I'd won their hearts. Indeed, it would be silly if I wasn't a happy and contented ghost."

His thoughts were interrupted by a question Baochai put to Xiren: "What's the reason for this sudden row and beating?"

Xiren passed on what Beiming had said, and this was Baoyu's first inkling of Jia Huan's tale-telling. But when Xue Pan's name came up he was afraid Baochai would be upset.

"Cousin Xue would never do such a thing!" he interposed quickly. "Stop making such wild guesses."

Baochai understood why he had silenced Xiren. "How tactful and cautious you are in spite of your pain after such a dreadful beating," she thought. "If you can be so considerate of *our* feelings, why not pay equal attention to important matters outside? For then your father would be pleased, and you wouldn't get into hot water like this. You cut Xiren short for fear of hurting me, but do you suppose I don't know my brother's wild, lawless ways? If such a rumpus was raised that time because of Qin Zhong, much worse things are possible now."

After these reflections she turned to Xiren with a smile.

"Why pin the blame on this person or that?" she said. "I think the master was angry because Cousin Bao doesn't behave well and keeps bad company. Even if my brother did let fall some careless remark about Cousin Bao, he can't have meant to make trouble. For after all, in the first place, it was the truth; in the second, he's the type who can't be bothered to gossip. You're used to Cousin Bao who's so considerate. You haven't met my brother, who fears neither Heaven nor Earth and blurts out whatever happens to be in his mind."

已明白自己说造次了，恐宝钗没意思，听宝钗如此说，更觉羞愧无言。宝玉又听宝钗这番话，一半是堂皇正大，一半是去自己疑心，更觉比先畅快了。方欲说话时，只见宝钗起身说道：“明儿再来看你，你好生养着罢。方才我拿来的药交给袭人，晚上敷上，管就好了。”说着，便走出门去。袭人赶着送出院外，说：“姑娘倒费心了。改日宝二爷好了，亲自来谢。”宝钗回头笑道：“有什么谢处？你只劝他好生静养，别胡思乱想的就好了。不必惊动老太太、太太众人，倘或吹到老爷耳朵里，虽然彼时不怎么样，将来对景，终是要吃亏的。”说着，一面去了。

袭人抽身回来，心内着实感激宝钗。进来见宝玉沉思默默、似睡非睡的模样，因而退出房外，自去栉沐。宝玉默默的躺在床上，无奈臀上作痛，如针挑刀挖一般，更又热如火炙，略展转时，禁不住“嗷哟”之声。那时天色将晚，因见袭人去了，却有两三个丫鬟伺候，此时并无呼唤之事，因说道：“你们且去梳洗，等我叫时再来。”众人听了，也都退出。

这里宝玉昏昏默默，只见蒋玉菡走了进来，诉说忠顺府拿他之事；一时，又见金钏儿进来哭说为他投井之情。宝玉半梦半醒，都不在意。忽又觉有人推他，恍恍惚惚听得有人悲泣之声。宝玉从梦中惊醒，睁眼一看，不是别人，却是林黛玉。宝玉犹恐是梦，忙又将身子欠起来，向脸上细细一认，只见他两个眼睛肿的桃儿一般，满面泪光，不是黛玉，却是那个？宝玉还欲看时，怎奈下半截疼痛难忍，支持不



Baoyu's interruption when she spoke of Xue Pan had made Xiren realize that her tactlessness must have embarrassed Baochai, whose last remarks abashed her even more. As for Baoyu, he could see that while saying what was right and proper Baochai was also trying to put him at his ease. He felt even more touched. But before he could speak again she rose to leave.

"I'll come back tomorrow to see how you are," she assured him. "Have a good rest. I've given Xiren something to make you a salve tonight, and that should help."

With that she left, and Xiren escorted her out of the courtyard.

"Thank you, miss, for taking so much trouble," she said. "When Master Bao's better he'll come himself to thank you."

Baochai turned and smiled.

"There's nothing to thank *me* for. Just persuade him to rest properly and not let his imagination run away with him. We don't want the old lady and the mistress and everyone disturbed. For if word of it reached the master's ears, even if he did nothing for the time being, there'd be trouble later on."

So saying, she went off. With a warm sense of gratitude to her, Xiren returned to Baoyu. Finding him in a dreamy, drowsy state, she went to the other room to tidy herself.

Although Baoyu lay as still as he could, his buttocks were smarting as if scorched by fire, pricked by needles, or cut by knives. The slightest movement wrung a groan from him. Dusk was falling, Xiren had gone, and he dismissed the other maids saying that he would call if he wanted anything.

Dozing off, he dreamed that Qiguan had come to tell of his capture by prince Zhongshun's steward; after which Jinchuan appeared, in tears, to explain why she had thrown herself into the well. Half sleeping and half waking, he paid only scant attention. But then he felt himself shaken and caught the faint sound of sobbing. He opened his eyes with a start to see Daiyu. Suspecting at first that this was another dream, he propped himself up to look at her more closely. Her eyes were swollen, her face was bathed in tears: it was Daiyu beyond a doubt. He would have gazed at her longer, but the pain in his legs was so unbearable that he fell back

住，便“暖哟”一声，仍就倒下，叹了一口气，说道：“你又做什么跑来！虽说太阳落下去，那地上余热未散，走两趟又要受了暑。我虽然捱了打，并不觉疼痛。我这个样儿，只装出来哄他们，好在外头布散与老爷听，其实是假的。你不可认真。”此时林黛玉虽不是嚎啕大哭，然越是这等无声之泣，气噎喉堵，更觉利害。听了宝玉这番话，心中虽然有万句言词，只是不能说得。半日，方抽抽噎噎的说道：“你从此可都改了罢！”宝玉听说，便长叹一声，道：“你放心，别说这样的话。就便为这些人死了，也是情愿的！”

一句话未了，只见院外人说：“二奶奶来了。”林黛玉便知是凤姐来了，连忙立起身，说道：“我从后院子里去罢，回来再来。”宝玉一把拉住道：“这可奇了，好好的怎么怕起他来？”林黛玉急的跺脚，悄悄的说道：“你瞧瞧我的眼睛，又该他取笑开心呢。”宝玉听说，赶忙的放了手。黛玉三步两步转过床后，出后院而去。凤姐从前头已进来了，问宝玉：“可好些了？想什么吃，叫人往我那里取去。”接着，薛姨妈又来了。一时贾母又打发了人来。

至掌灯时分，宝玉只喝了两口汤，便昏昏沉沉的睡去。接着，周瑞媳妇、吴新登媳妇、郑好时媳妇这几个有年纪常往来的，听见宝玉捱了打，也都进来。袭人忙迎出来，悄悄的笑道：“婶婶们来迟了一步，二爷才睡着了。”说着，一面带他们到那边房里坐了，倒茶与他们吃。那几个媳妇子都悄悄坐了一回，向袭人说：“等二爷醒了，你替我们说罢。”

袭人答应了，送他们出去。刚要回来，只见王夫人使个



with a groan.

“You shouldn’t have come,” he said. “Though the sun’s set, the ground is still hot. Walking here and back may make you unwell again. I’m not in any pain after my beating, just putting on an act to fool them so that word of it will get out to my father. I’m shamming actually. Don’t you worry about me.”

Daiyu was not crying aloud. She swallowed her tears in silence till she felt as if she would choke. She had a thousand replies to make to Baoyu, but not one word could she utter. At long last she sobbed:

“Never do such things again.”

“Don’t you worry,” replied Baoyu with a long sigh. “Please don’t talk this way. I would die happily for people like them, and I’m still alive.”

At this point some maids in the courtyard announced Xifeng’s arrival. Daiyu at once stood up.

“I’ll go out the back way and drop in again later,” she said.

Baoyu caught her hand protesting, “That’s a strange thing to do. Why should you be afraid of her?”

Daiyu stamped one foot in desperation.

“Look at my eyes,” she whispered. “She’d make fun of me if she saw.”

At once he released her and she slipped past his bed and out through the back court just as Xifeng came in from the front.

“Are you better?” she asked Baoyu. “If you fancy anything to eat, send someone to my place for it.”

Aunt Xue called next. And then the Lady Dowager sent maids to inquire after the invalid. When it was time to light the lamps, Baoyu swallowed two mouthfuls of soup and soon dozed off. Then came some of the older maid-servants, the wives of Zhou Rui, Wu Xindeng and Zheng Haoshi, who were in the habit of calling and had dropped in after hearing of today’s trouble. Xiren hurried out to greet them with a smile.

“You’re a second too late, aunties,” she whispered, “Master Bao has just gone to sleep.”

She offered them tea in the outer room and after sitting quietly for a while they left, having asked her to let Baoyu know that they had called.

As Xiren was coming back from seeing them off, one of Lady Wang’s

婆子来，口称“太太叫一个跟二爷的人呢。”袭人见说，想了一想，便回身悄悄的告诉晴雯、麝月、檀云、秋纹等说：“太太叫人，你们好生在房里，我去了就来。”说毕，同那婆子一径出了园子，来至上房。王夫人正坐在凉榻上摇着芭蕉扇子，见他来了，说：“你不管叫个谁来也罢了。你又丢下他来了，谁伏侍他呢？”袭人见说，忙陪笑回道：“二爷才睡安稳了，那四五个丫头如今也会伏侍二爷了，太太请放心。恐怕太太有什么话吩咐，打发他们来，一时听不明白，倒耽误了。”王夫人道：“也没甚话，白问问他这会子疼的怎么样？”袭人道：“宝姑娘送去的药，我给二爷敷上了，比先好些了。先疼的躺不稳，这会子都睡沉了，可见好些了。”王夫人又问：“吃了什么没有？”袭人道：“老太太给的一碗汤，喝了两口，只嚷干渴，要吃酸梅汤。我想着酸梅是个收敛的东西，才刚挨了打，又不许叫喊，自然急的那热毒、热血未免不存在心里，倘或吃下这个去，激在心里，再弄出大病来，可怎么样呢？因此我劝了半天才没吃，只拿那糖腌的玫瑰卤子和了吃，吃了半碗，又嫌吃絮了，不香甜。”王夫人道：“暖哟，你不早来和我说。前儿有人送了两瓶香露来，原要给他一点子的，我怕胡乱糟踏了，就没给。既是他嫌那些玫瑰膏子絮烦，把这个拿两瓶子去。一碗水里只用挑一茶匙儿，就香的了不得呢。”说着就唤彩云来：“把前儿的那几瓶香露拿了来。”袭人道：“只拿两瓶来罢，多了也白糟踏。等不够再要，再来取也是一样。”彩云听说，去了半日，果然





women accosted her with the message that her mistress wanted to see one of Master Bao's maids. Xiren came to a quick decision. Turning softly she told Qingwen, Sheyue, Tanyun and Qiuwen:

"The mistress has sent for one of us. You see to things here. I'll be back presently."

She went with the other woman out of the Garden to Lady Wang's apartments, where she found her fanning herself with a palm-leaf fan on the couch.

"Why didn't you send one of the others?" asked Baoyu's mother. "Who'll look after him in your absence?"

"Master Bao's sound asleep now, and the other girls know how to look after him," Xiren answered confidently. "Please don't worry, madam. I thought perhaps you had some instructions which one of the others might not understand, and that might hold things up."

"I've no special instructions. I just wanted to know how he is now."

"Miss Baochai brought us a salve, and after I applied it he seemed better. At first the pain kept him awake, but now he's sleeping soundly. It shows he's on the mend."

"Did he eat anything?"

"Only two mouthfuls of the soup the old lady sent. He complained he was parched and asked for some sour plum juice. But I thought to myself: Sour things are astringent, and when he was beaten and couldn't cry out some choleric humours must have rushed to his viscera; plum juice might affect them, bringing on a serious illness, and that would never do. Finally I talked him out of it and gave him some candied rose petals instead. He only ate half a bowl, though, then found it cloying and insipid."

"Why didn't you send and let me know before?" cried Lady Wang. "The other day I was sent a couple of bottles of scented flower juice and meant to give them to him, but thought he might waste them. If he finds rose petals cloying, take him these. One tea-spoon in a bowl of water is delicious." She told Caiyun, "Fetch those bottles of juice which were brought the other day."

"Two bottles will be plenty," Xiren assured her, "More would be wasted. We can always come and ask for more when it's finished."

拿了两瓶子来，付与袭人。袭人看时，只见两个玻璃小瓶，却有三寸大小，上面螺丝银盖，鹅黄签上写着“木樨清露”，那一个写着“玫瑰清露”。袭人笑道：“好金贵东西！这么个小瓶儿，能有多少？”王夫人道：“那是进上的，你没看见鹅黄签子？你好生替他收着，别糟踏了。”

袭人答应着，方要走时，王夫人又叫：“站着，我想起一句话来问你。”袭人忙又回来。王夫人见房内无人，便问道：“我恍惚听见宝玉今儿挨打，是环儿在老爷跟前说了什么话。你可听见这个了？你要听见，告诉我听听，我也不吵嚷出来叫人知道是你说的。”袭人道：“我倒没听见这话，为二爷霸占着戏子，人家来和老爷要，为这个打的。”王夫人摇头说道：“也为这个，还有别的原故。”袭人道：“别的原故实在不知道了。我今儿大胆在太太跟前说句不知好歹的话。论理……”说了半截忙又掩住。王夫人道：“你只管说。”袭人笑道：“太太别生气，我就说了。”王夫人道：“我有什么生气的，你只管说来。”袭人道：“论理，我们二爷也须得老爷教训两顿。若老爷再不管，不知将来做出什么事来呢？”王夫人一闻此言，便合掌念声“阿弥陀佛”，由不得赶着袭人叫了一声：“我的儿，亏了你明白，这话和我的心一样。我何



Caiyun went off on this errand, returning presently with two bottles which she handed to Xiren. They were tiny glass bottles barely three inches high, with silver caps which screwed on, and yellow labels. On one was written "Pure Osmanthus Juice," on the other "Pure Rose Juice."

"What luxury objects!" Xiren laughed. "Such small bottles can't hold much."

"They're for the Imperial use," explained Lady Wang. "Don't you see the yellow label? Mind you keep them carefully for him. Don't waste any of the juice."

Xiren assented and was about to leave when Lady Wang told her to wait.

"There's something else I want to ask you," she said.

Having made sure that no one else was about she continued, "There's talk that the master beat Baoyu because of some tale Huan told. Did you hear that? If you did, just tell me what it was. I won't make a rumpus about it. No one will know that it was you who told me."

"No, I didn't hear that," replied Xiren. "I heard it was because Master Bao kept an actor from some prince's mansion, and they came to ask His Lordship to send him back."

Lady Wang shook her head.

"That was *one* reason, but there was another too."

"If there's anything else I really don't know it," rejoined Xiren. She added, "May I make so bold, now that I'm here, to suggest something, madam?...."

She broke off at this point.

"Go on."

With a sly smile she went on, "I hope Your Ladyship won't think it presumptuous."

"Of course not. What is it?"

"Actually, Master Bao *does* need to be taught a lesson. If His Lordship doesn't discipline him, there's no knowing what may happen in future."

On hearing this, Lady Wang clapped her hands together, exclaiming "Gracious Buddha!" Then although so eager to hear more, she confided, "Dear child, I'm glad you are so understanding — that's exactly how

曾不知道管儿子，先时你珠大爷在，我是怎么样管他，难道我如今倒不知管儿子了？只是有个原故：如今我想，我已经快五十岁的人，通共剩了他一个，他又长的单弱，况且老太太宝贝似的。若管紧了他，倘或再有个好歹，或是老太太气坏了，那时上下不安，岂不坏了，所以就纵坏他。我常常苦着口儿劝一阵，说一阵，气的骂一阵，哭一阵，彼时他好，过后儿还是不相干，端的吃了亏才罢了。若打坏了，将来我靠谁呢！”说着，由不得滚下泪来。

袭人见王夫人这般悲感，自己也不觉伤了心，陪着落泪。又道：“二爷是太太养的，岂不心疼。便是我们做下人的伏侍一场，大家落个平安，也算是造化了。要这样起来，连平安都不能了。那一日那一时我不劝二爷？只是再劝不醒。偏生那些人又肯亲近他，也怨不得他这样，总是我们劝的倒不好了。今儿太太提起这话来，我还记挂着一件事，每要来回太太，讨太太个主意。只是我怕太太心疑，不但我的话白说了，且连葬身之地都没了。”王夫人听了这话内有因，忙问道：“我的儿，你有话只管说。近来我因听见众人背前背后都夸你，我只说你不过是在宝玉身上留心，或是诸人跟前和气，这些小意思好，所以将你合老姨娘一体行事。谁知你方才和我说的话全是大道理，正合我的心事。你有什么只管说什么，只别叫别人知道就是了。”袭人道：“我也没什么别的说。我只想着讨太太一个示下，怎么变个法儿，以后竟还叫二爷搬出园外来住就好了。”王夫人听了，吃一大惊，忙拉了袭人的手问道：“宝玉难道和谁作怪了不成？”袭人连忙回



I feel. Of course I know the importance of discipline. I haven't forgotten how strict I was with Master Zhu. But there's a reason for my indulgence now. I'm getting on for fifty, and I've only the one son left; besides, he's rather delicate and the old lady dotes on him. If I were too strict so that something happened to him, or if the old lady were upset, the whole household would be turned upside down and that would be even worse. *That's* why he's been spoiled. I'm always scolding him, pleading with him, getting angry with him or crying over him, but after a short improvement back he slips. He'll never mend his ways unless he's made to smart. Yet if he's badly injured, I'll have no one to depend on in the future."

With this she burst into tears. And Xiren, seeing her distress, wept in sympathy.

"He's your son, madam, of course you take this to heart. Even those of us who wait on him would be happy if everyone could keep out of trouble. If things go on like this we'll have no peace either. Not a day goes by but I reason with Master Bao, yet it has no effect. It's not *his* fault if people of that sort make up to him, and he loses patience when we reason with him. Since you've brought this up, madam, I'd like to ask your advice about something that's been worrying me for a long time. I've never raised it before for fear you might misunderstand. In that case, not only would I be wasting my breath but taking an outrageous liberty."

Lady Wang realized there was something behind this.

"Just say what's on your mind, my child," she urged. "I've heard nothing but good of you recently from everyone. I assumed it was just because you looked after Baoyu well and were pleasant to everybody. Such thoughtfulness in little things is good. That's why I treated you like one of the old nurses. Now I see you have principles too and your views coincide with mine. Just say whatever's on your mind, but don't let it go any further."

"It's nothing else, only that I was hoping Your Ladyship might arrange for Master Bao to move out of the Garden."

Lady Wang was shocked. She caught hold of Xiren's hand.

"Has Baoyu been up to anything improper?"

道：“太太别多心，并没有这话，不过是我的小见识。如今二爷也大了，里头姑娘们也大了，况且林姑娘、宝姑娘又是两姨姑表姊妹。虽说是姊妹们，到底是男女之分，日夜一处起坐不方便，由不得叫人悬心，便是外人看着也不像。大家子的事，俗语说的‘没事常思有事’。世上多少无头脑的事，多半因为无心中做出，有心人看见，当作有心事，反说坏了。只是预先不防着，断然不好。二爷素日性格，太太是知道的。他又偏好在我们队里闹，倘或不防，前后错了一点半点，不论真假，人多口杂，那起小人的嘴有什么避讳。心顺了，说的比菩萨还好；心不顺，就贬的连畜牲不如。二爷将来倘或有人说好，不过大家直过；设若叫人哼出一声‘不’字来，我们不用说，粉身碎骨，罪有万重，都是平常小事，但后来二爷一生的声名、品行岂不完了？二则太太也难见老爷。俗语又说‘君子防未然’，不如这会子防避的为是。太太事情多，一时固然想不到；我们想不到则可，既想到了，若不回明太太，罪越重了。近来我为这事日夜悬心，又不好说与人，惟有灯知道罢了。”王夫人听了这话，如雷轰电掣的一般，正触了金钏儿之事，心内越发感爱袭人不尽。忙笑道：“我的儿，你竟有这个心胸，想的这样周全！我何曾又不想到这里，只是这几次有事就忘了，你今儿这一番话提醒了我。难为你成全我娘儿两个名声体面，真真我竟不知道你这样好。罢了，你且去罢，我自有道理。只是还有一句话：你今日既说了这样的话，我就把他交给你了，好歹留心。保全了他，就是保全了我。我自然不辜负你。”

大中华文库  
PDG



“No, no, madam. Don’t misunderstand me. Nothing of that sort. But in my humble opinion, now that he and the young ladies are no longer children and, what’s more, Miss Lin and Miss Bao aren’t members of the family, cousins of different sexes should live apart. When they spend all their time together every day, it’s not convenient for them and we can’t help worrying. Besides, it doesn’t look good to people outside. As the proverb has it: Best be prepared for the worst. A lot of foolishness is quite innocent, but suspicious people always think the worst. Better make sure in advance that there’s no trouble.

“*You* know, madam, what Master Bao is like and how he enjoys amusing himself with us girls. If no precautions are taken and he does something the least bit foolish — no matter whether it’s true or not — there’s bound to be talk. Lowclass people *will* gossip. When they’re well disposed, they laud you to the skies; when they’re not, they talk as if you were worse than a beast. If people speak well of him, that’s as it should be. If a single slighting remark is passed, not only shall we deserve a thousand deaths — that’s not important — but his reputation will be ruined for life and how will you answer for it to His Lordship? Another proverb says: A gentleman should show providence. Better guard against this now. You’re naturally too busy, madam, to think of these things, and they might not occur to us either. But if they do and we fail to mention it, that would be very remiss. Lately this has been preying on my mind day and night, but I couldn’t mention it to anyone else. Only my lamp at night knew how I worried!”

Lady Wang felt thunderstruck on hearing this, borne out as it was by the case of Jinchuan. The more she thought, the more grateful she felt to Xiren.

“What a wise child you are to see so far!” she exclaimed. “Of course I’ve given some thought to this myself, but lately I’ve had too much else on my mind. Now you’ve reminded me. I’m glad you’re so concerned for our reputation. I really had no idea what a good girl you are! All right, you may go now. Leave everything to me. But I tell you this: after what you’ve said today, I mean to entrust Baoyu to you. You must look after him and keep him safe. That way, you’ll be safeguarding *me* as well, and I shan’t forget our obligation to you.”

袭人连连答应着去了。回来正值宝玉睡醒，袭人回明香露之事。宝玉喜不自禁，即令调来尝试，果然香妙非常。因心下记挂着黛玉，满心里要打发人去，只是怕袭人，便设法，先使袭人往宝钗那里去借书。

袭人去了，宝玉便命晴雯来，吩咐道：“你到林姑娘那里看看他做什么呢。他要问我，只说我好了。”晴雯道：“白眉赤眼，做什么去呢？到底说句话儿，也像一件事。”宝玉道：“没有什么可说的。”晴雯道：“若不然，或是送件东西，或是取件东西，不然我去了怎么搭讪呢？”宝玉想了一想，便伸手拿了两条手帕子撂与晴雯，笑道：“也罢，就说我叫你送这个给他去了。”晴雯道：“这又奇了。他要这半新不旧的两条手帕子？他又要恼了，说你打趣他。”宝玉笑道：“你放心，他自然知道。”

晴雯听了，只得拿了帕子往潇湘馆来。只见春纤正在栏杆上晾手帕子，见他进来，忙摆手儿，说：“睡下了。”晴雯走进来，满屋魑黑，并未点灯，黛玉已睡在床上。问是谁，晴雯忙答道：“晴雯。”黛玉道：“做什么？”晴雯道：“二爷送手帕子来给姑娘。”黛玉听了，心中发闷，暗想：“做什么送手帕子来给我？”因问：“这帕子是谁送他的？必定是上好的，叫他留着送别人罢，我这会子不用这个。”晴雯笑道：“不是新的，就是家常旧的。”林黛玉听见，越发着闷，着实细心





Xiren hastily assented and withdrew. Back in Happy Red Court, she found Baoyu had just woken up. When she told him about the juice he was delighted. He asked to taste some and pronounced it delicious.

Because Baoyu had Daiyu on his mind he was eager to send someone over to her, but for fear of Xiren he had to resort to a trick. He dispatched Xiren to Baochai to borrow some books, and as soon as she had left called for Qingwen.

“Go and see what Miss Lin is doing,” he said. “If she asks after me, tell her I’m better.”

“I can’t just go there without any excuse. Is there no message that you want to send?”

“Not that I can think of.”

“Give me something to take then, or ask to borrow something. Otherwise what am I going to say when I see her?”

After a little thought Baoyu picked up two handkerchiefs and tossed them to her.

“All right, tell her I sent you to give her these.”

“This is even odder!” cried Qingwen. “What would she want two old handkerchiefs for? She’ll flare up again and say you’re teasing her.”

“Don’t worry. She’ll understand.”

So Qingwen took his gift to Bamboo Lodge, where she found Chunxian hanging some handkerchiefs to dry on the balustrade.

Chunxian held up a warning finger.

“She’s gone to bed.”

Qingwen slipped into the dark room where the lamps were not yet lit. Daiyu, lying on the bed, asked who it was.

“It’s me, Qingwen.”

“What do you want?”

“Master Bao has sent you some handkerchiefs, miss.”

Why should he send me handkerchiefs? Daiyu wondered.

“Who gave these to him?” she asked. “I suppose they’re specially fine ones. Tell him to keep them for someone else, I don’t need them for the time being.”

“They’re not new,” replied Qingwen giggling. “He’s often used them.”



搜求，思忖一时，方大悟过来，连忙说：“放下，去罢。”晴雯听了，只得放下，抽身回去，一路盘算，不解何意。

这里林黛玉体贴出手帕子的意思来，不觉神魂驰荡：宝玉这番苦心，能领会我这番苦意，又令我可喜；我这番苦意，不知将来如何，又令我可悲；忽然好好的送两块旧手帕子来，若不是领我深意，单看了这帕子，又令我可笑；再想令人私相传递与我，又可惧；我自己每每好哭，想来也无味，又令我可愧。如此左思右想，一时五内沸然炙起。黛玉由不得余意缠绵，命掌灯，也想不起嫌疑避讳等事，便向案上研墨蘸笔，便向那两块旧帕上走笔写道：

眼空蓄泪泪空垂，暗洒闲抛却为谁？  
尺幅鲛绡劳解赠，叫人焉得不伤悲！

其二

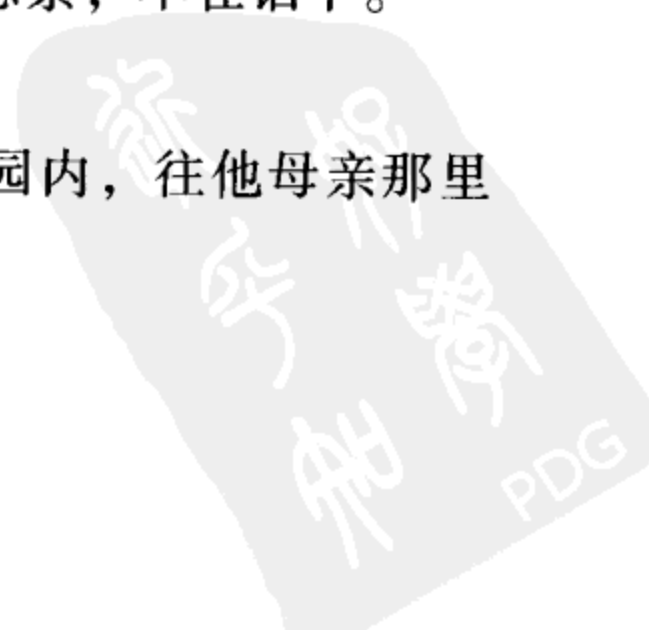
抛珠滚玉只偷潜，镇日无心镇日闲。  
枕上袖边难拂拭，任他点点与斑斑。

其三

彩线难收面上珠，湘江旧迹已模糊。  
窗前亦有千竿竹，不识香痕渍也无？

林黛玉还要往下写时，觉得浑身火热，面上作烧，走至镜台揭起锦袱一照，只见腮上通红，自羡压倒桃花，却不知病由此萌。一时方上床睡去，犹拿着那帕子思索，不在话下。

却说袭人来见宝钗，谁知宝钗不在园内，往他母亲那里





Daiyu was even more mystified at this, but some careful thought cleared up the riddle for her.

"Leave them then," she said quickly, "You may go."

So Qingwen put down the handkerchiefs and left, puzzling her head all the way back over this gift.

Meanwhile Daiyu, touched by the meaning of this gift, was lost in reverie. Pleased as she was by Baoyu's insight and sympathy, it was sad to think that all her concern for him might come to nothing. This unexpected present of two used handkerchiefs was rather laughable if it were not for the fact that she understood the thought behind it; yet it was scandalous that he should send and she accept a secret gift. And it made her ashamed of her habit of crying so much. As she mused in this way, her heart was very full, her mind in a turmoil. Having ordered the lamps to be lit, without any thought of the possible consequences she ground some ink on the inkstone, dipped her brush in it and quickly wrote these lines on the handkerchiefs:

Vain are all these idle tears,  
Tears shed secretly — for whom?  
Your kind gift of a foot of gauze  
Only deepens my gloom.

By stealth I shed pearly tears,  
Idle tears the livelong day;  
Hard to wipe them from sleeve and pillow,  
Then suffer the stains to stay.

No silk thread can string these pearls;  
Dim now the tear-stains of those bygone years;  
A thousand bamboos grow before my window —  
Is each dappled and stained with tears?<sup>1</sup>

She would have written more but her whole body was afire, her face burning. Going to the mirror-stand she removed its silk cover and saw that her flushed cheeks were redder than peach blossom, but failed to realize that this was the first symptom of consumption. She went to bed with the handkerchiefs clasped in her hands and lost herself in dreams.

To return to Xiren and her errand to Baochai, when she found that



去了，袭人便空手回来。等至二更，宝钗方回来。原来宝钗素知薛蟠情性，心中已有一半疑是薛蟠调唆了人来告宝玉的，谁知又听袭人说出来，越发信了。究竟袭人是听焙茗说的，那焙茗也是私心窥度，并未据实，竟认准是他说的。那薛蟠都因素日有这个名声，其实这次却不是他干的，被人生生的一口咬死是他，有口难分。这日正从外头吃了酒回来，见过母亲，只见宝钗在这里，说了几句闲话，因问：“听见宝兄弟吃了亏，是为什么？”薛姨妈正为这个不自在，见他问时，便咬牙道：“不知好歹的冤家，都是你闹的，你还有脸来问！”薛蟠见说，便怔了，忙问道：“我何尝闹什么？”薛姨妈道：“你还装憨呢！人人都知道是你说的，还赖呢。”薛蟠道：“人人说我杀了人，也就信了罢？”薛姨妈道：“连你妹妹都知道是你说的，难道他也赖你不成？”宝钗忙劝道：“妈和哥哥且别叫喊，消消停停的，就有个青红皂白了。”因向薛蟠道：“是你说的也罢，不是你说的也罢，事情也过去了，不必较证，倒把小事儿弄大了。我只劝你从此以后少在外头胡闹，少管别人的事。天天一处大家胡逛，你是个不防头的人，过后没事就罢了，倘或有事，不是你干的，人人都也疑惑是你干的，不用说别人，我就先疑惑。”薛蟠本是个心直口快的人，一生见不得这样藏头露尾的事，又见宝钗劝他不要逛去，他母亲又说他犯舌，宝玉之打是他治的，早已急的





Baochai was not in the Garden but had gone to her mother's house, she went back empty-handed. And Baochai did not return till the second watch.

The fact is that Baochai's knowledge of her brother had led her to suspect that he was behind the visit of the prince's chief steward, and Xiren's report confirmed her suspicion. Xiren of course had this on hearsay from Beiming, who had simply been guessing, not having any proof. But she now was sure of his guilt. The joke was that for all Xue Pan's bad reputation he was not to blame this time, and yet everyone condemned him out of hand.

Coming home today after carousing outside, Xue Pan went in to greet his mother and found Baochai with her. After they had exchanged a few words he remarked:

"I hear Cousin Bao got a whacking. What for?"

Aunt Xue was already upset on this score.

"You trouble-maker," she snapped back, gnashing her teeth, "this is all *your* doing. And you have the impudence to ask!"

Xue Pan was genuinely taken aback.

"What trouble have I made?" he asked.

"Still playing the innocent? Everyone knows you were the one who told. Do you still deny it?"

"If everyone said I'd killed a man, would you believe it?"

"Even your sister knows it was you. Would she make up something against you?"

"Do keep your voices down!" put in Baochai quickly. "It will all be cleared up by and by." She turned to her brother. "Whether you told or not, it's over and done with. Don't let's quibble or make a mountain out of a molehill. Take my advice, though, and stop fooling around outside. Just mind your own business. You waste all your time with those rowdies and you're too careless. If nothing happens, well and good. But if trouble starts everyone is bound to suspect you, whether you caused it or not. Why, even I would suspect you, let alone others."

Blunt, outspoken Xue Pan could not stand such insinuations. Baochai's warning against fooling about outside and his mother's charge that his careless talk had caused Baoyu's flogging made him stamp with rage



乱跳，赌身发誓的分辨。又骂众人：“谁这样脏派我？我把那囚攘的牙敲了才罢！分明是为打了宝玉，没的献勤儿，拿我来作幌子。难道宝玉是天王？他父亲打他一顿，一家子定要闹几天。那一回为他不好，姨爹打了他两下子，过后老太太不知怎么知道了，说是珍大哥哥治的，好好的叫了去骂了一顿。今儿越发拉上我了！既拉上，我也不怕，越性进去把宝玉打死了，我替他偿了命，大家干净。”一面嚷，一面抓起一根门闩来就跑。慌的薛姨妈一把拉住，骂道：“作死的孽障，你打谁去？你先打我来！”薛蟠急的眼似铜铃一般，嚷道：“何苦来！又不叫我去，又好好的赖我。将来宝玉活一日，我担一日的口舌，不如大家死了清静。”宝钗忙又上前劝道：“你忍耐些儿罢。妈急的这个样儿，不说来劝妈，你还反闹的这样！别说是妈，便是旁人来劝你，也为你好，倒把你的性子劝上来了。”薛蟠道：“这会子又说这话。都是你说的！”宝钗道：“你只怨我说，再不怨你顾前不顾后的形景。”薛蟠道：“你只会怨我顾前不顾后，你怎么不怨宝玉外头招风惹草的那个样子！别说多的，只拿前儿琪官的事比给你们听：那琪官，我们见过十来次的，我并未和他说一句亲热话；怎么前儿他见了，连姓名还不知道，就把汗巾子给他了？难道这也是我说的不成？”薛姨妈和宝钗急的说道：“还提这个！可不是为这个打他呢。可见是你说的了。”薛蟠道：“真真的气死人了！赖我说的我不恼，我只为个宝玉闹的这样





and swear he must clear himself.

“Who’s been shifting the blame on to me?” he fumed. “I’ll smash the scoundrel’s teeth. It’s obvious that to make up to Baoyu they’re using me as a whipping-boy. Is Baoyu the king of heaven? Whenever his father whacks him the whole household’s bound to be upside down for days. After my uncle caned him for misbehaving last time, it somehow came to the old lady’s ears that Cousin Zhen was behind it and she summoned him to give him a big dressing-down. This time they’re picking on *me*. Well, I’m not afraid. I’ll go and kill Baoyu then pay with my life — make a clean sweep!”

He seized the door bar and started rushing out. In desperation his mother dragged him back.

“You’ll be the death of me, you monster,” she scolded. “Off to pick a fight, are you? Better kill me first.”

Xue Pan’s eyes nearly started from his head in fury.

“What’s all this nonsense!” he bellowed. “You won’t let me go, yet pin this thing on me for no reason at all. As long as Baoyu lives, I shall always be his whipping-boy. We’d better all die and be done with it.”

“Do have patience,” urged Baochai, stepping quickly forward. “Mother’s so upset, yet instead of soothing her you raise this rumpus. When people — especially your own mother — advise you, it’s for your own good. You shouldn’t fly into a temper.”

“So *you’re* nagging again, are you?” he roared. “You’re the one who started this.”

“You only blame me for nagging, never blame your own thoughtlessness.”

“Instead of blaming my thoughtlessness, why don’t you blame Baoyu for looking for trouble outside? Let’s take just one example — that recent business of Qiguan. I’ve met Qiguan a dozen times without his making up to me once; but the very first time Baoyu met him, before he even knew his name, Qiguan gave him his girdle. That was my fault too, I suppose?”

“There you go again,” cried his mother and sister frantically. “That’s *why* he got beaten. This *shows* you’re the one who told.”

“You want me to burst with anger,” growled Xue Pan. “It’s not being

天翻地覆的。”宝钗道：“谁闹了？你先持刀动杖的闹起来，倒说别人闹。”薛蟠见宝钗说的话句句有理，难以驳正，比母亲的话反难回答，因此便要设法拿话堵回他去，就无人敢拦自己的话了。也因正在气头上，未曾想话之轻重，便说道：“好妹妹，你不用和我闹，我早知道你的心了。从先妈和我说，你这‘金’要拣有玉的才可正配，你留心了，见宝玉有那劳什骨子，你自然如今行动护着他。”话未说了，把个宝钗气怔了，拉着薛姨妈哭道：“妈妈你听，哥哥说的什么话！”薛蟠见妹妹哭了，便知自己冒撞了，便赌气走到自己房里安歇不提。

这里薛姨妈气的乱颤，一面又劝宝钗道：“你素日知那孽障说话没道理，明儿我叫他给你陪不是。”宝钗满心委屈气忿，待要怎样，又怕他母亲不安，少不得含泪别了母亲，各自回来，到房里整哭了一夜。次日早起来，也无心梳洗，胡乱整理整理，便出来瞧母亲。可巧遇见林黛玉独立在花阴之下，问他那里去，薛宝钗因说：“家去”，口里说着，便只管走。黛玉见他无精打彩的去了，又见眼上有哭泣之状，大非往日可比，便在后面笑道：“姐姐也自保重些儿。就是哭两缸眼泪来，也医不好棒疮！”不知薛宝钗如何答对，且听下回分解。





wrongly accused that enrages me, it's this fearful fuss you make over Baoyu."

"Who's making a fuss?" retorted Baochai. "You started it by arming yourself and threatening to fight. Now you accuse *us* of fussing."

As all her arguments were so reasonable and even harder to refute than his mother's, Xue Pan cast about for some way to silence her in order to have his say. And being in a towering rage, he did not trouble to weigh his words carefully.

"It's no use flying into a huff with me, my dear sister," he sneered. "I can see into your heart. Mother's told me about your gold locket which has to be matched with jade. Naturally you looked round carefully, and now that you find Baoyu has that rubbishy thing you're bound to take his side."

Baochai was speechless at first with indignation. Then catching hold of her mother she sobbed:

"Do you hear what he's saying, mother?"

At this Xue Pan knew he had gone too far and sullenly retired to his own room.

Though trembling with rage, Aunt Xue tried to comfort her daughter.

"You know that monster always talks nonsense," she said. "Tomorrow I'll tell him to apologize."

Bitterly wronged as Baochai felt, she could not make a scene for fear of upsetting her mother. So with tears in her eyes she took her leave and went back to her own apartment to cry all night.

The next morning she rose early and, without troubling to make a careful toilet, simply straightened her clothes and set off to see her mother again. On the way she happened to meet Daiyu standing alone under the shade of some blossom and was asked where she was going. Baochai, not stopping, said she was on her way home. Daiyu saw that she looked in low spirits, quite unlike her usual self, and had been crying.

She called mischievously after her, "Cousin, look after your health! Even if you fill two vats with tears that won't cure his welts."

To know how Baochai replied you must read the next chapter.

## 第三十五回

白玉钏亲尝莲叶羹 黄金莺巧结梅花络

话说宝钗分明听见林黛玉刻薄他，因记挂着母亲、哥哥，并不回头，一径去了。这里林黛玉还自立于花阴之下，远远的却向怡红院内望着，只见李宫裁、迎春、探春、惜春并各项人等都向怡红院内去过之后，一起一起的散尽了，只不见凤姐儿来，心里自己盘算道：“如何他不来瞧宝玉？便是有事缠住了，他必定也是要来打个花胡哨，讨老太太和太太的好儿才是。今儿这早晚不来，必有原故。”一面猜疑，一面抬头再看时，只见花花簇簇一群人又向怡红院内来了。定睛看时，只见贾母搭着凤姐儿的手，后头邢夫人、王夫人跟着周姨娘并丫鬟、媳妇等人都进院去了。黛玉看了不觉点头，想起有父母的人的好处来，早又泪珠满面。少顷，只见宝钗、薛姨妈等也进入去了。忽见紫鹃从背后走来，说道：“姑娘吃药去罢，开水又冷了。”黛玉道：“你到底要怎么样？只是催，我吃不吃，管你什么相干！”紫鹃笑道：“咳嗽的才好些，又不吃药了。如今虽然是五月里，天气热，到底也该还小心些。大清早起，在这个潮湿地方站了半日，也该回去歇息歇息了。”一句话提醒了黛玉，方觉得有点腿酸，呆了半日，方慢慢的扶着紫鹃，回潇湘馆来。

一进院门，只见满地下竹影参差，苔痕浓淡，不觉又想



## Chapter 35

### Yuchuan Tastes Some Lotus-Leaf Broth Yinger Skilfully Makes a Plum-Blossom Net

Baochai heard Daiyu's taunt but walked past without turning her head, so anxious was she to see her mother and brother. Daiyu, standing in the shade of the blossom, went on staring into the distance towards Happy Red Court. She saw Li Wan, Yingchun, Tanchun, Xichun and their maids pay short calls and leave again, but there was no sign of Xifeng.

"Why hasn't she called to see Baoyu?" she wondered. "Even if she's busy, you'd think she'd put in an appearance to please the Lady Dowager and Lady Wang. There must be some reason why she hasn't come."

But just then, raising her head, she caught sight of a gaily dressed group proceeding in that direction. Looking more closely she could recognize the Lady Dowager on Xifeng's arm, then Lady Xing and Lady Wang, with the concubine Zhou and some maids bringing up the rear. Together they entered the court. Daiyu nodded and tears ran down her cheeks as she reflected wistfully how good it was to have parents. A little later she saw Baochai enter with Aunt Xue, and then Zijuan came up suddenly behind her.

"Do go and take your medicine, miss, before the boiled water gets cold," she urged.

"Must you always be hurrying me?" protested Daiyu. "Whether I take it or not is none of your business."

"You shouldn't stop taking medicine just because your cough's beginning to be better. Although it's the fifth month and the weather's warm, you still ought to be careful. You've been standing here in the damp since first thing this morning. It's time to go back now and rest."

Daiyu realized then that she was indeed rather tired, and after some hesitation she walked slowly back to Bamboo Lodge on her maid's arm. As they entered the courtyard, the chequered shade cast by bamboos on



起《西厢记》中所云“幽僻处可有人行，点苍苔白露泠泠”二句来，因暗暗的叹道：“双文，双文，诚为命薄人矣。然你虽命薄，尚有孀母弱弟；今日林黛玉之命薄，一并连孀母弱弟俱无。古人云‘佳人命薄’，然我又非佳人，何命薄胜于双文哉！”一面想，一面只管走，不防廊上的鹦哥见林黛玉来了，“嘎”的一声扑了下来，倒吓了一跳，因说道：“作死的，又扇了我一头的灰。”那鹦哥仍飞上架去，便叫：“雪雁，快掀帘子，姑娘来了。”黛玉便止住步，以手扣架道：“添了食水不曾？”那鹦哥便长叹一声，竟大似林黛玉素日吁嗟音韵，接着念道：“侬今葬花人笑痴，他年葬侬知是谁？试看春尽花渐落，便是红颜老死时。一朝春尽红颜老，花落人亡两不知！”黛玉、紫鹃听了都笑起来。紫鹃笑道：“这都是素日姑娘念的，难为他怎么记了。”黛玉便令将架摘下来，另挂在月洞窗外的钩上，于是进了屋子，在月洞窗内坐了。吃毕药，只见窗外竹影映入纱来，满屋内阴阴翠润，几簟生凉。黛玉无可释闷，便隔着纱窗调逗鹦哥作戏，又将素日所喜的诗词也教与他念。这且不在话下。

且说薛宝钗来至家中，只见母亲正自梳头呢。一见他来了，便说道：“你大清早起跑来作什么？”宝钗道：“我瞧瞧妈身上好不好。昨儿我去了，不知他又过来闹了没有？”一面





the moss reminded her of those lines in *The Western Chamber*:

Who walks in this secluded spot,  
Where dew glimmers white on dark moss?

“Fate was unkind to Cui Yingying,” she told herself with a sigh. “But at least she had a widowed mother and a younger brother, whereas poor Daiyu has nobody at all. The ancients said: All beauties are ill-fated. But I’m no beauty. Why should my fate be so cruel?”

She was walking on lost in thought when the parrot in the covered walk swooped down to squawk at her.

“You pest!” she cried, giving a start. “Smothering my hair with dust.”

Flying back to its perch the parrot screeched, “Raise the curtain, Xueyan. The young lady’s here.”

She stopped, her hand on the perch, to ask whether the parrot’s birdseed and water had been changed. The bird gave a wheeze much like one of Daiyu’s deep sighs. Then it rattled off the lines:

“Men laugh at my folly in burying fallen flowers,  
But who will bury me when dead I lie?  
See, when spring draws to a close and flowers fall,  
This is the season when beauty must ebb and fade;  
The day that spring takes wing and beauty fades  
Who will care for the fallen blossom or dead maid?”

The two girls burst out laughing.

“Those are lines you often recite, miss,” giggled Zijuan. “Fancy him getting them by heart!”

Daiyu made her take the perch down and hang it on a hook outside the moon window, then went inside and sat down by the window to take her medicine. The room was flooded with a dim green light, its tables and couches cool in the green shade cast by bamboos through the gauze netting. To while away the time she played with the parrot from inside, teasing it and teaching it some of her favourite poems.

But let us return to Baochai who reached home to find her mother doing her hair.

“What are you doing here so early in the morning?” asked Aunt Xue.



说，一面在他母亲身旁坐了，由不得哭将起来。薛姨妈见他一哭，自己撑不住，也就哭了一场，一面又劝他：“我的儿，你别委曲了，你等我处分那孽障。你要有个好歹，我指望那一个来！”薛蟠在外听见，连忙跑了过来，对着宝钗，左一个揖，右一个揖，只说：“好妹妹，恕我这次罢！原是我昨儿吃了酒，回来的晚了，路上撞磕着了，来家未醒，不知胡说了什么，连自己也不知道，怨不得你生气。”宝钗原是掩面哭的，听如此说，由不得又好笑了，遂低头向地下啐了一口，说道：“你不用做这些像生儿。我知道你的心里多嫌我们娘儿两个，是要变着法儿叫我们离了你，你就心净了。”薛蟠听说，连忙笑道：“妹妹这话从那里说起来的？这样我连立足之地都没了。妹妹从来不是这样多心、说歪话的人。”薛姨妈忙又接着道：“你只会听你妹妹的歪话，难道昨儿晚上你说的那话就该的不成？当真是你发昏了！”薛蟠道：“妈也不必生气，妹妹也不用烦恼，从今以后，我再不同他们一处吃酒闲逛如何？”宝钗笑道：“这不明白过来了！”薛姨妈道：“你要有这个恒心，那龙也下蛋了。”薛蟠道：“我若再和他们一处逛，妹妹听见了只管啐我，再叫我畜生，不是人，如何？何苦来，为我一个人，娘儿两个天天操心！妈为我生气还有可恕，若只管叫妹妹为我操心，我更不是人了。如今父亲没了，我不能孝顺妈多疼妹妹，反教娘生气妹妹烦恼，真连个畜生也不如了。”口里说着，眼睛里禁不起也滚下泪来。薛姨妈本不哭了，听他一说又勾起伤心来。宝钗勉强笑道：“你

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"I came to see how you were, mother. Did he come back after I left yesterday or make any more trouble?"

Baochai sat down beside her mother and burst into tears.

"There, child, don't take it so to heart," urged her mother, weeping too. "I'll teach the monster a lesson. If anything were to happen to you, on whom could I rely?"

Overhearing this, Xue Pan hurried in.

"Forgive me this once, there's a good sister," he begged, making Baochai several bows from left and right. "I had a few drinks yesterday so I stayed out late, then on my way back I knocked into a friend; and that made me arrive home so drunk I've no idea what nonsense I may have talked. I don't blame you for being angry."

Baochai, who had been hiding her face to weep, looked up at this with a smile.

"Don't put on that act!" She spat in disgust. "I know what a nuisance you find us. You're trying to make us leave you so that you can do as you please."

"How can you say such a thing, sister, not leaving me a leg to stand on? It's not like you to be so suspicious and unkind."

"You accuse her of being unkind," put in his mother. "Was it kind what you said last night? Really you must have lost your senses."

"Don't be angry, mother, and don't you worry, sister. I promise not to drink or fool about with those fellows any more, how's that?"

Baochai smiled.

"At last you're showing some sense."

"If you can stick to that, why, dragons can lay eggs," scoffed his mother.

"If you catch me fooling around with them again, sister, you can spit in my face and call me a beast, not a man. I don't want to be such a trial to you both all the time. Vexing mother is bad enough; if I worry my sister too I'm less than human. Instead of being a filial son and good brother now that father's gone, I'm only upsetting you both. I'm really worse than a brute!"

While talking, tears gushed from his eyes. Since their mother showed fresh signs of distress at this, Baochai forced herself to interpose.

闹够了?这会子又招着妈哭起来了。”薛蟠听说，忙收了泪，笑道：“我何曾招妈哭来!罢，罢!且丢下这个别提了。叫香菱来倒茶妹妹吃。”宝钗道：“我也不吃茶，等妈洗了手，我们就过去了。”薛蟠道：“妹妹的项圈我瞧瞧，只怕该炸炸去了。”宝钗道：“黄澄澄的又炸他作什么?”薛蟠又道：“妹妹如今也该添补些衣裳，要什么颜色花样，告诉我。”宝钗道：“连那些衣服我还没穿遍了，又做什么?”一时薛姨妈换了衣裳，拉着宝钗进去，薛蟠方出去了。

这里薛姨妈和宝钗进园来瞧宝玉。到了怡红院中，只见抱厦里外回廊上许多丫鬟、老婆站着，便知贾母等都在这里。母女两个进来，大家见过了，只见宝玉躺在榻上。薛姨妈问他可好些，宝玉忙欲欠身，口里答应着“好些”，又说：“只管惊动姨妈、姐姐，我禁不起。”薛姨妈忙扶他睡下，又问他：“想什么，只管告诉我。”宝玉笑道：“我想起来，自然和姨妈要去的。”王夫人又问：“你想什么吃?回来好给你送来的。”宝玉笑道：“也倒不想什么吃，倒是那一回做的那小荷叶儿、莲蓬儿的汤还好。”凤姐在旁笑道：“听听，口味不算高贵，只是太磨牙了，巴巴的想这个吃了。”贾母便一叠连声的叫人做去。凤姐儿笑道：“老祖宗别急，等我想一想这模子谁收着呢。”因回头吩咐个婆子去问管厨房的要去。那婆子去了半天，来回说：“管厨房的说，四副汤模





“You’ve already made trouble enough without reducing mother to tears again.”

Xue Pan dabbed quickly at his eyes and grinned.

“When did I reduce her to tears? All right, that’s enough. Forget it. I’ll get Xiangling to pour you a cup of tea.”

“I don’t want any, thank you. As soon as mother’s ready we’re going to the Garden.”

“Let me have a look at your necklace. Shouldn’t it be gilded again?”

“No need. It’s still a bright gold.”

“You ought to make yourself some new clothes too. Just let me know what colours and patterns you fancy.”

“I haven’t yet worn all the clothes I have. Why make new ones?”

By now Aunt Xue had changed, and she led her daughter into the Garden while Xue Pan went out.

When Aunt Xue and Baochai reached Happy Red Court to inquire after Baoyu, they knew from the throng of maids and nurses on the verandah that the Lady Dowager and others must be there. Having gone in and exchanged greetings with all the ladies, Aunt Xue asked Baoyu if he were any better. He sat up on his couch to answer: “Yes, thank you, auntie. I’m sorry to have put you and my cousin to such trouble.”

She hastily made him lie down again.

“If there’s anything you want,” she said, “just let me know.”

“Thank you, I will,” he replied gaily.

“What would you like to eat?” his mother asked. “I can have it sent over later.”

“I’m not really hungry, but I’d like some of that broth you once had made with small lotus leaves and lotus seeds.”

“Just listen to him!” Xifeng laughed. “You may not have expensive tastes, but you’re certainly choosy to want something like that.”

“Have it made! Have it made!” the Lady Dowager ordered.

“Don’t be in such a hurry, Old Ancestress,” cried Xifeng. “I must try to remember where the moulds are.”

She sent an old servant to fetch them from the head cook, and after a while the woman came back to report: “The cook says those four moulds were returned, madam.”

子都交上来了。”凤姐儿听说，想了一想，道：“我记得交给谁了，多半在茶房里。”一面又遣人去问管茶房的，也不曾收。次后还是管金银器皿的送了来。

薛姨妈先接过来瞧时，原来是个小匣子，里面装着四副银模子，都有一尺多长，一寸见方，上面凿着有豆子大小，也有菊花的，也有梅花的，也有莲蓬的，也有菱角的，共有三四十样，打的十分精巧。因笑向贾母、王夫人道：“你们府上也都想绝了，吃碗汤还有这些样子。若不说出来，我见这个也不认得这是作什么用的……”凤姐儿不等人说完，便笑道：“姑妈那里晓得，这是旧年备膳，他们想的法儿。不知弄些什么面印出来，借点新荷叶的清香，全仗着好汤，究竟没意思，谁家常吃他了。那一回呈样的作了一回，他今日怎么想起来了。”说着接了过来，递与个妇人，吩咐厨房里立刻拿几只鸡，另外添了东西，做出十来碗汤来。王夫人道：“要这些做什么？”凤姐儿笑道：“有个原故：这一宗东西家常不大作，今儿宝兄弟提起来了，单做给他吃，老太太、姑妈、太太都不吃，似乎不大好。不如借势儿弄些大家吃，托赖着连我也上个俊儿。”贾母听了，笑道：“猴儿，把你乖的！拿着官中的钱你做人。”说的大家笑了。凤姐也忙笑道：“这不相干。这个小东道我还孝敬的起。”便回头吩咐妇人：“说给厨房里，只管好生添补着作了，在我的账上领银子。”妇人答应着去了。

宝钗在旁笑道：“我来了这么几年，留神看起来，凤丫头

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Xifeng thought this over.

“Well, I can’t remember to whom I sent them,” she remarked. “They’re in the tea pantry most likely.”

She sent to ask the steward in charge, but he did not have them either. Finally the steward in charge of the gold and silver plate had them sent over.

Aunt Xue took the casket containing the four silver moulds and examined them curiously. More than a foot long and about one inch across, they were inset with more than thirty delicately fashioned shapes no larger than peas — chrysanthemum, plum-blossom, lotus flower, caltrop and the like.

“Your house is really the last word in refinement,” she exclaimed to the old lady and her sister. “So many shapes just for one bowl of soup! I wouldn’t have known what these were for if I hadn’t been told.”

Xifeng interrupted with a smile, “Why, auntie, the cooks preparing the Royal Feast last year thought this up, flavouring the dough shapes with fresh lotus leaves; but what really counts is the quality of the soup. It isn’t anything special after all. Indeed, what family would often have such a soup! We did try it, though, when we first got the moulds; and he’s suddenly remembered it today.” She passed the casket to a maid with the order, “Tell the kitchen to kill a few chickens at once and make enough well-seasoned soup for a dozen people.”

“Why so much?” asked Lady Wang.

“For a good reason.” Xifeng smiled. “This is something we seldom have, and now that Cousin Bao has asked for it it would be a pity just to make some for him and none for the old lady and Aunt Xue. We may as well *all* have some while we’re about it — then even I can taste this novelty.”

“You monkey!” exclaimed the Lady Dowager. “Treating people at public expense.”

“That’s all right,” countered Xifeng quickly amid general laughter. “I can afford this little treat.” She turned to the maid. “Tell them in the kitchen to do their best and charge it to my account.”

As the maid left on this errand Baochai said playfully, “In the few years I’ve been here, careful observation has led me to the conclusion

凭他怎么巧，再巧不过老太太去。”贾母听说，便答道：“我如今老了，那里还巧什么。当日我像凤哥儿这么大年纪，比他还来得呢。他如今虽说不如我们，也就算好了，比你姨妈强远了。你姨妈可怜见的，不大说话，和木头似的，在公婆跟前就不大显好。凤儿嘴乖，怎么怨人疼他？”宝玉笑道：“若这么说，不大说话的不疼了？”贾母道：“不说话的又有不说话的疼之处，嘴乖的也有一宗可嫌的，倒不如不说话的好。”宝玉笑道：“这就是了。我说大嫂子倒不大说话呢，老太太也是和凤姐姐一样看待。若是单是只会说话的疼，这些姊妹里头也只凤姐姐和林妹妹疼了。”贾母道：“提起姊妹，不是我当着姨太太的面奉承，千真万真，从我们家四个女孩儿算起，都不及宝丫头。”薛姨妈听说，忙笑道：“这话老太太是说偏了。”王夫人忙又笑道：“老太太时常背地里和我说宝丫头好，这倒不是假话。”宝玉勾着贾母原为赞林黛玉的，不想反赞起宝钗来，倒也意出望外，便看着宝钗一笑；宝钗早扭过头去和袭人说话去了。

忽有人来请吃饭，贾母立起身来，命宝玉好生养着，又把丫头们嘱咐了一回，方扶着凤姐儿，让着薛姨妈，大家出房去了。因问汤好了不曾，又问薛姨妈等：“想什么吃，只管告诉我，我有本事叫凤丫头弄了来咱们吃。”薛姨妈笑道：“老太太也会怪他的。时常他弄了东西孝敬，究竟又吃不了多少。”凤姐儿笑道：“姑妈倒别这样说。我们老祖宗只是嫌人肉酸，若不嫌人肉酸，早已把我还吃了呢。”

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that, however clever Cousin Xifeng may be, she's no match for the old lady."

"I'm old and slow-witted now, child," said the Lady Dowager. "But at Xifeng's age I outshone her. Still, even if she's not up to me she's way ahead of your aunt. Your aunt, poor thing, has no more to say for herself than a block of wood and can't show herself to advantage to her elders. They can't help liking Xifeng for her clever tongue."

Baoyu chuckled.

"Does that mean you don't like people who don't talk much?"

"Oh, they have their merits too, just as those with smooth tongues have faults. It's better not to have too much to say for yourself."

"Quite so." Baoyu laughed. "My sister-in-law never talks much, yet you treat her just as well as Cousin Xifeng. If you merely liked good talkers, the only ones of these girls you could fancy would be Xifeng and Daiyu."

"Talking about the girls," observed the old lady. "I'm not saying this as a compliment to Aunt Xue, but the truth is that none of our four girls can stand comparison with Baochai."

"You're partial, madam," disclaimed Aunt Xue with a smile.

"But it's true," put in Lady Wang. "The old lady's often told me privately how good Baochai is."

Baoyu, angling for compliments for Daiyu, had not expected his grandmother to praise Baochai instead. He glanced at the latter with a smile, but she had turned away to talk to Xiren.

At this point lunch was announced and the Lady Dowager rose. Having told Baoyu to rest well and charged the maids to take good care of him, she took Xifeng's arm and urged Aunt Xue to lead the way. As they left, she asked if the soup was ready or not, and what Aunt Xue and the others fancied to eat.

"If there's anything special, just tell me," she said. "I know how to make this minx Xifeng get it for us."

"How you love to tease her, madam," replied Aunt Xue, "She's always offering you good things, but of course you don't eat very much."

"Don't say that, auntie," countered Xifeng. "If our Old Ancestress didn't think human flesh rancid, she'd have eaten me long ago."

一句话没说了，引的贾母、众人都哈哈的笑起来。宝玉在房里也撑不住笑了。袭人笑道：“真真的二奶奶的这张嘴怕死人！”宝玉伸手拉着袭人笑道：“你站了这半日，可乏了？”一面说，一面拉他身旁坐下。袭人笑道：“可是又忘了。趁宝姑娘在院子里，你和他说明，烦他们莺儿来打上那几根络子。”宝玉笑道：“亏你提起来。”说着，便仰头向窗外道：“宝姐姐，吃过饭叫莺儿来，烦他打几根络子，可得闲儿？”宝钗听见，回头道：“怎么不得闲儿，一会叫他来就是了。”贾母等尚未听真，都止步问宝钗。宝钗说明了，大家方明白。贾母又说道：“好孩子，叫他来替你兄弟作几根。你要无人使唤，我那里闲着的丫头多呢，你喜欢谁，只管叫了来使唤。”薛姨妈、宝钗等都笑道：“只管叫他来作就是了，有什么使唤的去处？他天天也是闲着淘气。”

大家说着，往前正走，忽见史湘云、平儿、香菱等在山石边掐风仙花呢，见了他们走来，都迎上来了。少顷出了园中，王夫人恐贾母乏了，便欲让至上房内坐。贾母也觉腿酸，便点头依允。王夫人便命丫头忙先去铺设坐位。那时赵姨娘推病，只有周姨娘与众婆娘、丫头们忙着打帘子，立靠背，铺褥子。贾母扶着凤姐儿进来，与薛姨妈分宾主坐了。薛宝钗、史湘云坐在下面。王夫人亲捧了茶奉与贾母，李宫裁奉与薛姨妈。贾母向王夫人道：“让他们小妯娌伏侍，你在



That set the whole company laughing. Even Baoyu joined in from his bed.

“What a terrible tongue Madam Lian has!” Xiren commented with a smile.

He reached out to make her sit beside him.

“You must be tired after standing so long.”

“How forgetful I am!” she exclaimed. “Do ask Miss Baochai before she leaves the courtyard to send Yinger over to make a few nets for us.”

“I’m glad you reminded me.”

Baoyu sat up and called to Baochai through the window, “Will you send Yinger over after your meal, cousin? I want her to make me some nets if she has time.”

“Of course,” promised Baochai, turning back. “I’ll send her presently.”

The others who had not understood this exchange stopped to ask Baochai what was wanted. When she had explained the Lady Dowager said: “That’s a good child. Send her to do as he asks. If you need more hands I have plenty of girls sitting idle. You can send for any of them.”

“We can manage without Yinger,” Aunt Xue and Baochai assured her. “She’s nothing to do every day and needs something to keep her out of mischief.”

As they walked on they were greeted by Xiangyun, Pinger and Xiangling, who had been picking balsam by some rocks and now left the Garden with them.

Lady Wang urged her mother-in-law to have a rest in her room, as she feared she must be tired. As the old lady’s legs were aching she agreed. Maids were sent on ahead to see that all was ready; and because the concubine Zhao had excused herself on the grounds of an indisposition, there was only the concubine Zhou to help the serving-women and maids raise the portière and set out the back-rests and cushions. The Lady Dowager entered on Xifeng’s arm and sat down with Aunt Xue in the places of honour. Baochai and Xiangyun took two lower seats. Lady Wang brought tea herself to her mother-in-law while Li Wan served Aunt Xue.

“Leave serving to the young people,” said the Lady Dowager to Lady

那里坐了，好说话儿。”王夫人方向一张小杌子上坐下，便吩咐凤姐儿道：“老太太的饭在这里放，添了东西来。”凤姐儿答应出去，便令人往贾母那边去告诉，那边的婆娘忙往外传了，并丫头们忙都赶过来。王夫人又命“请姑娘们去”。请了半天，只有探春、惜春两个来了；迎春身上不耐烦，不吃饭；林黛玉自不消说，平素十顿饭只好吃五顿，众人也不着意了。少顷饭至，众人调放了桌子。凤姐儿用手巾裹着一把牙箸站在地下，笑道：“老祖宗和姑妈不用让，还听我说就是了。”贾母笑向薛姨妈道：“我们就是这样。”薛姨妈笑着应了。于是凤姐放了四双：上面两双是贾母、薛姨妈，两边是薛宝钗、史湘云的。王夫人、李宫裁等都站在地下，看着放菜。凤姐先忙着要干净家伙来，替宝玉拣菜。

少顷，荷叶汤来，贾母看过了。王夫人回头见玉钏儿在那边，便命玉钏与宝玉送去。凤姐道：“他一个人拿不去。”可巧莺儿和喜儿都来了。宝钗知道他们已吃了饭，便向莺儿道：“宝兄弟正叫你去打络子，你们两个一同去罢。”莺儿答应，同着玉钏儿出来。莺儿道：“这么远，怪热的，怎么端了去？”玉钏笑道：“你放心，我自有道理。”说着，便命一个婆子来，将汤饭等物放在一个捧盒里，令他端了跟着，他两个却空着手走。一直到了怡红院门内，玉钏儿方接了过来，同莺儿进入宝玉房中。袭人、麝月、秋纹三个人正和宝玉玩笑呢，见他两个来了，都忙起来，笑道：“你两个来的怎么碰







Wang. "You sit down and chat with us."

Seating herself on a stool, Lady Wang told Xifeng to have the old lady's meal brought there with some extra portions. Xifeng withdrew and told Lady Wang's serving-women to pass the order on to those of the Lady Dowager and ask her maids to hurry over, while Lady Wang instructed another serving-woman to fetch the young ladies. This took some time, and only Tanchun and Xichun appeared eventually; for Yingchun had no appetite that day, and no one thought anything of Daiyu's absence as she never ate more than one meal out of two.

Soon the food arrived and the table was laid.

"Our Old Ancestress and Aunt Xue mustn't stand on ceremony but do as I say," declared Xifeng, approaching them with a bundle of ivory chopsticks wrapped in a handkerchief.

"This is how we do things," the old lady told Aunt Xue, who acquiesced cheerfully.

Xifeng placed four pairs of chopsticks before the Lady Dowager, Aunt Xue, Baochai and Xiangyun, while Lady Wang and Li Wan superintended the serving of the dishes. Then Xifeng called for clean bowls and chose dishes for Baoyu.

After the lotus broth arrived and the old lady had inspected it, Lady Wang commissioned Yuchuan who was standing behind her to take Baoyu his meal.

"She can't carry all this single-handed," remarked Xifeng.

Just then, as it happened, Yinger and Xier arrived. Baochai knew that they had eaten already.

"Master Bao wants you to make some nets for him," she told Yinger. "You'd better go with Yuchuan."

As the two maids left on this errand Yinger asked, "How are we to carry this hot soup all that way?"

"Don't worry." Yuchuan smiled. "Leave it to me."

She made an old nurse put the broth and dishes in a hamper and carry this behind them while they walked empty-handed to Happy Red Court. There Yuchuan took over the hamper and the two girls went in. Xiren, Sheyue and Qiuwen, who were amusing Baoyu, stood up to greet them.

"How did you two happen to arrive together?" they asked, taking the

巧，一齐来了！”一面说，一面接了下来。玉钏便向一张杌子上坐了，莺儿不敢坐下。袭人便忙端了个脚踏来，莺儿还不敢坐。宝玉见莺儿来了，却倒十分欢喜；忽见了玉钏儿，便想起他姐姐金钏儿来了，又是伤心，又是惭愧，便把莺儿丢下，且和玉钏儿说话。袭人见把莺儿不理，恐莺儿没好意思的，又见莺儿不肯坐，便拉了莺儿出来，到那边房里去吃茶说话儿去了。

这里麝月等预备了碗箸来伺候吃饭。宝玉只是不吃，问玉钏儿道：“你母亲身子好？”玉钏儿满脸怒色，正眼也不看宝玉，半日，方说了一个“好”字。宝玉便觉没趣，半日，只得又陪笑问道：“谁叫你给我送来的？”玉钏儿道：“不过是奶奶、太太们！”宝玉见他还是哭丧着脸，便知他是为金钏儿的原故；待要虚心下气磨转他，又见人多，不好下气的，因而变尽方法，将人都支出去，然后又陪笑问长问短。那玉钏儿先虽不悦，只管见宝玉一些性气没有，凭他怎么丧谤，还是温存和气，自己倒不好意思的了，脸上方有三分喜色。宝玉便笑求他：“好姐姐，你把那汤拿了来我尝尝。”玉钏儿道：“我从不会喂人东西，等他们来了再吃。”宝玉笑道：“我不是要你喂我。我因为走不动，你递给我吃了，你好赶早儿回去交代了，你好吃饭的。我只管耽误时候，你岂不饿坏了。你要懒待动，我少不了忍着疼下去取来。”说着便要下床来，挣扎起来，禁不住“嗷哟”之声。玉钏儿见他这般，忍不住起身说道：“躺下罢！那世里造了孽的，这会子现世现



hamper.

Yuchuan promptly sat herself down on a chair, but Yinger would not presume to sit although Xiren hastily fetched a foot-stool for her.

Baoyu was delighted by Yinger's arrival but distressed and embarrassed by the sight of Yuchuan, who reminded him of her elder sister Jinchuan. For this reason he addressed himself exclusively to her. This made Xiren afraid that Yinger might feel slighted, and since she refused to be seated she took her to the outer room for some tea and a chat.

Meanwhile Sheyue and the others had fetched Baoyu's bowl and chopsticks, but instead of starting his lunch he asked Yuchuan: "How is your mother?"

Scowling and refusing to look at him, for a long time she did not answer. Then she snapped out:

"All right."

Silence followed this snub. Then Baoyu tried again.

"Who asked you to bring me my lunch?"

"The madams and the ladies, naturally."

Well aware that Jinchuan's death was behind Yuchuan's displeasure, Baoyu cast about for some means to placate her. Not wanting to humble himself in front of the others, he dismissed them on various pretexts and then put himself out to be pleasant. And tempted though Yuchuan was to cold-shoulder him, she could not but be mollified by the amiable way in which he put up with all her rudeness. It was her turn to feel embarrassed.

"Do pass me the broth to taste, dear sister," he begged when he saw her face begin to brighten.

"I've never fed anyone. Wait till the others come back."

"I don't want you to feed me but I can't get out of bed," he said coaxingly. "If you'll just pass me the bowl, you can report back so much the sooner and have your own meal. I mustn't keep you here starving. If you can't be bothered to move I'll have to fetch the bowl myself, however much it hurts."

He struggled to get out of bed and could not suppress a groan. At that Yuchuan no longer had the heart to refuse.

"Lie down," she said, leaving her seat. "What a sight you are, suffer-

报。教我那一个眼睛看的上!”一面说，一面“哧”的一声又笑了，端过汤来。宝玉笑道：“好姐姐，你要生气只管在这里生罢，见了老太太、太太可放和气些，若还这样，你就又要挨骂了。”玉钏儿道：“吃罢，吃罢!不用和我甜嘴蜜舌的，我可不信这样话!”说着，催宝玉喝了两口汤。宝玉故意说：“不好吃，不吃了。”玉钏儿道：“阿弥陀佛!这还不好吃，什么好吃?”宝玉道：“一点味儿也没有，你不信，尝一尝就知道了。”玉钏儿果真赌气尝一尝。宝玉笑道：“这可好吃了。”玉钏儿听说，方解过意来，原是宝玉哄他吃一口，便说道：“你既说不好吃，这会子说好吃也不给你吃了。”宝玉只管陪笑央求要吃，玉钏儿又不给他，一面又叫人打发吃饭。

丫头们方进来时，忽有人来回话：“傅二爷家的两个嬷嬷来请安，来见二爷。”宝玉听说，便知是通判傅试家的嬷嬷来了。那傅试原是贾政的门生，历年来都赖贾家的名势得意，贾政也着实看待，故与别个门生不同，他那里常遣人来走动。宝玉素习最厌勇男蠢妇的，今日却如何又令这两个婆子过来?其中原来有个原故：只因那宝玉闻得傅试有个妹子，名唤傅秋芳，也是个琼闺秀玉，听人传说才貌俱全，虽目未亲睹，然遐思遥爱之心十分诚敬，不命他们进来，恐薄了傅秋芳，因此连忙命让进来。那傅试原是暴发的，因傅秋芳有几分姿色，聪明过人，那傅试安心仗着妹妹要与豪门贵族结婚，不肯轻易许人，所以耽误到如今。目今傅秋芳已二十三岁，尚未许人。争奈那些豪门贵族又嫌他穷酸，根基浅薄，不肯求配。那傅试与贾家亲密，也自有一段心事。今日遣来的两个婆子偏生是极无知识的，闻得宝玉要见，进来只



ing for the sins committed in your previous incarnations.”

With a giggle she passed him the bowl.

“If you must be angry, dear sister, be angry here,” advised Baoyu amiably. “Try to keep your temper in front of the old lady and the mistress. If you carry on like this with them, you’ll get another scolding.”

“Drink your soup, go on, I’m not taken in by that sweet talk.”

She made him drink a couple of mouthfuls, but Baoyu pretended not to like the flavour and left the rest untouched.

“Gracious Buddha!” she exclaimed. “You’re hard to please.”

“It’s got no taste at all. If you don’t believe me, try it.”

Rising to his bait, Yuchuan took a sip. At once he cried with a laugh: “Now it must taste delicious!”

Realizing that she had been tricked she said, “First you don’t like it, now you say it’s delicious. Well, I shan’t let you have any more.”

Though he smiled and pleaded she was adamant. She called the others to come to serve him his meal. As the maids came back they heard the unexpected announcement that two nannies sent by Second Master Fu had called to pay their respects.

Baoyu knew that they came from the house of the sub-prefect Fu Shi, one of his father’s former pupils who had prospered thanks to his connection with the celebrated Jia family. Jia Zheng treated him better than his other pupils, and Fu Shi was forever sending servants over. Now Baoyu disliked foolish old nurses as much as hulking men-servants, but today he asked these two in for the reason that Fu Shi’s younger sister Qiufang was said to be remarkably talented and good-looking; and although he had never seen her, his admiration for such a fine girl made him feel it would be slighting her not to admit them. So he promptly invited them in.

Fu Shi, being an upstart, wanted to consolidate his own position by marrying his pretty, gifted sister into some rich and noble family. Indeed, his requirements were so strict that she was still not engaged yet at twenty-three; for no proposals had come from the rich and great, who looked down on his poverty and humble origin. Naturally, then, Fu Shi had his own reason for ingratiating himself with the Jia house.

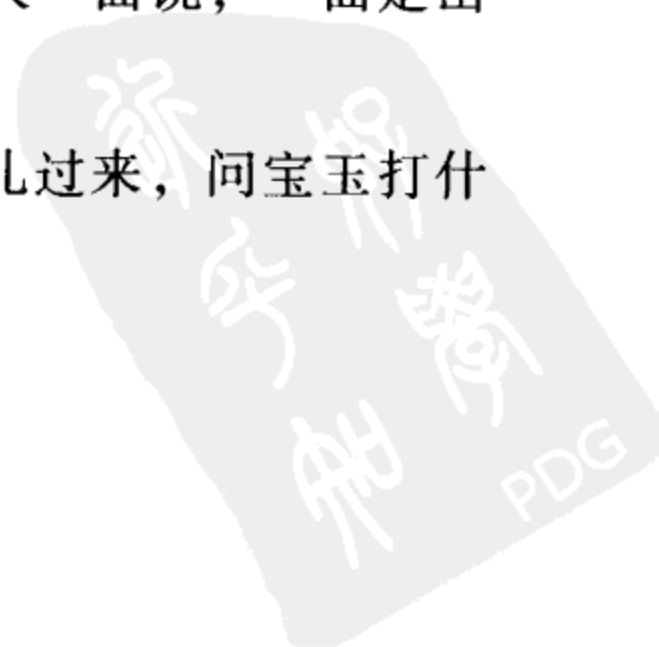
The two nurses sent today happened to be exceptionally stupid. When



刚问了好，说了没两句话。那玉钏见生人来，也不和宝玉厮闹了，手里端着汤只顾听话。宝玉又只顾和婆子说话，一面吃饭，一面伸手去要汤。两个人的眼睛都看着人，不想伸猛了手，便将碗碰落，将汤泼了宝玉手上。玉钏儿倒不曾烫着，唬了一跳，忙笑了：“这是怎么说！”慌的丫头们忙上来接碗。宝玉自己烫了手倒不觉的，却只管问玉钏儿：“烫了那里了？疼不疼？”玉钏儿和众人都笑了。玉钏儿道：“你自己烫了，只管问我。”宝玉听说，方觉自己烫了。众人上来连忙收拾。宝玉也不吃饭了，洗手，吃茶，又和那两个婆子说了两句话。然后两个婆子告辞出去，晴雯等送至桥边方回。

那两个婆子见没人了，一行走，一行谈论。这一个笑道：“怪道有人说他家宝玉是外像好，里头糊涂，中看不中吃的，果然有些呆气。他自己烫了手，倒问人疼不疼，这可不是个呆子？”那一个又笑道：“我前一回来，听见他谈论，家里许多人抱怨，千真万真的有些呆气。大雨淋的水鸡似的，他反告诉别人‘下雨了，快避雨去罢’，你说可笑不可笑？时常没人在跟前，就自哭自笑的。看见燕子，就和燕子说话；河里看见了鱼，就和鱼说话；见了星星月亮，不是长吁短叹，就是咕咕哝哝的。且连一点刚性也没有，连那些毛丫头的氣都受的。爱惜东西，连个线头儿都是好的；糟蹋起来，那怕值千值万的都不管了。”两个人一面说，一面走出园来，辞别诸人回去，不在话下。

如今且说袭人见人去了，便携了莺儿过来，问宝玉打什





invited in they paid their respects to Baoyu, and Yuchuan stopped teasing him to listen, bowl in hand, to the conversation. Baoyu went on eating as he talked while both he and Yuchuan kept their eyes on the two visitors. When he reached out suddenly for the bowl and upset it, splashing soup over his hand, Yuchuan started although not hurt herself and gave a cry:

“What are you doing?”

As the other maids rushed forward to take the bowl, Baoyu oblivious of his own pain cried:

“Where did you scald yourself, Yuchuan? Does it hurt?”

Everyone laughed at that.

“You’re the one who got scalded, not me,” she pointed out. Only then did he realize that his own hand was smarting.

No time was lost in mopping up the spilt soup. Baoyu stopped eating, rinsed his fingers and sipped some tea while exchanging a few more remarks with the two nurses, who then took their leave and were seen off to the bridge by Qingwen and some other girls.

As soon as they were alone, the old women started talking as they ambled along.

One of them said with a laugh, “No wonder Baoyu’s called a handsome fool. Handsome is as handsome does, and anyone can see he’s a bit touched. He scalds his own hand and asks someone else if it hurts — what could be more stupid than that?”

“The last time I came here,” the other rejoined, “I heard several of those girls say he’s downright cracked. He got drenched himself in the rain and advised someone else to take shelter. Don’t you call that soft? When there’s no one about he laughs and cries to himself. When he sees a swallow he talks to the swallow, when he sees a fish in the stream he talks to the fish. He sighs or mumbles to the moon and stars, and has so little spirit he even puts up with the tantrums of those pert girls. When he’s in a saving mood he treasures the least scrap of thread, but at other times he doesn’t mind squandering millions.”

Chatting like this they left the Garden and after taking leave of the others went home.

To revert to Xiren, as soon as these visitors had left she brought Yinger in and asked Baoyu what sort of net he wanted.

么络子。宝玉笑着向莺儿道：“才只顾说话，就忘了你。烦你来不为别的，却为替我打几根络子。”莺儿道：“装什么的络子？”宝玉见问，便笑道：“不管装什么的，你都每样打几个罢。”莺儿拍手笑道：“这还了得！要这样，十年也打不完了。”宝玉笑道：“好姐姐，你闲着也没事，都替我打了罢。”袭人笑道：“那里一时都打得完，如今且拣要紧的打两个罢。”莺儿道：“什么要紧，不过是扇子、香坠儿、汗巾子。”宝玉道：“汗巾子就好。”莺儿道：“汗巾子是什么颜色的？”宝玉道：“大红的。”莺儿道：“大红的须是黑络子才好看呢，或是石青的才压得住颜色。”宝玉道：“松花色配什么？”莺儿道：“松花配桃红。”宝玉道：“也罢了，也打一条桃红，再打一条葱绿。”莺儿道：“什么花样呢？”宝玉道：“共有几样花样？”莺儿道：“一炷香、朝天凳、象眼块、方胜、连环、梅花、柳叶。”宝玉道：“前儿你替三姑娘打的那花样是什么？”莺儿道：“那是攒心梅花。”宝玉道：“就是那样好。”一面说，一面袭人刚拿了线来，窗外婆子说：“姑娘们的饭都有了。”宝玉道：“你们吃饭去，快吃了来罢。”袭人笑道：“有客在这里，我们怎好去的！”莺儿一面理线，一面笑道：“这话又打那里说起，正经快吃了来罢。”袭人等听说方去了，只留下两个小丫头听呼唤。

宝玉一面看莺儿打络子，一面说闲话，因问他：“十几岁

数字水印  
PDG





"I was so busy talking I forgot you," he told Yinger with an apologetic smile.

"I want to trouble you to make me some nets."

"Nets for what?"

"Never mind about that. Make a few of each kind."

"Good gracious!" Yinger clapped her hands and laughed. "That would take ten years and more."

"You've nothing to do anyway, dear sister, so do make them for me."

"You're asking the impossible," protested Xiren with a smile. "Let her first do a couple of the kind you need most."

"And which are those?" asked Yinger. "Nets to hold fans, scented pouches, or sashes?"

"Yes," said Baoyu. "One for a sash would be nice."

"For what colour sash?" asked Yinger.

"Scarlet," said Baoyu.

"A black or slate-blue net would make a good contrast, then."

"What would match a light green one?"

"That would go well with peach-pink."

"All right. Do me one also in peach-pink and another in leek-green."

"What design would you like?"

"How many do you know?"

"'Incense-stick,' 'ladder,' 'lozenge,' 'double squares,' 'chains,' 'plum-blossom' and 'willow-catkins.'"

"What was that pattern you worked for Miss Tanchun the other day?"

"That was 'clustered plum-blossom.'"

"That would do nicely," Baoyu said. At the same time he asked Xiren to fetch the thread.

Then a nurse called through the window: "Your lunch is ready, misses!"

"Go and have lunch," said Baoyu, "and come back as soon as you can."

"How can we go when we've a visitor here?" asked Xiren with a smile.

"Nonsense," declared Yinger, sorting out the thread. "Run along."

Then Xiren and all but two of the youngest girls left. Baoyu chatted with Yinger as he watched her work.



了？”莺儿手里打着，一面答话说：“十六岁了。”宝玉道：“你本姓什么？”莺儿道：“姓黄。”宝玉笑道：“这个名姓倒对了，果然是个黄莺儿。”莺儿笑道：“我的名字本来是两个字，呼作金莺。姑娘嫌拗口，就单叫莺儿，如今就叫开了。”宝玉道：“宝姐姐也算疼你了。明儿宝姐姐出阁，少不得是你跟去了。”莺儿抿嘴一笑。宝玉笑道：“我常常和袭人说，明儿不知那一个有福的消受你们主子、奴才两个呢。”莺儿笑道：“你还不知道我们姑娘有几样世人都没有的好处呢，模样儿还在次。”宝玉见莺儿娇憨婉转，语笑如痴，早不胜其情了，那禁又提起宝钗来。便问道：“好处在那里？好姐姐，细细告诉我听。”莺儿笑道：“我告诉你，你可不许又告诉他去。”宝玉笑道：“这个自然的。”正说着，只听外头说道：“怎么这样静悄悄的！”二人回头看时，不是别人，正是宝钗来了。宝玉忙让坐。宝钗坐了，因问莺儿：“打什么呢？”一面问，一面向他手里去瞧，才打了半截。宝钗笑道：“这有什么趣儿，倒不如打个络子把玉络上呢。”一句话提醒了宝玉，便拍手笑道：“倒是姐姐说的是，我就忘了。只是配个什么颜色才好？”宝钗道：“若用杂色断然使不得，大红又犯了色，黄的又不起眼，黑的又过暗。等我想个法儿：把那金线拿来，配着黑珠儿线，一根一根的拈上，打成络子，这才好看。”

宝玉听说，喜之不尽，一叠声便叫袭人来取金线。正值





“How old are you?” he asked.

“Sixteen,” she replied, her fingers busy netting the thread.

“What’s your family name?”

“Huang.”

Baoyu smiled.

“Then you’re aptly named, because you really are a golden oriole.”<sup>1</sup>

“My name used to be Jinying, but my young lady found that awkward and just called me Yinger instead. Now everyone’s got into the way of it.”

“Cousin Baochai is very fond of you,” he remarked. “When she marries she’s sure to take you along with her.”

Yinger smiled at this and said nothing.

Baoyu went on, “I often tell Xiren he’ll be a lucky man, whoever gets the pair of you, mistress and maid.”

To this she replied, “I don’t think you quite realize that our young lady, apart from her good looks, has some wonderful qualities which you won’t find in anyone else in the world.”

Baoyu was enchanted by Yinger’s charming manner and the sweet, innocent way she spoke of her mistress.

“What wonderful qualities?” he asked. “Do tell me, dear sister.”

“If I do, you mustn’t let her know.”

“Of course not.”

Just then a voice outside asked, “Why are you so quiet?”

Looking round they saw that it was Baochai herself. Baoyu hastily offered her a seat, and having sat down she asked Yinger what kind of net she was making. Examining the net, which was only half done, she remarked: “This isn’t very interesting. Why not make a net for his jade?”

“Of course, cousin!” Baoyu clapped his hands in approval. “I’d forgotten that. But what colour would be best?”

“Nothing too nondescript would do,” said Baochai. “But crimson would clash, yellow wouldn’t stand out well enough, and black would be too drab. I suggest you get some golden thread and plait it with black-beaded thread to make a net. *That* would look handsome.”

Baoyu was so delighted with this idea that he immediately called for Xiren to fetch the gold thread. She happened to come in at that moment

袭人端了两碗菜走进来，告诉宝玉道：“今儿奇怪，才刚太太打发人给我送了两碗菜来。”宝玉笑道：“必定是今儿菜多，送来给你们大家吃的。”袭人道：“不是，指名给我送来，还不叫我过去磕头。这可是奇了。”宝钗笑道：“给你的，就吃去，这有什么猜疑的？”袭人笑道：“从来没有的事，倒叫我不好意思的。”宝钗抿嘴一笑，说道：“这就不好意思了？明儿还有比这个更叫你不好意思的呢。”袭人听了话内有因，素知宝钗不是轻嘴薄舌、奚落人的，自己方想起上日王夫人的意思来，便不再提，将菜与宝玉看了，说：“洗了手来拿线。”说毕，便一直出去了。吃过饭，洗了手，进来拿金线与莺儿打络子。此时宝钗早被薛蟠遣人来请出去了。

这里宝玉正看着打络子，忽见邢夫人那边遣了两个丫鬟送了两样果子来与他吃，问他：“可走得了？若走得动，叫哥儿明儿过去散散心，太太着实记挂着呢。”宝玉忙道：“若走得了，必请太太的安去。疼的比先好些，请太太放心罢。”一面叫他两个坐下，一面又叫秋纹来，把才刚那果子拿一半送与林姑娘去。秋纹答应了，刚欲去时，只听黛玉在院内说话，宝玉忙叫“快请”。要知端的，且听下回分解。



with two dishes.

"This is odd," she told him. "Her Ladyship has just sent me these two dishes."

"There must be such a lot of dishes today that she has sent these for all you girls."

"No, they said these were specially for me, and I needn't go over to kowtow my thanks. This seems very strange."

"If they're for you, then eat them," put in Baochai with a smile. "Don't look so puzzled."

"But such a thing has never happened before. I feel rather embarrassed."

"What's there to be embarrassed about?" Baochai smiled significantly. "Some day more embarrassing things than this will happen to you."

Xiren sensed something behind these words, knowing that Baochai was not one to make cutting remarks. Recalling Lady Wang's hint the previous day, she dropped the subject and simply showed Baoyu the dishes before withdrawing again with the assurance:

"I'll fetch the thread as soon as I've washed my hands."

After lunch, having rinsed her hands, she brought the gold thread to Yinger and found that Baochai had been summoned by her brother and left. While Baoyu watched Yinger at work, Lady Xing sent two maids with two varieties of fruit for him and the message:

"If you're fit enough to walk, Her Ladyship hopes you'll go over tomorrow to have a little distraction. She's longing to see you."

"If I'm able I'll certainly come and pay my respects," he answered. "I'm already feeling much better. Please tell her not to worry."

He made the girls sit down and told Qiuwen to take half the fruit to Miss Lin. She was just leaving to do this when they heard Daiyu's voice outside, and Baoyu lost no time in inviting her in.

To know what followed, read on.



## 第三十六回

绣鸳鸯梦兆绛芸轩 识分定情悟梨香院

话说贾母自王夫人处回来，见宝玉一日好似一日，心中自是欢喜。因怕将来贾政又叫他，遂命人将贾政的亲随小厮头儿唤来，吩咐他：“以后倘有会人待客诸样的事，你老爷要叫宝玉，你不用上来传话，就回他说我说了：一则打重了，得着实将养几个月才走得；二则他的星宿不利，祭了星不见外人，过了八月才许出二门。”那小厮头儿听了，领命而去。贾母又命李嬷嬷、袭人等来，将此话说与宝玉，使他放心。那宝玉本就懒与士大夫诸男人接谈，又最厌峨冠礼服，贺吊往还等事，今日得了这句话，越发得了意，不但将亲戚朋友一概杜绝了，而且连家庭中晨昏定省益发都随他的便了。日日只在园中游卧，不过每日一清早到贾母、王夫人处走走就回来了，却每每甘心为诸丫鬟充役，竟也得十分闲消日月。或如宝钗辈有时见机导劝，反生起气来，只说：“好好的一个清净洁白女儿，也学的沽名钓誉，入了国贼禄鬼之流。这总是前人无故生事，立言竖辞，原为导后世的须眉浊物。不想我生不幸，亦且琼闺绣阁中亦染此风，真真有负天

## Chapter 36

### A Dream During the Embroidering of Mandarin Ducks in Red Rue Studio Foretells the Future Baoyu Learns in Pear Fragrance Court That Each Has His Share of Love

The Lady Dowager went back from Lady Wang's rooms to her own quarters very pleased by Baoyu's steady recovery. To forestall any further summons from his father, she sent for Jia Zheng's chief page and gave him these orders:

"Next time your master wants Baoyu to meet or entertain guests, you can tell him without reporting it to me that I've forbidden the boy to set foot outside the second gate until after the eighth month. For one thing, it will be several months before he can walk again after that terrible beating. For another, just now his stars are unpropitious, and he mustn't meet any outsiders while sacrifices are being made to the stars."

When the page had assented and left, Nanny Li and Xiren were summoned and instructed to tell Baoyu this to reassure him.

Baoyu had an inveterate dislike of entertaining literati or men in general. He hated putting on ceremonial dress to pay calls, return visits or offer congratulations or condolences. Delighted by his grandmother's decision, he not only stopped seeing most relatives and friends but even grew lax about asking after the health of his seniors each morning and evening. After paying his respects early in the morning to his grandmother and mother he spent the rest of the day amusing himself in the Garden, often glad to idle away his time by offering his services to the maids. When Baochai or any of the others advised against this it only angered him.

"Imagine a pure, innocent girl joining the ranks of time-servers and place-seekers, who set such store by reputation!" he would fume. "This is all the fault of the ancients who had nothing better to do than coin maxims and codes to control stupid, uncouth men. It's too bad that in our time even those in refined ladies' chambers have been contaminated.



地钟灵毓秀之德!”因此祸延古人,除《四书》外,竟将别的书焚了。众人见他如此疯颠,也都不向他说这些正经话了。独有林黛玉自幼不曾劝他去“立身扬名”等语,所以深敬黛玉。

闲言少述。如今且说王凤姐自见金钏死后,忽见几家仆人常来孝敬他些东西,又不时的来请安奉承,自己倒生了疑惑,不知何意。这日又见人来孝敬他东西,因晚间无人时笑问平儿道:“这几家人不大管我的事,为什么忽然这么和我贴近?”平儿冷笑道:“奶奶连这个都想不起来了?我猜他们的女儿都必是太太房里的丫头,如今太太房里有四个大的,一个月一两银子的分例,下剩的都是一个月几百钱。如今金钏儿死了,必定他们要弄这一两银子的巧宗儿呢。”凤姐听了,笑道:“是了,是了,倒是你提醒了。我看这些人也太不知足,钱也赚够了,苦事情又侵不着,弄个丫头搪塞着身子也就罢了,又还想这个。也罢了,他们几家的钱容易也不能花到我跟前,这是他们自寻的,送什么来,我就收什么,横竖我有主意。”凤姐儿安下这个心,所以只管迁延着,等那些人把东西送足了,然后趁空方回王夫人。

这日午间,薛姨妈母女两个与林黛玉等正在王夫人房里大家吃西瓜呢,凤姐儿得便回王夫人道:“自从金钏儿姐姐死了,太太跟前少着一个人。太太或看准了那个丫头好,就吩咐,下月好放给月钱的。”王夫人听了,想了一想,道:“依我说,什么是例,必定四个、五个的,够使就罢了,竟可以免了罢。”凤姐笑道:“论理,太太说的也是。这原是旧例,





This is an offence against Heaven and Earth which endowed them with the finest qualities.”

Going further in his anger against the ancients, he burned all the Confucian classics in his possession except the *Four Books*. His wild ways discouraged people from talking to him about serious matters. And the only person he really admired was Daiyu precisely because she alone had never urged him to seek an official career or fame for himself.

But now let us return to Xifeng. After Jinchuan's death several servants suddenly started bringing her gifts and coming to pay their respects or flatter her. She became at a loss to account for the stream of presents sent her. One evening, when no one else was about, she remarked to Pinger:

“These families never had much to do with me before. Why are they making up to me now like this?”

“Isn't it obvious, madam?” Pinger smiled. “I fancy their daughters are working for Lady Wang. Her four chief maids get one tael of silver a month, the others only a few hundred cash apiece. Now that Jinchuan's dead they're all hoping to land this cushy one-tael job.”

“Of course.” Xifeng laughed. “Good for you. There's no satisfying some people. They've squeezed enough and no hard work ever comes their way. You'd think they'd be contented with getting their daughters off their hands, but no, they want something better. Well, it's not often they spend their money on me. Since they're doing this of their own free will I'll accept whatever they bring, but it won't make any difference to my decision.”

So she waited until enough gifts had been sent before taking the matter up with Lady Wang.

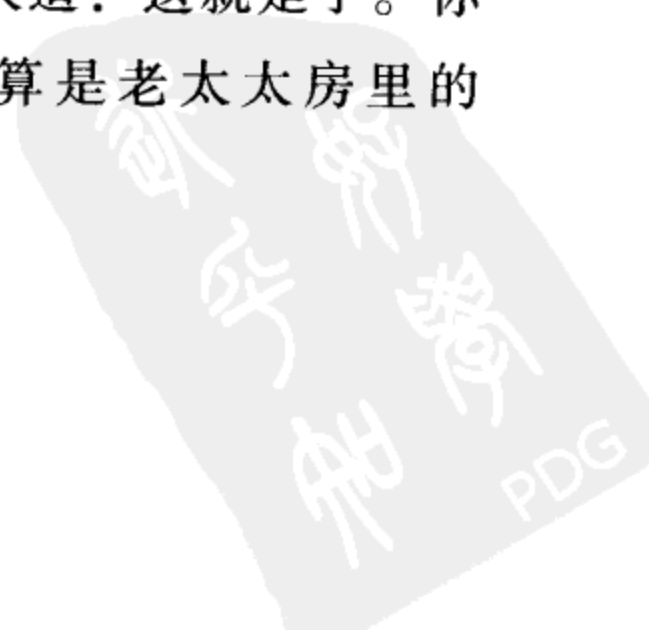
Her chance came at noon one day when Aunt Xue, Baochai and Daiyu were eating water-melons in Lady Wang's apartments.

“Since Yuchuan's sister died you've been one maid short, madam,” observed Xifeng. “If there's any girl you fancy, just tell me, and next month we can issue her allowance.”

Lady Wang thought this over.

“I don't see why we must have a fixed number of maids,” she said. “I've all I need, why not let it go at that?”

别人屋里还有两个呢，太太倒不按例了。况且省下一两银子也有限。”王夫人听了，又想一想，道：“也罢，这个分例只管关了来，不用补人，就把这一两银子给他妹妹玉钏儿罢。他姐姐伏侍了我一场，没个好结果，剩下他妹妹跟着我，吃个双分子也不为过逾了。”凤姐答应着，回头找玉钏儿，笑道：“大喜，大喜。”玉钏儿过来磕了头。王夫人问道：“正要问你，如今赵姨娘、周姨娘的月例多少？”凤姐道：“那是定例，每人二两。赵姨娘有环兄弟的二两，共是四两，另外四串钱。”王夫人道：“可都按数给他们？”凤姐见问的奇，忙道：“怎么不按数给！”王夫人道：“前儿我恍惚听见有人抱怨，说短了一吊钱，是什么原故？”凤姐忙笑道：“姨娘们的丫头，月例原是人各一吊。从旧年他们外头商议的，姨娘们每位的丫头分例减半，人各五百钱，每位两个丫头，所以短了一吊钱。这也抱怨不着我，我倒乐得给他们呢，他们外头又扣着，难道我添上不成？这个事我不过是接手儿，怎么来，怎么去，由不得我作主。我倒说了两三回，仍旧添上这两分的。他们说只有这个项数，叫我也难再说了。如今我手里每月连日子都不错给他们呢。先时在外头关，那个月不打饥荒，何曾顺顺溜溜的得过一遭儿。”王夫人听说，也就罢了，半日又问：“老太太屋里几个一两的？”凤姐道：“八个。如今只有七个，那一个是袭人。”王夫人道：“这就是了。你宝兄弟也并没有一两的丫头，袭人还算是老太太房里的





“What you say makes good sense, of course, madam,” answered Xifeng. “This just happens to be the tradition. If even the concubines have two maids apiece, why shouldn’t you have your full quota? It’s only saving one tael in any case.”

“Very well,” said Lady Wang on second thoughts. “You can issue the allowance but don’t assign me another maid. We’ll give this tael to Yuchuan. Jinchuan waited on me all that time before coming to such a sad end, it’s only fair this double pay should go to her sister.”

Xifeng turned to look at Yuchuan.

“Congratulations!” she called with a smile.

Then Yuchuan stepped forward to kowtow her thanks.

“That reminds me,” said Lady Wang. “How much are the concubines Zhao and Zhou allowed a month?”

“The regular two taels each. Concubine Zhao gets another two for Huan, making four taels and an extra four strings of cash.”

“Are they paid in full every month?”

“Of course they are,” declared Xifeng in surprise.

“The other day I seem to have heard someone complaining that she was one string short. Why was that?”

Xifeng replied readily, “The allowance for the concubines’ maids used to be one string a month, but last year the gentlemen in the treasury decided to reduce it by half — to five hundred cash for each. As each of them has two maids, that makes one string less. They can’t complain this was my doing. I’d like to give them the usual amount; but since the gentlemen cut it, how can I make good the cut? I’m only the intermediary, I’ve no say in the matter. I merely hand out what I’m given. Several times in fact I’ve suggested restoring their original pay, only to be told, ‘This is the quota.’ I can’t do more. At least I pay them on the dot each month, whereas in the past those people in the treasury always kept them waiting. They were never paid so regularly before.”

A short silence followed.

Then Lady Wang asked again, “How many of the old lady’s maids get one tael?”

“Eight before, now seven. The other one is Xiren.”

“That’s right, Baoyu has no maids in the one-tael class, but Xiren’s

人。”凤姐笑道：“袭人原是老太太的人，不过给了宝兄弟使。他这一两银子还在老太太的丫头分例上领。如今说因为袭人是宝玉的人，裁了这一两银子，断乎使不得。若说再添一个人给老太太，这个还可以裁他的。若不裁他的，须得环兄弟屋里也添上一个才公道均匀了。就是晴雯、麝月等七个大丫头，每月人各月钱一吊，佳蕙等八个小丫头，每月人各月钱五百，还是老太太的话，别人如何恼得气得呢？”薛姨妈笑道：“只听凤丫头的嘴，倒像倒了核桃车子的，只听他的账也清楚，理也公道。”凤姐笑道：“姑妈，难道我说错了不成？”薛姨妈笑道：“说的何尝错，只是你慢些说，岂不省力？”凤姐才要笑，忙又忍住了，听王夫人示下。王夫人想了半日，向凤姐儿道：“明儿挑一个好丫头送去老太太使，补袭人，把袭人的一分裁了。把我每月的月例二十两银子里，拿出二两银子一吊钱来给袭人。以后凡事有赵姨娘、周姨娘的，也有袭人的，只是袭人的这一分都从我的分例上匀出来，不必动官中的就是了。”凤姐一一的答应了，笑推薛姨妈道：“姑妈听见了，我素日说的话如何？今儿果然应了我的话。”薛姨妈道：“早就该如此。模样儿自然不用说的，他的那一种行事大方，说话见人和气里头带着刚硬要强，这个实在难得。”王夫人含泪说道：“你们那里知道袭人那孩子的好处，比我的宝玉强十倍！宝玉果然是有造化的，能够得他长远远的伏侍他一辈子，也就罢了。”凤姐道：“既这么样，就开了脸，明放他在屋里岂不好？”王夫人道：“那就不好了，一则都年轻，二则老爷也不许，三则那宝玉见袭人是个丫头，纵有放纵的事，倒能听他的劝，如今作了跟前人，那



still counted as in the old lady's service."

"Yes, Xiren still belongs to the old lady and is simply on loan to Cousin Bao, so her money comes out of the allowance for the old lady's maids. It would certainly be wrong to reduce Xiren's one-tael allowance because she's waiting on Baoyu, unless we gave the old lady another maid. And in that case, if Xiren's pay isn't cut Cousin Huan ought to have a maid with the same pay as well, to be fair. As for Qingwen, Sheyue and the other five of them, they get one string of cash apiece, while the eight younger girls like Jiahui get half a string. This is all according to the old lady's instructions, so it's no use anyone cutting up rough about it."

"Just listen to her," cried Aunt Xue with a laugh, "She rattles on like walnuts tipped out of a cart. But how clearly and fairly she puts everything."

"Did I say anything wrong, aunt?" asked Xifeng.

"Of course not. But you'd save breath by speaking slower."

Suppressing a smile, Xifeng waited for further instructions. Lady Wang thought for a while.

"Now," she announced, "you must choose the old lady a good maid in Xiren's place and stop Xiren's pay, but give her two taels and one string of cash from the twenty taels I get every month. In future she's to have the same treatment as Concubine Zhao, only her share is to come from my allowance, not from the general fund."

Having agreed to this, Xifeng nudged Aunt Xue,

"Did you hear that, aunt?" She asked. "What did I tell you?"

"This should have been done long ago," was Aunt Xue's comment. "Quite apart from the girl's looks where would you find another with such ladylike manners, so polite and yet so firm and principled? She really is a treasure."

"You don't know half her fine qualities." There were tears in Lady Wang's eyes. "She's ten times as good as my Baoyu. I ask no better luck for him than to have her looking after him all his life."

"In that case," suggested Xifeng, "Why not go through the usual ceremonies and make her his concubine openly?"

"No, that wouldn't do. For one thing, they're both too young. For another, his father would never agree. Besides, when he behaves wildly,

袭人该劝的也不敢十分劝了。如今且浑着，等再过二三年再说罢。”

说毕半日，凤姐见无话，便转身出来。刚至廊檐上，只见有几个执事的媳妇子正等他回事，见他出来，都笑道：“奶奶今儿回什么事，这半天？可是要热着了。”凤姐把袖子挽了几挽，踏着那角门的门槛子，笑道：“这里过门风倒凉快，吹一吹再走。”又告诉众人道：“你们说我回了这半日的话，太太把二百年头里的事都想起来问我，难道我不说罢？”又冷笑道：“我从今以后倒要干几样刻毒事了。抱怨给太太听，我也不怕。糊涂油蒙了心，烂了舌头，不得好死的下作东西，别作他娘的春梦！明儿一裹脑子扣的日子还有呢。如今裁了丫头的钱，就抱怨咱们了？也不想一想是奴几，也配使两三个丫头！”一面骂，一面方走了，自去挑人回贾母话去，不在话下。

却说王夫人等这里吃毕西瓜，又说了一回闲话，各自方散去。宝钗与黛玉等回至园中，宝钗因约黛玉往藕香榭去，黛玉回说“就要洗澡”，便各自散去。宝钗独自行来，顺路进了怡红院，意欲寻宝玉谈讲以解午倦。不想一入院来，鸦雀无闻，一并连两只仙鹤在芭蕉下都睡着了。宝钗便顺着游廊来至房中，只见外间床上横三竖四，都是丫头们睡觉。转过十锦榻子，来至宝玉的房内。宝玉在床上睡着了，袭人坐在身旁，手里做针线，旁边放着一柄白犀拂尘。宝钗走近前来，悄悄的笑道：“你也过于小心了，这个屋里那里还有苍蝇蚊子，还拿绳帚子赶什么？”袭人不防，猛抬头见是宝钗，



so long as Xiren's his maid he listens to her; but if she were made his concubine now she wouldn't dare remonstrate strongly. Better let things stand as they are for a few more years."

After Lady Wang had finished, as she had no further instructions Xifeng withdrew. As soon as she reached the corridor she found some stewards' wives waiting for her there.

"What business has kept you so long today, madam?" they asked her gaily. "You must be feeling the heat."

Xifeng tucked up her sleeves and stood on the doorstep.

"It's pleasant here with the through draught, I'll cool off a bit before going on," she remarked. "It's not my fault if I've been a long time. Her Ladyship has been raking up ancient history, and I had to answer her questions one by one."

With a grim smile she added, "Well, from today on, I mean to show how ruthless I can be, and I don't care if they complain to Her Ladyship either. Rot those stupid, foul-mouthed bitches! They'll come to no good end. How puffed up they are with their own consequence! But they'll lose the lot, and sooner than they think. Blaming us, indeed, because their maids' pay is cut. Who do they think they are? Do they deserve maids?"

Still pouring out abuse, she went off to select a new maid for the Lady Dowager.

Meanwhile Lady Wang and the others had finished their melons, and after some further talk the party broke up, the girls returning to the Garden. Daiyu, on the grounds that she must have a bath, turned down a suggestion by Baochai to call on Xichun. And after the two girls had parted, Baochai walked on alone to Happy Red Court, hoping that a chat with Baoyu would overcome the drowsiness induced by the mid-day heat.

To her surprise, his courtyard was utterly quiet. Even the two storks were sleeping under the plantain. Walking along the verandah into the outer room, she found his maids sprawled on their beds having a nap. She passed the curio cabinet into Baoyu's room and discovered him sleeping too. Xiren seated by him was sewing, a white whisk beside her.

Baochai tiptoed up to her.

"You're overdoing it, surely!" she said with a soft laugh. "You've no

忙放下针钱，起身悄悄笑道：“姑娘来了，我倒也不防，唬了一跳。姑娘不知道，虽然没有苍蝇蚊子，谁知有一种小虫子，从这纱眼里钻进来，人也看不见，只睡着了，咬一口，就像蚂蚁夹的。”宝钗道：“怨不得。这屋子后头又近水，又都是香花儿，这屋子里头又香。这种虫子都是花心里长的，闻香就扑。”说着，一面又瞧他手里的针线，原来是个白绫红里的兜肚，上面扎着“鸳鸯戏莲”的花样，红莲绿叶，五色鸳鸯。宝钗道：“嗳哟，好鲜亮活计！这是谁的，也值的费这么大工夫？”袭人向床上努嘴儿。宝钗笑道：“这么大了，还带这个？”袭人笑道：“他原是不带，所以特特的做的好了，叫他看见由不得不带。如今天气热，睡觉都不留神，哄他带上了，便是夜里纵盖不严些儿，也就不怕了。你说这一个就用了工夫，还没看见他身上现带的那一个呢。”宝钗笑道：“也亏你耐烦。”袭人道：“今儿做的工夫大了，脖子低的怪酸的。”又笑道：“好姑娘，你略坐一坐，我出去走走就来。”说着便走了。宝钗只顾看着活计，便不留心，一蹲身，刚刚的也坐在袭人方才坐的所在。因又见那活计实在可爱，不由的拿起针来，替他代刺。

不想林黛玉因遇见史湘云约他来与袭人道喜，二人来至院中，见静悄悄的，湘云便转身先到厢房里去找袭人。林黛玉却来至窗外，隔着纱窗往里一看，只见宝玉穿着银红纱衫





flies or mosquitoes here, so why the whisk?"

Xiren raised her head in surprise, then hastily put down her work and rose to her feet.

"So it's you, miss," she whispered. "You gave me quite a start. We've no flies or mosquitoes, I know. But there's a kind of midge, so small you can hardly see it, which can get through the gauze and bite anyone who's sleeping. It's like being stung by an ant."

"That's true. You've not much open space behind the house, but you've fragrant flowers all around and this room is scented too. These insects which live on the pollen of flowers are attracted to anything fragrant."

While saying this Baochai had been examining the work in Xiren's hand. It was a white silk stomacher lined with red, which she was embroidering with mandarin ducks at play among some lotus. The lotus flowers were pink, the leaves green, and the ducks a medley of colours.

"How charming!" exclaimed Baochai. "Whose is it, to be worth so much effort?"

Xiren motioned with her lips towards the bed.

"Isn't he too big to wear such things?" asked Baochai.

Xiren smiled.

"That's what *he* thinks. So to tempt him, I make them specially handsome. In this heat he's careless about covering himself; but if I get him to wear one of these it doesn't matter if he kicks off his bedding at night. If you think I've put a lot of work into this, you should see the one he has on."

"It's a good thing you have the patience."

"My neck aches from bending over so long today. Do you mind sitting here for a minute, miss, while I take a turn outside?"

With that Xiren left the room.

Baochai was so interested in the stomacher that she sat down without thinking in Xiren's place, unable to resist picking up the needle and going on embroidering the charming design.

Meanwhile Daiyu had run into Xiangyun and suggested they go together to congratulate Xiren. When they found the courtyard so quiet Xiangyun walked towards the servants' quarters in search of Xiren, but Daiyu peeped through the gauze of Baoyu's window. She saw him lying



子，随便睡着在床上，宝钗坐在身旁做针线，旁边放着蝇帚子。林黛玉见了这个景儿，连忙把身子一藏，手握着嘴不敢笑出来，招手儿叫湘云。湘云一见他这般景况，只当有什么新闻，忙也来一看，也要笑时，忽然想起宝钗素日待他厚道，便忙掩住口。知道林黛玉口里不让人，怕他言语之中取笑，便拉过他来道：“走罢。我想起袭人来，他说午间要到池子里去洗衣裳，想必去了，咱们那里找他去。”林黛玉心下明白，冷笑了两声，只得随他走了。

这里宝钗只刚做了两三个花瓣，忽见宝玉在梦中喊骂说：“和尚道士的话如何信得？什么是‘金玉姻缘’，我偏说是‘木石姻缘’！”薛宝钗听了这话，不觉怔了。忽见袭人走过来，笑道：“还没有醒呢。”宝钗摇头。袭人又笑道：“我才碰见林姑娘、史大姑娘，他们可曾进来？”宝钗道：“没见他们进来。”因向袭人笑道：“他们没告诉你什么话？”袭人笑道：“左不过是他们那些玩话，有什么正经说的。”宝钗笑道：“他们说的可不是玩话，我正要告诉你呢，你又忙忙的出去了。”

一句话未完，只见凤姐儿打发人来叫袭人。宝钗笑道：“就是为那话了。”袭人只得唤起两个丫鬟来，一同宝钗出怡红院，自往凤姐这里来。果然是告诉他这话，又叫他与王夫人叩头，且不必去见贾母，倒把袭人不好意思的。见过王夫人急忙回来，宝玉已醒了，问起原故，袭人且含糊答应，至夜间人静，袭人方告诉。宝玉喜之不尽，又向他笑道：“我



fast asleep in a pink linen shirt while Baochai sat next to him sewing, a whisk beside her. Seeing this Daiyu ducked out of sight and clapped one hand over her mouth to stifle her giggles, beckoning Xiangyun with the other hand. Her cousin ran over to see what was so amusing. She too was tempted to laugh, but restrained herself at the thought of how good Baochai had always been to her.

“Come on,” she said, dragging Daiyu away before she could make any cutting remarks. “I remember now, Xiren said she was going to the pool at noon to wash some clothes. Let’s go and look for her there.”

Daiyu saw through this ruse and snorted, but let Xiangyun lead her away.

Baochai inside had embroidered two or three petals when Baoyu started calling out in his sleep:

“Who believes what those bonzes and Taoists say? A match between gold and jade? Nonsense! Between wood and stone more likely, I’d say.”

Baochai was stunned by this when Xiren returned.

“Still not awake?” the maid asked.

Baochai simply shook her head.

“I just met Miss Lin and Miss Shi. Did they come in?”

“No, I didn’t see them. Hadn’t they something to tell you?”

“Some nonsense,” Xiren said. “They were just having one of their jokes.”

“They weren’t joking this time, I assure you.” Baochai smiled. “I was just going to tell you myself when you hurried off.”

She was interrupted by one of Xifeng’s maids who arrived with a summons for Xiren.

“There you are!” Baochai chuckled.

Then Xiren woke two of the other girls and left Happy Red Court with Baochai, going on alone to Xifeng’s quarters. There she was indeed informed of her promotion and told to go and kowtow to Lady Wang, but not to trouble the Lady Dowager. Xiren was quite overwhelmed.

On her hasty return from thanking Lady Wang, Baoyu was awake and asked where she had been. She gave an evasive answer. Only that night when they were alone did she tell him the truth, at which he was overjoyed.



可看你回家去不去了！那一回往家里走了一趟，回来就说你哥哥要赎你，又说在这里没着落，终究算什么，说了那么些无情无义的生分话唬我。从今以后，我可看谁来敢叫你去？”袭人听了，便冷笑道：“你倒别这么说。从此以后我是太太的人了，我要走连你也不必告诉，只回了太太就走。”宝玉笑道：“即便算我不好，你回了太太竟去了，叫别人听见说我不好，你也没意思。”袭人笑道：“有什么没意思，难道作了强盗贼，我也跟着罢。再不然，还有一个死呢。人活百岁，横竖要死，这一口气不在，听不见看不见就罢了。”宝玉听见这话，便忙握他的嘴，说道：“罢，罢，罢，不用说这些话了。”袭人深知宝玉性情古怪，听见奉承吉利话又厌虚而不实，听了这些尽情实话又生悲感，便悔自己说冒撞了，连忙笑着用话截开，只拣那宝玉素喜谈者问之。先问他春风秋月，再谈及粉淡脂莹，然后谈到女儿如何好，又谈到女儿死，袭人忙掩住口。宝玉谈至浓快时，见他不说了，便笑道：“人谁不死？只要死的好。那些个须眉浊物，只知道文死谏，武死战，这二死是大丈夫死名死节。竟何如不死的好！必定有昏君他方谏，他只顾邀名，猛拼一死，将来弃君于何地？必定有刀兵他方战，猛拼一死，他只顾图汗马之名，将来弃国于何地？所以这皆非正死。”袭人道：“忠臣良将，出于不得已他才死。”宝玉道：“那武将不过仗血气之勇，疏谋





"I don't see you going home now," he gloated. "After your last visit home you tried to frighten me with heartless talk, saying your brother meant to redeem you and you'd no future here. *Now* we'll see who dares fetch you away."

"You've no call to talk like that." She gave an ironic smile. "From now on I belong to Her Ladyship. I can leave without so much as a word to you, just by getting permission from her."

"Well, suppose I behaved so badly that you got leave from her and left, people hearing of it would put the blame on me. Wouldn't you feel bad about that?"

Xiren laughed.

"Why should I? If you turn bandit, should I have to go along with you? Anyhow, there is always death as a way out. All of us must die in the end, even if we live to be a hundred. Once I've breathed my last and can't see or hear any more I'll be through with you, won't I?"

Baoyu hastily put his hand over her mouth.

"All right, all right. Don't say such things."

Xiren knew all his foibles. Whereas hypocritical compliments disgusted him, true sentiments of this kind distressed him too. Regretting her tactlessness she hastily turned to subjects more to his taste: the spring breeze and autumn moon; powder and rouge; and, finally, the good qualities of girls. When this led inadvertently to talk of girls' dying, she hastily broke off.

Baoyu had been joining in with the greatest of pleasure, and when she stopped he responded cheerfully:

"All men must die. The thing is to die for good reasons. Those vulgar sods believe that ministers who die for remonstrating with the Emperor and generals who die in battle win immortal fame as fine, upright men — but wouldn't it be better if they didn't die? After all, there has to be a despot on the throne before ministers can remonstrate; but they court death in their eagerness to make a name, with a complete disregard for their sovereign. In the same way, there has to be a war before generals can die in battle; so they fight recklessly and try to win glory by dying, with no thought of the country's welfare. That's why I say these aren't worthy deaths."

"Loyal ministers and good generals only die when it's necessary,"

少略，他自己无能，送了性命，这难道也是不得已？那文官更不比武官了，他念两句书窝在心里，若朝廷少有疵瑕，他就胡谈乱劝，只顾他邀忠烈之名，浊气一涌，即时拼死，这难道也是不得已？还要知道，那朝廷是受命于天，他不圣不仁，那天地断不把这万几重任与他了。可知那些死的都是沽名，并不知大义。比如我此时若果有造化，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。”袭人忽见说出这些疯话来，忙说困了，不理他。那宝玉方合眼睡着，至次日也就丢开了。

一日，宝玉因各处游的烦腻，便想起《牡丹亭》曲来，自己看了两遍，犹不惬意，因闻得梨香院的十二个女孩子中有小旦龄官最是唱的好，因着意出角门来找时，只见宝官、玉官都在院内，见宝玉来了，都笑嘻嘻的让坐。宝玉因问“龄官独在那里？”众人都告诉他说：“在他房里呢。”宝玉忙至他房内，只见龄官独自倒在枕上，见他进来，公然不动。宝玉素习与别的女孩子玩惯了的，只当龄官也同别人一样，因近前，来身旁坐下，又陪笑央他起来唱“袅晴丝”一套。不想龄官见他坐下，忙抬身起来躲避，正色说道：“嗓子哑了。前儿娘娘传进我们去，我还没有唱呢。”宝玉见他坐



countered Xiren.

“If a foolhardy general has no idea of strategy and gets killed through incompetence, is that *necessary*? Civil officials are even worse. They learn by heart a few passages from books and if the government has the slightest fault they remonstrate at random, in the hope of winning fame as loyal men. If they court death in a fit of temper, is that necessary too? They should know that the sovereign receives his mandate from Heaven. Heaven wouldn’t entrust such an onerous task to anyone but a benevolent sage. So, you see, they die to win a reputation, not for the sake of noble principles.

“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.”

To cut short such wild talk Xiren said she was tired and gave up answering him. Then Baoyu closed his own eyes and went to sleep. Nor did he revert to the subject the next day.

That day, bored with the Garden, Baoyu recalled some songs in *The Peony Pavilion* and read through the libretto twice. Still not satisfied, he decided to look for Lingguan who played the part of young ladies and was said to be the best singer among the twelve young actresses in Pear Fragrance Court. So he went out through the side gate in search of her. Baoguan and Yuguan, whom he found in the courtyard there, greeted him pleasantly and invited him in.

“Where is Lingguan?” he asked.

“In her room,” they told him.

He hurried in and found her lying alone on her bed, and she did not move when she saw him. Used as he was to playing about with girls, he imagined Lingguan would respond like all the others; so he sat down beside her and with a coaxing smile begged her to get up and sing for him the passage describing the visit to the garden.

To his surprise she sat up and moved away.

“I’ve strained my voice,” she said gravely. “I didn’t even sing the



正了，再一细看，原来就是那日蔷薇花下划“蔷”字那一个。又见如此景况，从来未经过这番被人弃厌，自己便讪讪的红了脸，只得出来了。宝官等不解何故，因问其所以。宝玉便说了，遂出来。宝官便说道：“只略等一等，蔷二爷来了叫他唱，是必唱的。”宝玉听了，心下纳闷，因问：“蔷哥儿那去了？”宝官道：“才出去了，一定还是龄官要什么，他去变弄去了。”

宝玉听了，以为奇特，少站片时，果见贾蔷从外头来了，手里提着个雀儿笼子，上面扎着小戏台，并一个雀儿，兴头头往里走，找龄官。见了宝玉，只得站住。宝玉问他：“是个什么雀儿，会衔旗串戏台？”贾蔷笑道：“是个玉顶金豆。”宝玉道：“多少钱买的？”贾蔷道：“一两八钱银子。”一面说，一面让宝玉坐，自己往龄官房里来。宝玉此刻把听曲子的心都没了，且要看他和龄官是怎么样。只见贾蔷进去笑道：“你起来，瞧这个玩意儿。”龄官起身问是什么，贾蔷道：“买了雀儿你玩，省得天天闷闷的无个开心。我先玩个你看。”说着，便拿些谷子哄的那个雀儿果然在戏台上乱串，衔鬼脸旗帜。众女孩子都笑道“有趣”，独龄官冷笑了两声，赌气仍睡去了。贾蔷还只管陪笑，问他好不好。龄官道：“你们家把好好的人弄了来，关在这牢坑里学这牢什古子还不算，你这会子又弄个雀儿来，也偏生干这个。你分明是弄了他来打趣形容我们，还问我好不好。”贾蔷听了，不觉的慌起来，连忙赌身立誓。又道：“今儿我那里的脂油蒙了

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last time Her Imperial Highness sent for us.”

Now that she had sat up, Baoyu saw she was the girl who had written *Qiang* at the foot of the rose trellis. Never before had he been snubbed like this. His cheeks burning, he left the room. And when Baoguan and the others asked what the matter was, he told them.

“Just wait a bit till Master Qiang comes,” advised Baoguan. “If *he* asks her to sing, she will.”

“Where is he?” asked Baoyu, rather puzzled by this.

“He’s just gone out. Lingguan must have taken a fancy to something and he’s out trying to procure it for her.”

Baoyu waited, mystified, until Jia Qiang arrived with a bird-cage containing a bird and a miniature stage. He strode in cheerfully, eager to see Lingguan, but halted at sight of his uncle.

“What sort of bird is that,” inquired Baoyu, “able to hold a flag in its beak and walk round the stage?”

“It’s a jade-crested oriole,” Jia Qiang told him.

“How much did you give for it?”

“One tael, eighty cents.”

Urging Baoyu to sit a while, he went in to see Lingguan. By now Baoyu no longer wanted to hear her sing but was curious to know her relationship to Jia Qiang, who had walked in gaily calling out: “Get up and look at this!”

“What is it?” Lingguan raised herself on one elbow.

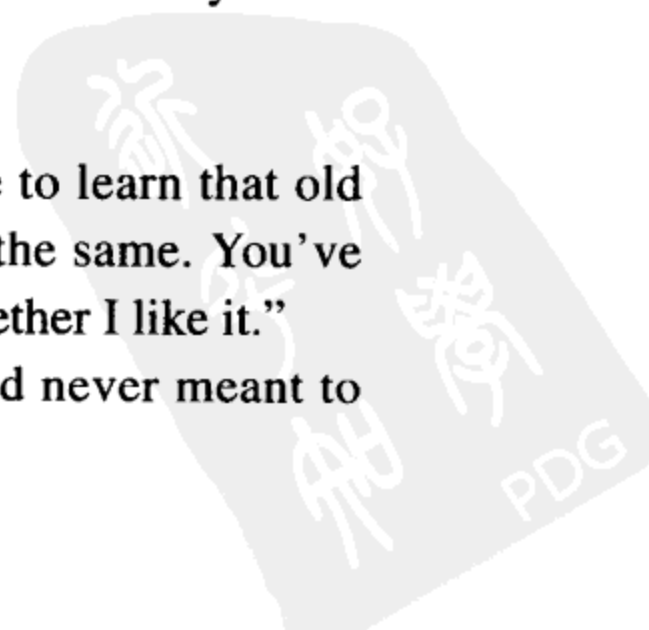
“I’ve brought you a bird to stop you feeling so bored. Let me show you how to put it through its tricks.”

Holding out a few seeds, he coaxed the bird to pick up a mask and flag and strut round the stage. All the other girls laughed, exclaiming “How amusing!”, but Lingguan gave a couple of snorts and lay down again in disgust.

“Like it?” Jia Qiang asked with a smile.

“It’s bad enough your family cooping *us* up here to learn that old trash,” she retorted. “And now you get a bird to do the same. You’ve obviously bought it to make fun of us, yet you ask whether I like it.”

Jia Qiang was disconcerted and swore that he had never meant to hurt her.



心!费一二两银子买他来,原说解闷,就没有想到这上头。罢,罢,放了生,免免你的灾病。”说着,果然将雀儿放了,一顿把那笼子拆了。龄官还说:“那雀儿虽不如人,他也有个老雀儿在窝里,你拿了他来弄这个牢什古子也忍得!今儿我咳嗽出两口血来,太太叫大夫来瞧,不说替我细问问,你且弄这个来取笑。偏生我这没人管没人理的,又偏病。”说着又哭起来。贾蔷忙道:“昨儿晚上我问了大夫,他说不相干。他说吃两剂药,后儿再瞧。谁知今儿又吐了,这会子请他去。”说着,便要请去。龄官又叫:“站住,这会子大毒日头地下,你赌气子去请了来,我也不瞧。”贾蔷听了如此说,只得又站住。宝玉见了这般景况,不觉痴了,这才领会了划“蔷”深意。自己站不住,便抽身走了。贾蔷一心都在龄官身上,也不顾送,倒是别的女孩子送了出来。

那宝玉一心裁度盘算,痴痴的回至怡红院中,正值林黛玉和袭人坐着说话儿呢。宝玉一进来,就和袭人长叹,说道:“我昨晚上的话竟说错了,怪道老爷说我是‘管窥蠡测’。昨夜说你们眼泪单葬我,这就错了。我竟不能全得了。从此后只是各人各得眼泪罢了。”袭人昨夜不过是些玩话,已经忘了,不想宝玉今又提起来,便笑道:“你可真真有些疯了。”宝玉默默不答,自此深悟人生情缘,各有分定,只是每暗暗伤心:“不知将来葬我洒泪者为谁?”此皆宝玉心中所怀者,不必十分妄拟。



“What a fool I am!” he cried. “I gave a couple of taels for this in the hope that it would amuse you, never dreaming that you’d feel this way about it. All right, I’ll set it free — to make you feel better.”

With that he let the bird out and smashed the cage.

“That bird may not be human,” said Lingguan, “but it has a mother bird in its nest. How heartless you are, bringing it here to play with. I coughed blood twice today, and Her Ladyship said that a doctor should be sent to examine me. But *you* — you bring this here to make fun of me. How unlucky I am, ill, with no one to care for me.”

She started sobbing again.

“I spoke to the doctor last night,” Jia Qiang replied hastily. “He said it was nothing serious and he’d come to examine you again after you’d taken a dose or two of the medicine prescribed. I’d no idea you’d coughed blood again. I’ll go and get him at once.”

He started off, but Lingguan called him back.

“The sun’s scorching just now,” she said. “If you go off in a huff to fetch him, I won’t see him.”

So the young man had to remain where he was.

Meanwhile Baoyu was lost in wonder as the significance of all those *chiangs* written on the ground dawned on him. And feeling superfluous there he took his leave. Jia Qiang being too absorbed in Lingguan to notice, it was left to the other girls to see him out.

Turning this discovery over in his mind, Baoyu walked back in a daze to Happy Red Court where he found Daiyu sitting and talking to Xiren. Baoyu went straight up to Xiren.

“What I said last night was wrong,” he told her with a sigh. “No wonder my father complains that I’m ‘benighted.’ It was wrong to say you’d all weep over my death. Now I know not all your tears would be for me — everyone will have his share.”

Xiren had forgotten those words spoken lightly the previous evening, and was surprised when he brought them up again.

“You really are crazy,” she told him teasingly.

Baoyu made no reply. Convinced now that all love was predestined, each having his allotted share, he was wondering wistfully who would shed tears for him when he was gone. But we need not attempt to guess

且说林黛玉当下见了宝玉如此形象，便知是又从那里着了魔来，也不便多问，因向他说道：“我才在舅母跟前，说明儿是薛姨妈的生日，叫我顺便来问你出去不出去。你打发人前头说一声去。”宝玉道：“上回连大老爷的生日我也没去，这会子我又去，倘或碰见了人呢？我一概都不去。这么怪热的，又穿衣裳，我不去，姨妈也未必恼。”袭人忙道：“这是什么话？他比不得大老爷。这里又住的近，又是亲戚，你不去，岂不叫他思量。你怕热，只清早起到那里磕个头，吃钟茶再来，岂不好看。”宝玉未说话，黛玉便先笑道：“你看着人家赶蚊子的分上，也该走走。”宝玉不解，忙问：“怎么赶蚊子？”袭人便将昨日睡觉无人作伴，宝姑娘坐了一坐的话说了出来。宝玉听了，忙说：“不该。我怎么睡着了，亵渎了他。”一面又说：“明日必去。”

正说着，忽见史湘云穿的齐齐整整走来，辞说家里打发人来接他。宝玉、林黛玉听说，忙站起来让坐。史湘云也不坐，宝、林两个只得送他至前面。那史湘云只是眼泪汪汪的，见有他家人在跟前，又不敢十分委曲。少时薛宝钗赶来，愈觉缱绻难舍。还是宝钗心内明白，他家人若回去告诉了他婶娘，待他家去又恐受气，因此倒催他走了。众人送至二门前，宝玉还要往外送，倒是湘云拦住了。一时，回身又



all his inmost thoughts.

When Daiyu saw the distracted state he was in she refrained from asking any questions, knowing that he must have been affected by something somewhere.

"I've just come from auntie," she told him. "Tomorrow is Aunt Xue's birthday, and auntie wants to know whether you'll go over or not. You'd better send someone to tell her."

"I didn't even go on my uncle's birthday," he said. "What if I were to meet someone there tomorrow? I'd rather steer clear of both birthdays. Besides, it's too hot for ceremonial dress. I'm sure Aunt Xue won't mind if I don't show up."

"The idea!" exclaimed Xiren. "She's on quite a different footing from His Lordship. You live close by, and she's a relative. If you don't go, she'll wonder why. If it's the heat you're afraid of, why not go first thing to kowtow and come back again after a cup of tea. Wouldn't that look better?"

Before Baoyu could answer, Daiyu teased, "You should go anyway for the sake of the one who kept away the mosquitoes."

"What's this about mosquitoes?" he demanded.

Xiren explained how Baochai had sat with him during his siesta the previous day, when there was nobody to wait on him.

"That's too bad," he cried. "How rude of me to sleep all through her visit. Well then, I must go tomorrow."

Just then Xiangyun appeared in formal dress. Her family had sent for her and she had come to say goodbye. At once they rose and asked her to be seated, but she could not stay and they had to see her out. Although her eyes were brimming with tears, she dared not complain in front of her family servants; but Baochai's arrival presently increased her reluctance to leave.

Baochai knew that if the servants reported this on their return to her aunt, Xiangyun might suffer for it. Accordingly she urged her to make a start. They saw her to the second gate, and Baoyu would have gone further but Xiangyun stopped him. She turned back, however, and beckoned him to her side.

"If the old lady forgets me," she whispered, "do remind her to send



叫宝玉到跟前，悄悄的嘱咐道：“便是老太太想不起我来，你时常提着，打发人接我去。”宝玉连连答应了。眼看着他上车去了，大家方才进来。要知端的，且听下回分解。



someone to fetch me back.”

Baoyu promised to do this for her.

They followed her with their eyes while she went to her carriage, and then retraced their steps. If you want to know what happened next, read on.









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## 第三十七回

### 秋爽斋偶结海棠社 蘅芜院夜拟菊花题

这年贾政又点了学差，择于八月二十日起身。是日拜过宗祠及贾母起身，宝玉诸子弟等送至洒泪亭。

却说贾政出门去后，外面诸事不能多记。单表宝玉每日在园中任意纵性的逛荡，直把光阴虚度，岁月空添。这日正无聊之际，只见翠墨进来，手里拿着一副花笺送与他。宝玉因道：“可是我忘了，才说要瞧瞧三妹妹去的，可好些了，你偏走来。”翠墨道：“姑娘好了，今日也不吃药了，不过是凉着一点儿。”宝玉听说，便展开花笺看时，上面写道：

妹探春谨奉

二兄文儿：前夕新霁，月色如洗。因惜清景难逢，讵忍就卧，时漏已三转，犹徘徊于桐槐之下，未防风露所侵，致获采薪之患。昨蒙亲劳抚嘱，后又数遣侍儿问切，兼以鲜荔并真卿墨迹见赐，何痼瘵惠爱之深耶！今因伏几凭床处默之时，因思及历来古人中处名攻利敌之场，犹置一些山水之区，远招近揖，投辖攀辕，务结一二同志盘桓于其中，或竖词坛，或开吟社，虽一时之偶兴，遂成千古之佳谈。妹虽不才，窃叨叨栖处于泉石之间，而兼慕薛、林之技。风庭月榭，惜未宴集诗人；帘



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## Chapter 37

### Begonia Club Takes Form One Day in the Studio of Autumn Freshness Themes for Poems on Chrysanthemums Are Prepared One Evening in Alpinia Park

Jia Zheng, having been appointed this year an Examiner of Provincial Education, chose the twentieth of the eighth month to start his journey. On that day, after paying his respects to the ancestral shrines and to the Lady Dowager, he was seen off by Baoyu and other young men of the family all the way to the Pavilion of Parting. But his doings outside need not concern us here.

His father's departure left Baoyu free to do as he pleased in the Garden, and he frittered away whole months in idleness. He was feeling listless one day when Cuimo brought him a letter on fancy note-paper.

"I'm glad you've come," said Baoyu. "I'd quite forgotten, I meant to go and see Third Sister. Is she better?"

"Yes, she's stopped taking medicine today," replied Cuimo. "It was only a slight chill."

Baoyu unfolded the letter then and read:

Tanchun greets her Second Brother.

The other night the moon was clear after the rain, and it seemed such a rare chance to enjoy the moonlight that I stayed up until midnight strolling under the trees. As a result, I caught a chill in the dew. You took the trouble to come in person and cheer me up yesterday, then sent your maids with gifts of fresh lichees and Yan Zhenqing's <sup>1</sup> calligraphy. I was extremely touched by your kind concern.

As I was resting quietly today it occurred to me that the ancients, even when pursuing fame and struggling for profit, kept a small hill or stream to which they could retire; and there, with a few friends from far or near, they amused themselves in their cups by organizing poetry clubs or literary forums. The fame of those impromptu gatherings has

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杏溪桃，或可醉飞银盏。孰谓莲社之雄才，独许须眉；直以东山之雅会，让余脂粉。若蒙棹雪而来，妹则扫花以待。谨奉。

宝玉看了，不觉喜的拍手笑道：“倒是三妹妹高雅，我如今就去商议。”一面说，一面就走，翠墨跟在后面。刚到了沁芳亭，只见园中后门上值日的婆子，手里拿着一个字帖走来，见了宝玉，便迎上去，口内说道：“芸哥儿请安，在后门只等着，叫我送来的。”宝玉打开看时，写道是：

不肖男芸恭请

父亲大人万福金安。男思自蒙天恩，认于膝下，日夜思一孝顺，竟无可孝顺之处。前因买办花草，上托大人金福，竟认得许多花匠，并认得许多名园。因忽见有白海棠一种，不可多得。故变尽方法，只弄得两盆。大人若视男如亲男一般，便留下赏玩。因天气暑热，恐园中姑娘们不便，故不敢面见。奉书恭启，并叩

台安。

男芸跪书。





come down through the centuries.

Though I myself have no talent I am lucky enough to live with others among rocks and fountains, and I admire the polished verses of Baochai and Daiyu. It would be a pity not to invite poetizers to a feast in a cool courtyard and a moonlit pavilion or to make poems and drink in Apricot Tavern by Peach Stream. Why should the genius of the Lotus Society<sup>2</sup> be confined to men? Why should girls be excluded from cultured gatherings like those in the Eastern Hills?<sup>3</sup>

If you will condescend to come, I shall sweep the path clear of blossoms to wait for you.

Respectfully written.

Baoyu clapped his hands delightedly.

“How high-brow Third Sister’s become!” he chuckled. “I’ll go now and discuss this with her.”

He set off at once with Cuimo at his heels, and had just reached Seeping Fragrance Pavilion when the serving-woman on duty at the back gate of the Garden appeared with a letter. Catching sight of Baoyu she approached him and announced: “Master Yun sends his respects. He is waiting at the back gate and told me to give you this.”

Baoyu opened the letter and read:

Your unworthy child Jia Yun sends his respectful greetings and wishes his noble father boundless health and happiness.

Since I had the good fortune to become your adopted son, I have been longing day and night to please you but found no way to show my filial piety. Recently I was entrusted with the purchase of flowers, and thanks to your great influence I have been able to make the acquaintance of many gardeners and visit many celebrated gardens. I discovered a rare species of white begonia and after considerable difficulty have succeeded in acquiring just two pots. If you consider me as your own son, please keep these flowers to enjoy.

As the weather is so hot I will not presume to intrude, for



宝玉看了，笑道：“独他来了，还有什么人？”婆子道：“还有两盆花儿。”宝玉道：“你出去说，我知道了，难为他想着。你便把花儿送到我屋里去就是了。”一面说，一面同翠墨往秋爽斋来，只见宝钗、黛玉、迎春、惜春已都在那里了。

众人见他进来，都笑说：“又来了一个。”探春笑道：“我不算俗，偶然起个念头，写了几个帖儿试一试，谁知一招皆到。”宝玉笑道：“可惜迟了，早该起个社的。”黛玉道：“你们只管起社，可别算我，我是不敢的。”迎春笑道：“你不敢，谁还敢呢？”宝玉道：“这是一件正经大事，大家鼓舞起来，不要你谦我让的。各有主意尽管说出来大家平章。宝姐姐也出个主意，林妹妹也说个话儿。”宝钗道：“你忙什么，人还不全呢。”一语未了，李纨也来了，进门笑道：“雅的紧！要起诗社，我自荐我掌坛。前儿春天我原有这个意思的。我想了一想，我又不会作诗，瞎乱说些什么，因而也忘了，就没有说得。既是三妹妹高兴，我就帮你作兴起来。”

黛玉道：“既然定要起诗社，咱们都是诗翁了，先把这些姐妹叔嫂的字样改了才不俗。”李纨道：“极是，何不大家起个别号，彼此称呼则雅。我是定了‘稻香老农’，再无人占的。”探春笑道：“我就是‘秋爽居士’罢。”宝玉道：“居





fear of disturbing the young ladies in the Garden.

I kowtow with humble respect, wishing you good health.

Having read this Baoyu asked with a smile, "Did he come all alone?"

"Just with two pots of flowers," said the old woman.

"Go and tell him I've read his letter and appreciate his thoughtfulness. You can put the flowers in my room."

With that he went with Cuimo to the Studio of Autumn Freshness where Baochai, Daiyu, Yingchun and Xichun were assembled.

"Here comes another!" they cried, laughing, as he entered.

"Not so vulgar, was it, that sudden idea of mine?" asked Tanchun gleefully. "I wrote a few invitations to see what would happen, and you all turn up in force."

"We should have started a club like this long ago," observed Baoyu.

"Start one if you like, but don't count me in," said Daiyu. "I'm not up to it."

"If you're not, who is?" countered Yingchun with a smile.

"This is a serious business," declared Baoyu. "We should encourage each other, not back out of politeness. Let's all give our ideas for general discussion. What suggestions have you, Cousin Baochai? And Cousin Daiyu?"

"What's the hurry?" asked Baochai. "We're not all here yet."

Before she had finished speaking Li Wan walked in.

"How very refined!" she cried, laughing. "If you're going to start a poetry club, I'll volunteer to preside. I had this very idea last spring, but on second thoughts decided it would only be asking for trouble as I can't write poetry myself. So I dropped the idea and forgot it. Now that Third Sister's so keen, I'll help you get this going."

"If you're set on starting a poetry club," said Daiyu, "we must all be poets. And first, to be less conventional, we must stop calling each other 'sister,' 'cousin,' 'sister-in-law' and so forth."

"Quite right," agreed Li Wan. "Let's choose some elegant pen-names. I'll be The Old Peasant of Sweet Paddy. No one else can have that name."

"I'll be Master of Autumn Freshness," cried Tanchun. "There's something unreal and awkward about 'master' and 'scholar,'" ob-



士、主人到底不确，且又累赘。这里梧桐、芭蕉尽有，或指梧桐、芭蕉起个倒好。”探春笑道：“有了，我最喜芭蕉，就称‘蕉下客’罢。”众人都道别致有趣。黛玉笑道：“你们快牵了他去，炖了脯子吃酒。”众人不解。黛玉笑道：“古人曾云‘蕉叶覆鹿’，他自称‘蕉下客’，可不是一只鹿了？快做了鹿脯来。”众人听了都笑起来。探春因笑道：“你别忙中使巧话来骂人，我已替你想了个极妥当的美号了。”又向众人道：“当日娥皇、女英洒泪在竹上成斑，故今斑竹又名湘妃竹。如今他住的是潇湘馆，他又爱哭，将来他想林姐夫，那些竹子也是要变成斑竹的。以后都叫他作‘潇湘妃子’就完了。”大家听说，都拍手叫妙。林黛玉低了头方不言语。李纨笑道：“我替薛大妹妹也早已想了个好的，也只三个字。”惜春、迎春都问“是什么”，李纨道：“我是封他为‘蘅芜君’，不知你们如何。”探春道：“这个封号极好。”宝玉道：“我呢？你们也替我想一个。”宝钗笑道：“你的号早有了，‘无事忙’三字恰当的很。”李纨道：“你还是你的旧号‘绛洞花主’就好。”宝玉笑道：“小时候干的营生，还提他作什么？”探春道：“你的号多的很，又起什么？我们爱叫你什么，你就答应着就是了。”宝钗道：“还得我送你个号罢。有







jected Baoyu. "With all these *wu-tung* trees and plantains here, why not use them in your name?"

"Yes, I know what. I like plantains best so I'll call myself The Stranger Under the Plantain."

The others approved this as more original.

Only Daiyu teased, "Drag her off, quick! Stew some slices of her flesh to go with our wine." When the others looked mystified she explained with a smile, "Didn't an ancient say, 'The deer was covered with the plantain'? If she calls herself The Stranger Under the Plantain, she must be a deer. Let's hurry up and cook this venison."

Amid general laughter Tanchun cried, "Just you wait! You're very clever at making fun of people, but I've got the right name for you, a perfect name." She turned to the rest. "The wives of King Shun<sup>4</sup> shed so many tears on bamboos that thereafter their stems became speckled, and now the speckled bamboo is called by their name. Well, she lives in Bamboo Lodge and she's always crying. When one day she pines for a husband, I'm sure the bamboos there will grow speckled too. I propose we call her Queen of the Bamboos."

The rest applauded while Daiyu lowered her head, reduced to silence.

"I've thought of a good name for Cousin Baochai," volunteered Li Wan. "A short one too."

"What is it?" asked Xichun and Yingchun.

"I'm entitling her Lady of the Alpinia. How's that?"

"An excellent title," said Tanchun.

"How about *me*?" asked Baoyu. "Think of one for me too."

"You've already got one." Baochai chuckled. "Much Ado About Nothing is just the name for you."

"Why not keep your old title of Prince of the Crimson Cavern?" suggested Li Wan.

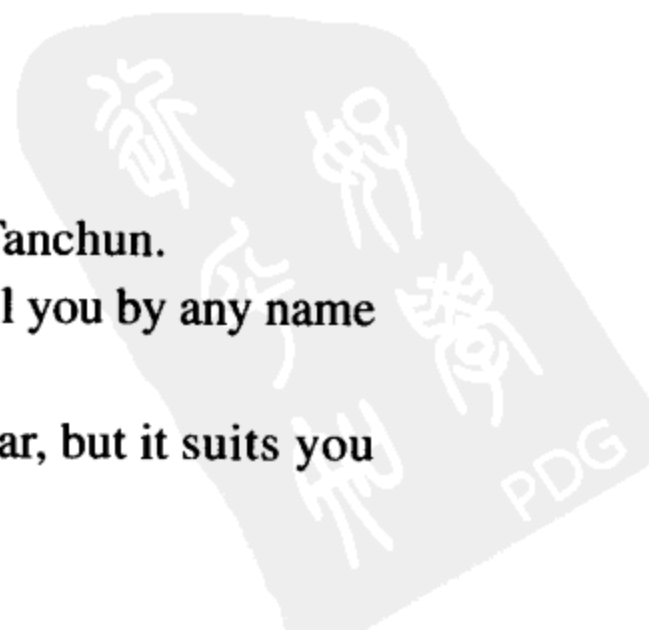
Baoyu smiled sheepishly.

"Don't bring up the silly things I did as a child."

"You've already got plenty of pen-names," said Tanchun.

"What do you want a new one for? We can just call you by any name we feel like."

"I've got one for you," offered Baochai. "It's vulgar, but it suits you





最俗的一个号，却于你最当。天下难得的是富贵，又难得的是闲散，这两样再不能兼有，不想你兼有了，就叫你‘富贵闲人’也罢了。”宝玉笑道：“当不起，当不起，倒是随你们混叫去罢。”李纨道：“二姑娘、四姑娘起个什么号？”迎春道：“我们又不大会诗，白起个号作什么？”探春道：“虽如此，也起个才是。”宝钗道：“他住的是紫菱洲，就叫他‘菱洲’；四丫头在藕香榭，就叫他‘藕榭’就是了。”

李纨道：“就是这样好。但序齿我大，你们都要依我的主意，管情说了大家合意。我们七个人起社，我和二姑娘、四姑娘都不会作诗，须得让出我们三个人去。我们三个各分一件事。”探春笑道：“已有了号，还只管这样称呼，不如不有了。以后错了，也要立个罚约才好。”李纨道：“立定了社，再定罚约。我那里地方大，竟在我那里作社。我虽不能作诗，这些诗人竟不厌俗客，我作个东道主人，我自然也清雅起来了。若是要推我作社长，我一个社长自然不够，必要再请两位副社长，就请菱洲、藕榭二位学究来，一位出题限韵，一位誊录监场。亦不可拘定了我们三个不作，若遇见容易些的题目、韵脚，我们也随便作一首。你们四个都是要限定的。若是如此便起，若不依我，我也不敢附骥了。”迎春、惜春本性懒于诗词，又有薛、林在前，听了这话便深合己意，二人皆说“是极”。探春等也知此意，见他二人悦服，也不好强，只得依了。因笑道：“这话也罢了，只是我自





to the ground. The two hardest things to come by are riches and nobility, and the third is leisure. Few people enjoy more than one of these, but you have all three. So you should be called The Rich and Noble Idler.”

“That’s too good for me.” Baoyu grinned. “But just as you please.”

“What about Second Cousin and Fourth Cousin?” asked Li Wan.

“We’re no good at writing poetry so we shan’t need pen-names,” rejoined Yingchun.

“Even so, you’d each better have one,” urged Tanchun.

“As Yingchun lives on Purple Caltrop Isle, let her be Mistress of Caltrop Isle,” suggested Baochai. “And Xichun in the Pavilion of Scented Lotus could be Mistress of Lotus Pavilion.”

“Very good,” said Li Wan. “Now as I’m the eldest you must all listen to me. I’m sure you’ll agree to my proposal. We seven are starting this club; but as Second Cousin, Fourth Cousin and I are no poetesses you must leave us out when it comes to writing, and we’ll each take charge of something.”

“We’ve already got titles.” Tanchun giggled. “But we might just as well not have them, the way you’re still talking. We must decide on forfeits for mistakes like that from now on.”

“Wait till we’ve set up the club before laying down rules,” said Li Wan. “My apartments are the largest, let’s meet there. Though I can’t versify, if you poets don’t object to my vulgar company I’ll act as hostess and in that way acquire some culture too. But if you elect me as warden, I shan’t be able to manage on my own. We must have as our deputy-wardens the scholars of Caltrop Isle and Lotus Pavilion, one to set the theme and rhymes, the other as copyist and supervisor. We won’t make a ruling that we three are not to write — when the subject and rhyme are easy we may have a go — but you four definitely *must* write. That’s my proposal. If you don’t accept it, I must withdraw from this illustrious company.”

As Yingchun and Xichun had no liking for versifying and no chance of outdoing Baochai or Daiyu, they willingly agreed to this arrangement which suited them down to the ground. The others, seeing their relief, acquiesced understandingly without pressing them.

想好笑，好好的，我起了个主意，反叫你们三个来管起我来了。”宝玉道：“既这样，咱们就往稻香村去。”李纨道：“都是你忙，今日不过商议了，等我再请。”宝钗道：“也要议定几日一会方好。”探春道：“若只管会的多，又没趣了。一月之中，只可两三次才好。”宝钗点头道：“一月只要两次就够了。拟定日期，风雨无阻。除这两日外，倘有高兴的，他情愿加一社的，或情愿到他那里去，或附就了来，亦可使得，岂不活泼有趣。”众人都道：“这个主意更好。”

探春道：“只是原系我起的意，我须得先作个东道主人，方不负我这兴。”李纨道：“既这样说，明日你就先开一社如何？”探春道：“明日不如今日，此刻就很好。你就出题，菱洲限韵，藕榭监场。”迎春道：“依我说，也不必随一人出题限韵，竟是拈阄公道。”李纨道：“方才我来时，看见他们抬进两盆白海棠来，倒是好花。你们何不就咏起他来？”迎春道：“都还未赏，先倒作诗。”宝钗道：“不过是白海棠，又何必定要见了才作。古人诗赋，也不过都是寄性写情耳。若都是看见了作，如今也没这些诗了。”迎春道：“既如此，待我限韵。”说着，走到书架前抽出一本诗来，随手一揭，这首竟是一首七言律，递与众人看了，都该作七言律。迎春掩了



"All right then," said Tanchun cheerfully. "Seems funny to me, though. This was *my* brain-wave, but you three end up in charge."

"Now that's settled," put in Baoyu, "let's go to Paddy-Sweet Cottage."

"Don't be in such a hurry," objected Li Wan. "We're still in the planning stage. Wait till I invite you."

"At least we should agree on how often to meet," urged Baochai.

"If we meet too often we won't enjoy it," predicted Tanchun. "Let's limit it to two or three times a month."

Baochai nodded.

"Twice a month is enough. We'll fix dates and meet regardless of wind or rain. If anyone likes to invite people to her place or the usual place for another gathering on some other day, well and good. Wouldn't that be more flexible and greater fun?"

They all approved this idea.

"As this was *my* suggestion," said Tanchun, "you must let me play hostess first. That's only fair."

"Very well then," agreed Li Wan. "You can call the first meeting tomorrow."

"Why not today? There's no time like the present. You set the subject, Caltrop Isle can fix the rhymes, and Lotus Pavilion can supervise."

"I don't think the subject and rhymes should be decided by one person," Yingchun demurred. "Drawing lots would be fairer."

"On my way here," remarked Li Wan, "I saw them carrying in two pots of white begonia which looked simply lovely. Why not write on the begonia?"

"Without having seen them?" protested Yingchun. "How can we?"

"It's only white begonia," countered Baochai. "There's no need to look at it first. The ancients wrote to manifest their own temperaments and feelings. If they'd only written about things they'd seen, we wouldn't have so many poems today."

"In that case let me settle the rhymes," said Yingchun.

She took a volume of poetry from the bookcase and opened it at random at a *lushi* with seven-character lines. Having held this out for all to see, she told them to use the same metre. Then putting the book away



诗，又向一个小丫头道：“你随口说一个字来。”那丫头正倚门立着，便说了个“门”字。迎春笑道：“就是门字韵，‘十三元’了。押头一个韵定要这‘门’字。”说着，又要了韵牌匣子过来，抽出“十三元”一屉，又命那小丫头随手拿四块。那丫头便拿了“盆”、“魂”、“痕”、“昏”四块来。宝玉道：“这‘盆’、‘门’两个字不大好作呢！”

待书一样预备下四份纸笔，便都悄然各自思索起来。独黛玉或抚梧桐，或看秋色，或又和丫鬟们嘲笑。迎春又命丫鬟炷了一支“梦甜香”。原来这“梦甜香”只有三寸来长，有灯草粗细，以其易烬，故以此烬为限，如香烬未成便要罚。一时探春便先有了，自提笔写出，又改抹了一回，递与迎春。因问宝钗：“蘅芜君，你可有了？”宝钗道：“有却有了，只是不好。”宝玉背着手，在回廊上踱来踱去，因向黛玉说道：“你听，他们都有了。”黛玉道：“你别管我。”宝玉又见宝钗已誊写出来，因说道：“了不得！香只剩了一寸了，我才有了四句。”又向黛玉道：“香就完了，只管蹲在那潮地下作什么？”黛玉也不理。宝玉道：“我可顾不得你了，好歹也写出来罢。”说着也走在案前写了。李纨道：“我们要看诗了，若看完了还不交卷是必罚的。”宝玉道：“稻香老农虽不善作却善看，又最公道，你就评阅优劣，我们都服的。”众





she turned to a little maid.

“Say any word that comes into your head.”

The maid, standing by the door, said, “*Men* (door).”

“Very well, that rhyme belongs to the thirteenth section of the rhyme system,” announced Yingchun. “And that word must come in the first line.”

Next she asked for the box of rhyme cards, pulled out the thirteenth drawer and told the maid to pick four cards at random. These proved to be *pen* (pot), *hun* (spirit), *hen* (stain) and *hun* (dim).

“‘Pot’ and ‘door’ aren’t easy to fit in,” was Baoyu’s comment.

Daishu prepared four lots of paper and writing-brushes, and all quietened down to think. All but Daiyu, who went on fondling the *wu-tong* trees, looking at the autumn scene or joking with the maids. Yingchun had a stick of Sweet-Dream Incense lit. Being only three inches long and no thicker than a lampwick, this burnt quickly. The poems had to be finished before it burnt out, on pain of a penalty.

Tanchun was the first to finish. She wrote out her poem, made one or two corrections, and handed the paper to Yingchun.

“Are you ready, Lady of the Alpinia?” she asked Baochai.

“Yes, mine’s done, but it’s no good,” replied Baochai.

Baoyu, his hands behind his back, was pacing up and down the corridor. “Hear that?” he said to Daiyu. “They’ve finished theirs.”

“Don’t worry about me,” she answered. Then he saw that Baochai had copied out her poem. “Good gracious!” he exclaimed. “There’s only one inch of the incense left, but all I’ve done is four lines.” He turned to Daiyu. “The incense is nearly burnt out. Do stop squatting on the damp ground.”

Daiyu paid no attention.

“I can’t help you now,” he said. “I must write mine out, however bad it is.” With that he walked to the desk. “We’re going to look at the poems now,” announced Li Wan. “Anyone who doesn’t hand his in by the time we finish reading the others will have to pay a forfeit.”

“The Old Peasant of Sweet Paddy may not write well herself,” remarked Baoyu, “but she’s a good judge and absolutely impartial. We’ll all stand by your verdict.”

人都道：“自然。”于是先看探春的稿上写道是：

咏白海棠 限门盆魂痕昏为韵  
斜阳寒草带重门，苔翠盈铺雨后盆。  
玉是精神难比洁，雪为肌骨易销魂。  
芳心一点娇无力，倩影三更月有痕。  
莫谓缟仙能羽化，多情伴我咏黄昏。

大家看了称赏一回，又看宝钗的道：

珍重芳姿昼掩门，自携手瓮灌苔盆。  
胭脂洗出秋阶影，冰雪招来露砌魂。  
淡极始知花更艳，愁多焉得玉无痕。  
欲偿白帝凭清洁，不语婷婷日又昏。

李纨笑道：“到底是蘅芜君。”说着又看宝玉的，道是：

秋容浅淡映重门，七节攒成雪满盆。  
出浴太真冰作影，捧心西子玉为魂。  
晓风不散愁千点，宿雨还添泪一痕。  
独倚画栏如有意，清砧远笛送黄昏。

大家看了，宝玉说探春的好，李纨终要推宝钗这诗有身分，因又催黛玉。黛玉道：“你们都有了？”说着提笔一挥而就，掷与众人。李纨等看他写道是：

半卷湘帘半掩门，碾冰为土玉为盆。

看了这句，宝玉先喝起彩来，只说“从何处想来！”又看下面道是：





The rest agreed. First they looked at Tanchun's paper.

Chill the sunset grass in front of the closed door,  
Thick the green moss the rain-drenched pot below;  
Her spirit's purity surpasses jade,  
Her gentle form is ravishing as snow.  
A faint ethereal loveliness is hers,  
Her shadow at midnight chequers the moon's light.  
Do not fly from me, chaste goodess;  
Abide with me as fall the shades of night.

After admiring this they read Baochai's poem:

For the sake of the flowers the door is closed by day  
As I go to water the pots with moss overgrown;  
Immaculate its shadow on autumn steps,  
Pure as snow and ice its spirit by dewy stone.  
Only true whiteness dazzles with its brightness;  
Can so much sadness leave a flawless jade?  
Its purity rewards the god of autumn,  
Speechless and chaste it stays as sunbeams fade.

Li Wan remarked with a smile, "Trust the Lady of the Alpinia!"  
Then they turned to Baoyu's poem:

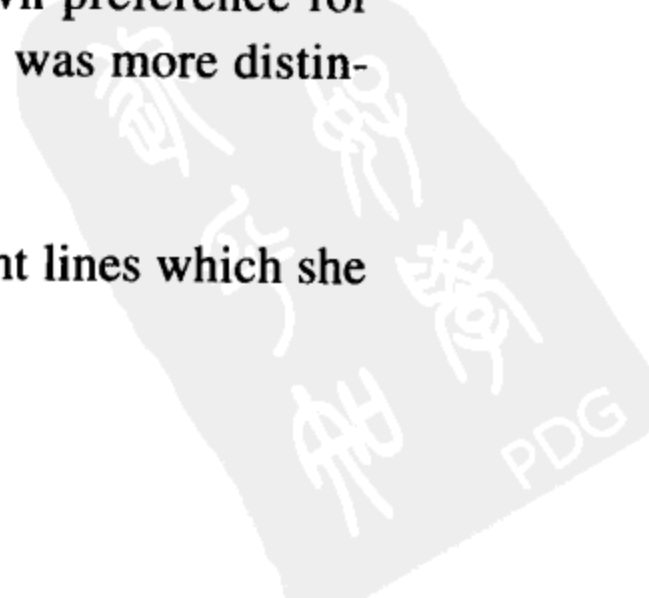
Autumn blooms cast chequered shadows by the door,  
Seven nodes of snowy flowers in pots arrayed,  
Like Lady Yang's shade, fresh from the bath, ice-pure,  
Or Xi Shi's mournful spirit fair as jade.  
No morning breeze can scatter this infinite sadness,  
And the rain adds fresh tear-stains at night;  
Leaning by painted balustrade it seems sensate  
As pounding of clothes and fluting put dusk to flight.

When all had read this, Baoyu expressed his own preference for Tanchun's verse, but Li Wan insisted that Baochai's was more distinguished. She then asked Daiyu for her poem.

"Have you all finished?" cried Daiyu.

At once she took up her brush and dashed off eight lines which she tossed over to them. Li Wan and the others read:

Half-rolled the bamboo blind, half-closed the door;



偷来梨蕊三分白，借得梅花一缕魂。

众人看了也都不禁叫好，说“果然比别人又是一样心肠。”

又看下面道是：

月窟仙人缝缟袂，秋闺怨女拭啼痕。

娇羞默默同谁诉，倦倚西风夜已昏。

众人看了，都道是这首为上。李纨道：“若论风流别致，是推潇湘作；若论含蓄浑厚，终让蘅稿。”探春道：“这评的有理，潇湘妃子当居第二。”李纨道：“怡红公子是压尾，你服不服？”宝玉道：“我的那首原是不好，这评的最公。”又笑道：“只是蘅、潇湘二首还要斟酌。”李纨道：“原是依我评论，不与你相干，再有多说者必罚。”宝玉听说，只得罢了。李纨道：“从此后我定于每月初二、十六这两日开社，出题、限韵都要依我。这期间我们有高兴的，只管另择日子补开，那怕一个月每天都开社，我也不管。只是到了初二、十六这两日，是必往我那里去。”宝玉道：“到底要起个社名才是。”探春道：“俗了又不好，忒新了，刁钻古怪也不好。可巧才是海棠诗开端，就呼作‘海棠社’罢。虽然俗些，因真有此事，也就不碍了。”说毕大家又商议了一回，略用些酒果，方各自散去。也有回家的，也有往贾母、王夫人处去的。当



Crushed ice serves as mould for jade pots.

“How do you do it?” exclaimed Baoyu in admiration before reading on.

Some whiteness from the pear-blossom is stolen,  
Some of its spirit winter-plum allots.

“Splendid!” cried the others. “She’s really original.”

They read on:

The goddess of the moon sews a white gown,  
The maid’s weeping in autumn chamber never ends;  
Silently, shyly, with never a word of complaint,  
She reclines in the autumn breeze as night descends.

“This is the best!” cried the young people. “It’s certainly the most charming and unusual,” said Li Wan. “But our Lady Alpinia’s has deeper significance and real substance.”

“Quite right,” put in Tanchun. “The Queen of Bamboos should come second.”

“And the Happy Red Prince last,” said Li Wan. “Agreed?”

“Mine was no good, that’s quite fair,” said Baoyu with a smile. “But you should reconsider which is the better, Lady Alpinia’s or Queen Bamboo’s.”

“I’m the arbiter,” insisted Li Wan. “You’ve no say in the matter. Any more argument will be penalized.”

So Baoyu said no more.

“I’ve decided that from now on we should meet on the second and sixteenth of each month,” continued Li Wan. “And you’ll have to accept the subjects and rhymes I choose. You can have extra meetings on other days if you like — I don’t care if you meet every day. But mind you come to my place on the second and sixteenth.”

“We must choose a name for this club,” declared Baoyu.

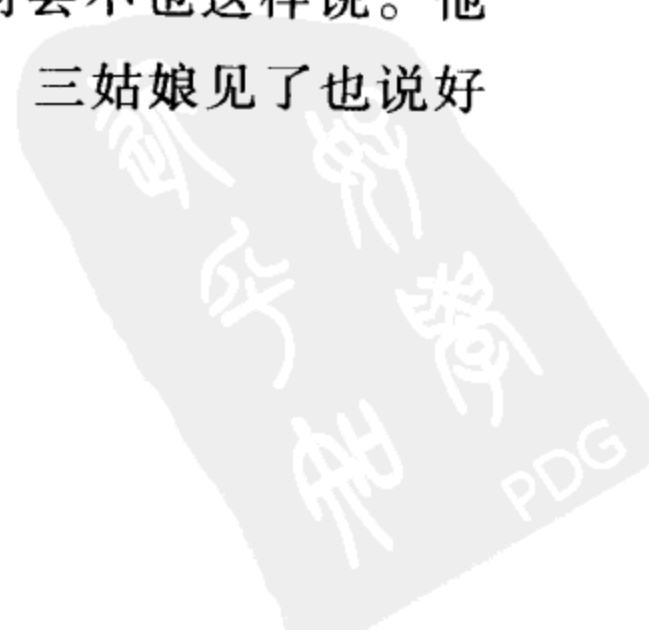
“Nothing too common,” said Tanchun. “Nothing too new-fangled either. As we happened to start with poems on begonia, why not call it Begonia Club? Even if this sounds a little commonplace, as it’s based on fact that doesn’t matter.”

After some further discussion and some refreshments they parted,

下别人无话。

且说袭人因见宝玉看了字帖儿便慌慌张张同翠墨去了，也不知何事。后来又见后门上婆子送了两盆海棠花来，袭人问是那里来的，婆子便将宝玉前一番缘故说了。袭人听说便命他们摆好，让他们在下房里坐了，自己走到自己房内秤了六钱银子封好，又拿了三百钱来，都递与那两个婆子道：“这银子赏那抬花来的小子们，这钱你们打酒吃罢。”婆子们站起来，眉开眼笑，千恩万谢的不肯受，见袭人执意不收，方领了。袭人又道：“后门上外头可有该班的小子们？”婆子忙应道：“天天有四个，原预备里面差使的。姑娘有什么差使，我们吩咐去。”袭人笑道：“我有什么差使？今儿宝二爷要打发人到小侯爷家与史大姑娘送东西去，可巧你们来了，顺便出去，叫后门上的小子们雇辆车来。回来你们就来这里拿钱，不用叫他们又往前头混碰去。”婆子答应着去了。

袭人回至房中，拿碟子盛东西与史湘云送去，却见榻子上碟槽空着。因回头见晴雯、秋纹、麝月等都在一处做针黹，袭人问道：“这一个缠丝白玛瑙碟子那去了？”众人见问，都你看我，我看你，都想不起来。半日，晴雯笑道：“给三姑娘送荔枝去的，还没送来呢。”袭人道：“家常送东西的家伙多呢，何必用这个？”晴雯道：“我何尝不也这样说。他说这个碟子配上鲜荔枝才好看。我送去，三姑娘见了也说好





some going back to their own rooms, others calling on the Lady Dowager and Lady Wang. But no more of this.

Now Xiren had wondered what Baoyu was up to when he hurried off with Cuimo after reading the note. When two women from the back gate brought in two pots of begonia some time later, she asked where these were from and was told what had happened. Xiren made them put the plants down and take seats in the servants' room while she went inside, weighed out sixty cents of silver and fetched another three hundred cash which she handed to the two women.

"This silver is for the boys who brought the flowers," she explained. "And the cash is for you to buy drinks."

The two women stood up, beaming, to thank her profusely and make a show of declining; but on Xiren's insistence they accepted the tip.

"Are there any pages on duty outside the back gate?" she asked them.

"Yes, there are four of them there every day," they answered. "If there's anything you want done, miss, we can tell them."

"There's nothing *I* want," answered Xiren, smiling. "But Master Bao wanted to send something today to Miss Shi in the house of the young marquis. It's lucky you came. When you go out, please tell those boys at the back gate to hire a carriage. As soon as it arrives you can come here to get the money. Don't let them knock around in the front."

When the women had left to see to this, Xiren went back inside to look for a plate on which to put the gifts for Xiangyun; but the plate she wanted was missing from the carved cabinet. Turning round, she saw Qingwen, Qiuwen and Sheyue busy with their needlework.

"What's become of that white agate plate with spiral designs?" she asked them.

The girls looked at each other but could not remember.

"It was used to send lichees to Miss Tanchun," said Qingwen after some thought. "They've not sent it back yet."

"There are plenty of everyday dishes you could have used. Why choose that particular one?" Xiren inquired.

"Just what I said. But *he* insisted that plate looked best with the fresh

看，叫连碟子放着，就没带来，你再瞧，那桶子尽上头的一对联珠瓶还没收来呢。”秋纹笑道：“提起瓶来，我又想起笑话。我们宝二爷说声孝心一动，也孝敬到二十分。因那日见园里桂花，折了两枝，原是自己要插瓶的，忽然想起来说，这是自己园里的才开的新鲜花，不敢自己先玩，巴巴的把那一对瓶拿下来，亲自灌水插好了，叫个人拿着，亲身送一瓶进老太太，又进一瓶与太太。谁知他孝心一动，连跟的人都得福了，可巧那日是我拿去的，老太太见了这样，喜的无可无不可，见人就说：‘到底是宝玉孝顺我，连一枝花儿也想的到。别人还只抱怨我疼他。’你们知道，老太太素日不大同我说话的，有些不入他老人家的眼的。那日竟叫人拿几百钱给我，说我可怜见的，生的单柔。这可是再想不到的福气。几百钱事小，难得这个脸面。及至到了太太那里，太太正和二奶奶、赵姨奶奶、周姨奶奶好些人翻箱子，找太太当日年轻的颜色衣裳，不知给那一个。一见了，连衣裳也不找了，且看花儿。又有二奶奶在旁边凑趣儿，夸宝玉又是怎么孝敬，又是怎样知好歹，有的没的说了两车话。当着众人，太太自为又增了光，堵了众人的嘴。太太越发喜欢了，现成的衣服就赏了我两件。衣裳也是小事，年年横竖也得，却不像这个彩头。”晴雯笑道：“呸！没见世面的小蹄子！那是把好的给了人，挑剩下的才给你，你还充有脸呢。”秋纹道：“凭他给谁剩的，到底是太太的恩典。”晴雯道：“要是我，我就不要。若是给别人剩的给我，也罢了。一样这屋里的人，难



lichees. And when I took it over, Miss Tanchun liked it so much she told me to leave the fruit on it; so I didn't bring it back. Look, that pair of vases from the top shelf hasn't come back either."

"Speaking of those vases reminds me of something funny," put in Qiuwen. "When our Master Bao takes it into his head to be filial, he really goes the whole hog. When he saw the fragrant osmanthus in bloom in the Garden he picked two sprays for himself, but all of a sudden he thought better of it. He said, 'These flowers have just bloomed in our own garden, I shouldn't be the first to enjoy them.' He promptly took down those two vases, filled them with water and put the sprays in himself, then having them carried over, he went personally to deliver one to his grandmother, another to his mother.

"This sudden filial piety on his part brought good luck to his messenger too. I happened to be the one who went that day, and the old lady was as pleased as pleased could be. She told everyone:

"What a good grandson Baoyu is after all, even sending me flowers like this! Yet other people blame me for spoiling him.'

"You know how little the old lady usually has to say to me. I've never been a favourite of hers. But that day she told them to give me a few strings of cash, saying I was a 'poor, delicate little thing.' What an unexpected stroke of luck! A few strings of cash mayn't be much, but it was a rare honour.

"Then I went to Her Ladyship's place just as she was looking through some cases with Madam Lian and the concubines Zhao and Zhou, sorting out the bright clothes she'd worn in her young days to give away. When I went in she stopped looking at the clothes to admire the flowers. And to please her Madam Lian started praising Baoyu for being such a considerate, filial son — she came out with two cartloads of compliments. Her Ladyship felt that in front of everyone she had gained credit because of him, and this should silence those who had gossiped about him. She was so delighted that she gave me two gowns on the spot. Clothes are nothing special either — we're given new ones at any rate every year — but this was a great mark of favour."

"Bah, you're easily pleased," scoffed Qingwen. "She gives others the best and you the cast-offs, yet you feel you have big face."



道谁又比谁高贵些？把好的给他，剩的才给我，我宁可不要，冲撞了太太，我也不受这口气。”秋纹忙问：“给这屋里谁的？我因为前日病了几天，家去了，不知是给谁的。好姐姐，你告诉我我知道。”晴雯道：“我告诉你，难道你这会退还太太去不成？”秋纹笑道：“胡说。我白听了喜欢喜欢。那怕给这屋里的狗剩下的，我只领太太的恩典，也不犯管别的事。”众人听了都笑道：“骂的巧，可不是给了那西洋花点子哈巴儿了。”袭人笑道：“你们这起烂了嘴的！得了空就拿我取笑打牙儿。一个个不知怎么死呢。”秋纹笑道：“原来姐姐得了，我实在不知道。我陪个不是罢。”袭人笑道：“少轻狂罢。你们谁取了碟子来是正经。”麝月道：“那瓶也该得空儿收来了。老太太屋里还罢了，太太屋里人多手杂。别人还可以，赵姨奶奶一伙的人见是这屋里的东西，又该使黑心弄坏了才罢。太太也不大管这些，不如早些收来正经。”晴雯听说，便掷下针黹道：“这话倒是，等我取去。”秋纹道：“还是我取去罢，你取碟子去。”晴雯笑道：“我偏取一遭儿去。是巧宗儿你们都得了，难道不许我得一遭儿。”麝月笑道：“通共秋丫头得了一遭儿衣裳，那里今儿又可巧，你也遇见找衣裳不成。”晴雯冷笑道：“虽然碰不见衣裳，或







“Cast-offs or not, it was kind of Her Ladyship.”

“If I’d been you I wouldn’t have taken them,” retorted Qingwen. “Anyone else’s cast-offs I wouldn’t mind; but why should someone in these rooms be superior to the rest of us? If *she* got the good clothes and I the cast-offs, I’d refuse them. Even at the risk of offending the mistress, I wouldn’t put up with that.”

“Who here got the good ones?” demanded Qiuwen quickly. “I was ill for a few days at home, I didn’t know. Do be a dear and tell me.”

“If I tell you, will you return those gowns to the mistress?”

“Don’t be silly. I just think it would be fun to know. Even if Her Ladyship gave me the dog’s left-overs, I’d think it kind of her. I don’t worry about other people’s business.”

The other girls laughed.

“You’ve hit the nail on the head. They were given to this foreign-species, spotted lap-dog of ours.”<sup>5</sup>

“May all your tongues rot!” parried Xiren with a smile. “Never miss a chance to make fun of me, do you? You’ll one by one come to a bad end.”

“So it was *you*, sister,” said Qiuwen. “I’d no idea. I do apologize.”

“Stop fooling,” urged Xiren. “I wish one of you would bring that plate back.”

“Those vases should be fetched back too,” said Sheyue. “It’d be all right in the old lady’s place, but all sorts of people go to Her Ladyship’s rooms. The rest don’t matter, but if Concubine Zhao and that lot saw things from here they’d try some mean trick to break them, and the mistress wouldn’t pay too much attention. We’d better fetch them back before it’s too late.”

Qingwen, hearing this, put down her needlework.

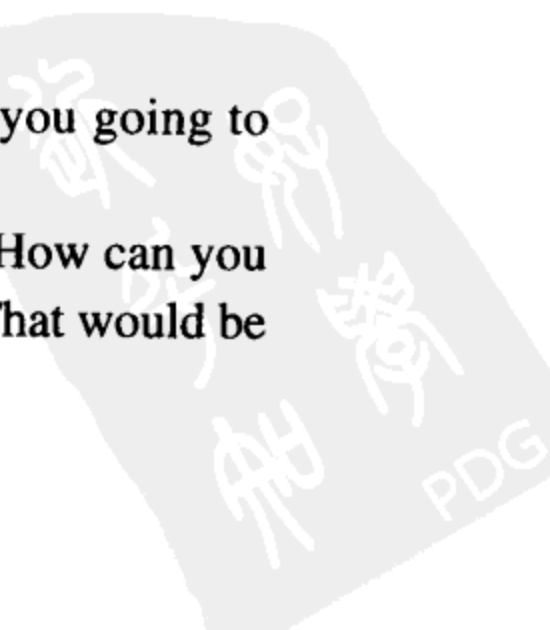
“All right, I’ll go and get them,” she volunteered.

“I’ll go while you fetch the plate,” offered Qiuwen.

“No, it’s *my* turn,” insisted Qingwen, laughing. “Are you going to take all the good errands and leave none for me?”

“Qiuwen only got clothes that once,” teased Sheyue. “How can you expect to find them looking through clothes again today? That would be too much of a coincidence.”

Qingwen snorted.





者太太看见我勤谨，一个月也把太太的公费里分出二两银子来给我，也定不得。”说着，又笑道：“你们别和我装神弄鬼的，什么事我不知道。”一面说，一面往外跑了。秋纹也同他出来，自去探春那里取了碟子来。

袭人打点齐备东西，叫过本处的一个老宋妈妈来，向他说道：“你先好生梳洗了，换了出门的衣裳来，如今打发你与史大姑娘送东西去。”那宋嬷嬷道：“姑娘只管交给我，有话说与我，我收拾了就好一顺去的。”袭人听说，便端过两个小掐丝盒子来。先揭开一个，里面装的是红菱和鸡豆两样鲜果；又那一个，是一碟子桂花糖蒸新栗粉糕。又说道：“这都是今年咱们这里园里新结的果子，宝二爷送来与姑娘尝尝。再前日姑娘说这玛瑙碟子好，姑娘留下玩罢。这绢包儿里头是姑娘上日叫我作的活计，姑娘别嫌粗糙，将就着用罢。替我们请安，替二爷问好就是了。”宋嬷嬷道：“宝二爷不知还有什么说的，姑娘再问问去，回来又别说忘了。”袭人因问秋纹：“方才可见在三姑娘那里？”秋纹道：“他们都在那里商议起什么诗社呢，又都作诗。想来没话，你只去罢。”宋嬷嬷听了，便拿了东西出去，另外穿戴了。袭人又嘱咐他：“从后门出去，有小子和车等着你。”宋妈去后，不在话下。

宝玉回来，先忙着看了一回海棠，至房内告诉袭人起诗社的事。袭人也把打发宋妈妈与史湘云送东西去的话告诉了宝玉。宝玉听了拍手道：“偏忘了他。我自觉心里有件事，只是想不起来，亏你提起来，正要请他去。这诗社里若少了他



“Even if I don’t see any clothes, maybe the mistress will think me so trustworthy that she gives me two taels of silver a month from her own allowance too. Who knows?” She laughed. “Don’t try to fool me. I know all about it.”

With that she ran off, and Qiuwen also left to fetch the plate from Tanchun’s apartments.

When the plate had been brought, Xiren prepared the gifts then called for Nanny Song who was attached to their compound.

“Get yourself spruced up and put on your outdoor things,” she said. “I want you to take some presents to Miss Shi.”

“Just give the things and message to me,” said the nurse. “I’ll get ready and go at once.”

Xiren picked up two small woven bamboo hampers. The first she opened contained fresh caltrops and euryale seeds; the second, powdered chestnut cake sweetened with osmanthus.

“These are fresh from our Garden,” she explained. “Master Bao wants Miss Shi to try them. And the other day she admired this agate plate, so she must keep it. Then here, in this silk wrapper, is the needlework she asked me to do. I hope she won’t find it too clumsy. Send her our respects and the young master’s greetings.”

“Has Master Bao any other messages?” asked the nurse. “Will you go and find out, miss, in case you’ve forgotten something.”

“Did you see him with Miss Tanchun?” Xiren asked Qiuwen.

“Yes, they were disussing starting some sort of poetry club and all busy writing poems. I shouldn’t think he has any message. She needn’t wait.”

As Nanny Song took the things and prepared to leave, Xiren told her to go by the back gate where the boys had a carriage waiting. So the nurse left.

When Baoyu came back, the first thing he did was to admire the begonia; then, going inside, he told Xiren about the poetry club. She in turn reported how she had sent Nanny Song with the gifts to Xiangyun. He clapped his hands at this.

“How could we forget her?” he cried. “I *felt* there was something missing, but couldn’t think what it was. I’m so glad you mentioned her. I

还有什么意思。”袭人劝道：“什么要紧，不过玩意儿。他比不得你们自在，家里又作不得主儿。告诉他，他要来，又由不得他；不来，他又牵肠挂肚的，没的叫他不受用。”宝玉道：“不妨事，我回老太太打发人接他去。”正说着，宋妈妈已经回来，回复道生受，与袭人道乏，又说：“问二爷作什么呢，我说和姑娘们起什么诗社作诗呢。史姑娘说，他们作诗也不告诉他去，急的了不得。”宝玉听了起身便往贾母处来，立逼着叫人接去。贾母因说：“今儿天晚了，明日一早再去。”宝玉只得罢了，回来闷闷的。

次日一早，便又往贾母处来催逼人接去。直到午后，史湘云才来了，宝玉方放了心，见面时就把始末原由告诉他，又要与他诗看。李纨等因说道：“且别给他看，先说与他韵。他后来，先罚他和了诗。若好，便请入社；若不好，还要罚他一个东道再说。”湘云笑道：“你们忘了请我，我还要罚你们呢。就拿韵来，我虽不能，只得勉强出丑。容我入社，扫地焚香我也情愿。”众人见他这般有趣，越发喜欢，都埋怨昨日怎么忘了他，遂忙告诉他韵。史湘云一心兴头，等不得推敲删改，一面只管和人说着话，心内早已和成，即用随便的纸笔录出，先笑说道：“我却依韵和了两首，好歹我却不



meant to invite her. Our poetry club will be no fun without her.”

“It’s not all that important — just a way to pass the time,” rejoined Xiren. “She’s not as free as the rest of you and has no say at home. If you tell her she’ll want to come, but she may not be able; and if she can’t she’ll be terribly disappointed. You’ll only be upsetting her.”

“That’s all right,” said Baoyu. “I shall ask my grandmother to send and fetch her.”

Just then Nanny Song came back to report on her errand. Having expressed Xiangyun’s thanks for the gift she told Xiren, “Miss Shi asked what Master Bao was doing. When I told her, ‘Writing poems with the young ladies and starting a poetry club,’ she was most disappointed you hadn’t let her know. Quite a state she was in!”

This made Baoyu go straight to the Lady Dowager to insist that Xiangyun should be fetched at once. When the old lady told him that it was too late and she should be invited first thing the next day, he had to accept this reply and returned dejectedly to his own rooms.

Early the next morning he went back to urge his grandmother to send for Xiangyun, and did not relax until she finally arrived in the afternoon. After greeting her he lost no time in explaining the whole business to her. He was about to show her their poems when Li Wan and the others stopped him.

“Don’t show her yet,” said Li Wan. “Give her the rhymes. We’ll fine her for coming late by making her write a poem in the same metre first. If it’s good, we’ll welcome her to join the club, if not, she’ll have to stand treat first and then we’ll think it over.”

“You forgot to ask me; it’s *I* who should fine you people,” said Xiangyun laughingly. “All right, show me the rhymes. I’m no good, but I don’t mind making a fool of myself. Just let me join the club and I’ll willingly sweep the ground and burn incense for you.”

“How could we forget her yesterday?” cried the others, delighted to find her so full of fun.

They quickly told her the rhymes. Xiangyun was too excited to give careful thought to her poems or to polish them. While chatting with the rest she made up some lines and casually wrote them out.

“I’ve done two verses using the same rhyme sequence,” she said. “I

知，不过应命而已。”说着递与众人。众人道：“我们四首也算想绝了，再一首也不能了。你倒弄了两首，那里有许多话说，必要重了我们。”一面说，一面看诗，只见那两首诗写道：

神仙昨日降都门，种得蓝田玉一盆。  
自是素娥偏爱冷，非关倩女亦离魂。  
秋阴捧出何方雪，雨渍添来隔宿痕。  
却喜诗人吟不倦，岂令寂寞度朝昏。

皆道：“好诗，好诗。”又往下看，写道：

蘅芷阶通萝薜门，也宜墙角也宜盆。  
花因喜洁难寻偶，人为悲秋易断魂。  
玉烛滴干风里泪，晶帘隔破月中痕。  
幽情欲向嫦娥诉，无奈虚廊夜已昏。

众人看一句，惊讶一句，看到了，赞到了，都说：“这个不枉作了海棠诗，真该要起海棠社了。”史湘云道：“明日先罚我个东道，就让我先邀一社可使得？”众人笑道：“这更妙了。”因又将昨日的与他评论了一回。

至晚，宝钗将湘云邀往蘅芜院去安歇。湘云灯下计议如何设东拟题。宝钗听他说了半日，皆不妥当，因向他说道：“既开社，便要作东。虽然是个玩意儿，也要瞻前顾后，又



don't suppose they're much good, they're just made to order."

She handed over her poems for their inspection.

"Our four poems exhausted the subject, we couldn't have written another," they commented. "Yet here you come up with *two*. How can you have so much to say, unless you're repeating us?"

As they said this they read the poems:

A fairy flew down last night to the capital  
And planted in a pot these flowers of rare jade,  
Like the goddess of frost who loves the cold,  
But not the wandering spirit of some chaste maid.  
Whence comes this snow on a dull autumn day?  
A night's rain stains its loveliness;  
But poets will never tire of singing it,  
That it may not pass the day in loneliness.

The others all applauded this, then went on to read the next.

Steps through alpinia lead to an ivy-clad gate;  
Fit place, the wall's corner, for this pot set apart;  
Love of purity makes the flower hold aloof,  
Grief for the autumn breaks its owner's heart;  
Wind dries the tears on jade candles.  
Crystal screens break up its shadow cast by the moon.  
I long to tell the moon goddess its secret,  
But in the corridor night fades too soon.

The others exclaimed in delight after each line.

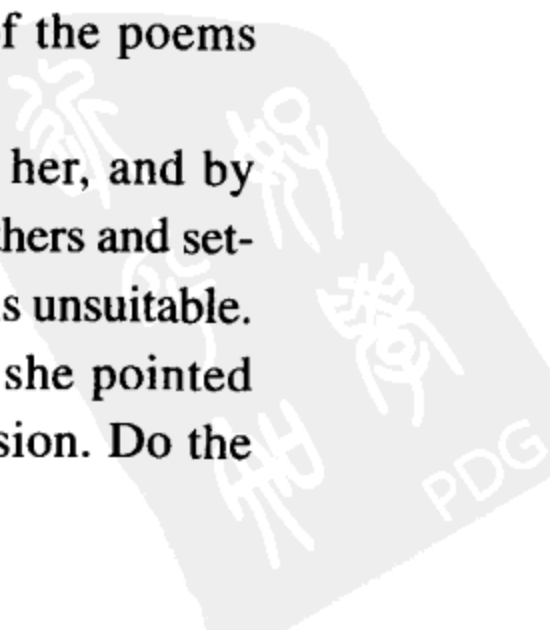
"See what a good idea it was to write poems on the begonia," they said. "How right we were to start our Begonia Club."

"Tomorrow let me pay my penalty by standing treat and calling the first meeting. All right?" proposed Xiangyun.

"Perfect!" they cried. Then they asked her opinion of the poems written the previous day.

That evening Baochai invited Xiangyun to stay with her, and by lamplight Xiangyun outlined her plans for entertaining the others and setting subjects for poems. But Baochai thought all her proposals unsuitable.

"Since you've called a meeting, you're the hostess," she pointed out. "Although it's just fun, you must make proper provision. Do the





要自己便宜，又要不得罪了人，然后方大家有趣。你家里你又作不得主，一个月通共那几串钱，你还不够盘缠呢。这会子又干这没要紧的事，你婶婶听见了，越发抱怨你了。况且你就都拿出来，做这个东道也不够。难道为这个家去要去不成？还是和这里要呢？”一席话提醒了湘云，倒踌躇起来。宝钗道：“这个我已经有个主意。我们当铺里有一个伙计，他家田上出的好肥螃蟹，前儿送了几斤来。现在这里的人，从老太太起连上园里的人，有多一半都是爱吃螃蟹的。前日姨娘还说要请老太太在园里赏桂花、吃螃蟹，因为有事，还没有请。你如今且把诗社别提起，只管普通一请。等他们散了，咱们有多少诗作不得的。我和我哥哥说，要几篓极肥大的螃蟹来，再往铺子里取上几坛好酒，再备上四五桌果碟，岂不又省事又大家热闹了？”湘云听了，心中自是感服，极赞他想的周到。宝钗又笑道：“我是一片真心为你的话，你千万别多心，想着我小视了你，咱们两个就白好了。你若不多心，我就好叫他们办去的。”湘云忙笑道：“好姐姐，你这样说，倒多心待我了。凭他怎么糊涂，连个好歹也不知，还成个人了？我若不把姐姐当作亲姐姐一样看，上回那些家常话，烦难事，也不肯尽情告诉你了。”宝钗听说，便叫一个婆子来：“出去和大爷说，依前日的大螃蟹要几篓来，明日饭后请老太太、姨娘赏桂花。你说大爷好歹别忘了，我今儿已请下人了。”那婆子出去说明，回来无话。





thing cheaply but give no grounds for complaints; then everyone can have a good time.

“You’re not in charge at home, and the few strings of cash you get each month hardly cover your own expenses; yet you took this on yourself quite needlessly. When your aunt hears of it she’s bound to scold you. Why, your whole allowance isn’t enough to stand treat. Are you going home to ask for more? Or will you ask them here for money?”

This set Xiangyun worrying.

“Actually, I have an idea,” continued Baochai. “One of the assistants in our pawnshop has a farm which produces fine crabs, and the other day he sent us several catties. Most of the people here, from the old lady down to those in the Garden, are very partial to crabs. Only the other day aunt talked of inviting the old lady to the Garden to enjoy the fragrant osmanthus and eat some crabs; but she’s been too busy to ask her. So don’t mention the poetry club but just issue a general invitation, and after the older people have left we can write all the poems we please.

“I’ll get my brother to send us a few crates of the biggest crabs with some vats of good wine from our shop, in addition to which we’ll prepare four or five tables of other refreshments. That’s easily done and we’ll all have a good time.”

Xiangyun was extremely grateful.

“You’ve thought it all out!” she exclaimed admiringly.

“I’m only thinking of *you*,” replied Baochai. “You mustn’t be touchy or imagine I look down on you, because this is between friends. If you’ve no objection, I’ll tell them to go ahead.”

“My dear cousin, you’re being touchy instead if you talk like that,” said Xiangyun. “However scatter-brained I may be, I know when someone’s being good to me. At least I’ve *that* much sense. If I didn’t look on you as my own elder sister, I wouldn’t have confided to you last time all the troubles I have at home.”

Accordingly Baochai ordered a serving-woman, “Go and ask my brother to get us several crates of big crabs like those we had the other day. Tomorrow after lunch we’re inviting the old lady and my aunt to see the fragrant osmanthus in the Garden. Tell him to be sure not to forget, as I’ve already issued the invitations.”



这里宝钗又向湘云道：“诗题也不要过于新巧了。你看古人诗中那些刁钻古怪的题目和那极险的韵脚，若题过于新巧，韵过于险，再不得有好诗，终是小家气。诗固然怕说熟话，更不可过于求生，只要头一件立意清新，自然措词就不俗了。究竟这也算不得什么，还是纺绩针黹是你我的本等。一时闲了，倒是于你我深有益的书看几章是正经。”湘云只答应着，因笑道：“我如今心里想着，昨日作了海棠诗，我如今要作个菊花诗如何？”宝钗道：“菊花倒也合景，只是前人太多了。”湘云道：“我也是如此想着，恐怕落套。”宝钗想了一想，道：“有了，如今以菊花为宾，以人为主，竟拟出几个题目来，都是两个字：一个虚字，一个实字，实字使用‘菊’字，虚字就用通用门的。如此又是咏菊，又是赋事，前人也未作过，也不能落套。赋景咏物双关着，又新鲜，又大方。”湘云笑道：“这却很好。只是不知用何等虚字才好？你先想一个我听听。”宝钗想了一想，笑道：“《菊梦》就好。”湘云笑道：“果然好。我也有个，《菊影》可使得？”宝钗道：“也罢了。只是也有人作过，若题目多，这个也夹的上。我又有了一个。”湘云道：“快说出来。”宝钗道：“《问菊》如何？”湘云拍案叫妙，因接说道：“我也有了，《访菊》如何？”宝钗也赞有趣，因说道：“越性拟出十个来写





The old woman went off to do as she was told.

Then Baochai advised Xiangyun, "The themes for verses shouldn't be too outlandish. You can see that the poets of old times didn't go in for far-fetched subjects or freakish rhymes. Such things don't make for good poems and seem rather lowclass. Of course, poetry shouldn't be stereotyped, but we mustn't overdo the emphasis on originality either. So long as our ideas are fresh, the language can't be vulgar. In any case, writing poetry isn't important. *Our* main jobs are spinning and sewing. If we've time to spare, the proper thing for us is to read a few chapters of some improving book."

Xiangyun, having agreed to this, suggested, "As we wrote poems on the begonia yesterday, I wonder if we could write about the chrysanthemum this time?"

"Yes, the chrysanthemum is suitable for autumn. The only objection is that too many poems have been written about it in the past."

"That's what I feel. We could hardly avoid plagiarism."

Baochai thought this over.

"I know," she said presently. "We'll lay stress not on the chrysanthemum but on the people looking at it, and set themes about their *reactions* to the flower. In this way we shall have tributes to the chrysanthemum as well as descriptions of feeling. This hasn't been done before and can't be too stereotyped. In fact, this combination will have freshness and distinction."

"A good idea," agreed Xiangyun. "But how will you introduce the feeling? Give me an example."

After a moment's thought Baochai replied, "*A Dream of Chrysanthemums* for instance."

"Of course. I've got one too. How about *The Chrysanthemum's Shadow*?"

"Can do, although of course it's been used before. If we have a fair number of themes we can include it. I've thought of another."

"Go on!"

"*Questioning the Chrysanthemum*."

"Splendid!" Xiangyun clapped one hand on the table. "I know. How d'you like *Seeking Out the Chrysanthemum*?"

上，再说来看。”说着，二人研墨蘸笔，湘云便写，宝钗便念，一时凑了十个。湘云看了一遍，又笑道：“十个还不成幅，越性凑成十二个便全了，也如人家的字画册页一样。”宝钗听说，又想了两个，一共凑成十二个了。又说道：“既这样，越性编出他个次序先后来。”湘云道：“如此更妙，竟弄成个菊谱了。”宝钗道：“起首是《忆菊》；忆之不得，故访，第二是《访菊》；访之既得，便种，第三是《种菊》；种既盛开，故相对而赏，第四是《对菊》；相对而兴有余，故折来供瓶为玩，第五是《供菊》；既供而不吟，亦觉菊无彩色，第六便是《咏菊》；既入词章，不可无笔墨，第七便是《画菊》；既为菊如是碌碌，究竟不知菊有何妙处，不禁有所问，第八便是《问菊》；菊如解语，使人不禁狂喜，第九便是《簪菊》；如此人事虽尽，犹有菊之可咏者，《菊影》、《菊梦》二首续在第十、第十一；末卷便以《残菊》总收前题之盛。这便是三秋的妙景妙事都有了。”湘云依言将题录出，又看了一回，又问：“该限何韵？”宝钗道：“我平生最不喜限韵的，分明有好诗，何苦为韵所缚。咱们别学那





“Good. We may as well think of ten themes and write them out.”

They ground ink and dipped in the brush. Xiangyun wrote the themes out at Baochai’s dictation, and in no time at all they had ten. After reading them through Xiangyun said:

“Ten doesn’t make a set. Let’s have twelve while we’re about it, like those albums of calligraphy and painting.”

So Baochai thought up two more, making twelve in all.

“In this case let’s arrange them in the right order.” she said.

“Better still!” cried Xiangyun. “We shall have a chrysanthemum album.”

“We’ll start with *Thinking of the Chrysanthemum*. After thinking of it we seek it out; so number two will be *Visiting the Chrysanthemum*. After finding it we plant it; so the third will be *Planting the Chrysanthemum*. After it has been planted and flowers, we face it and enjoy it; so four is *Facing the Chrysanthemum*. To enjoy it further we pick it to put in a vase; so five is *Displaying the Chrysanthemum*. But to bring out its splendour once it is displayed we must write poems about it; so six is *Writing About the Chrysanthemum*. And as a verse must be accompanied by a painting, number seven is *Painting the Chrysanthemum*. Even though we’ve been to so much trouble over it, we shan’t know all its rare qualities unless we ask questions; so eight is *Questioning the Chrysanthemum*. If the flower seems able to understand, we are so thrilled that we want to get closer to it; hence nine is *Wearing the Chrysanthemum*.

“This exhausts all that men can do but, as there still remain certain aspects of the flower which can be described, ten and eleven are *The Chrysanthemum’s Shadow* and *A Dream of Chrysanthemum*. And we end with *The Withered Chrysanthemum* to sum up all the emotions expressed before. In this way we shall cover all the fine sights and occupations of autumn.”

Xiangyun copied out the themes again in this order and read them through once more.

“What rhymes shall we decide on?” she asked next.

“In general I’m against a hard-and-fast rhyme pattern,” replied Baochai. “Why should fine lines be restricted by fixed rhymes? Let’s

小家派，只出题不拘韵。原为大家偶得了好句取乐，并不为那些而难人。”湘云道：“这话很是。这样大家的诗还进一层。但只咱们五个人，这十二个题目，难道每人作十二首不成？”宝钗道：“那也太难人了。将这题目誊好，都要七言律诗，明日贴在墙上。他们看了，谁作那一个就作那一个。有力量者，十二首都作也可；不能的，一首不成也可。高才捷足者为尊。若十二首已全，便不许他后赶着又作，罚他就完了。”湘云道：“这倒也罢了。”二人商议妥贴，方才息灯安寝。要知端的，且听下回分解。





not follow that petty rule but simply set themes. We want everyone to write some fine lines for pleasure, not to make it hard for them.”

“I quite agree. In this way we should write better. But there are only five of us. Will each of us have to write on all twelve of these subjects?”

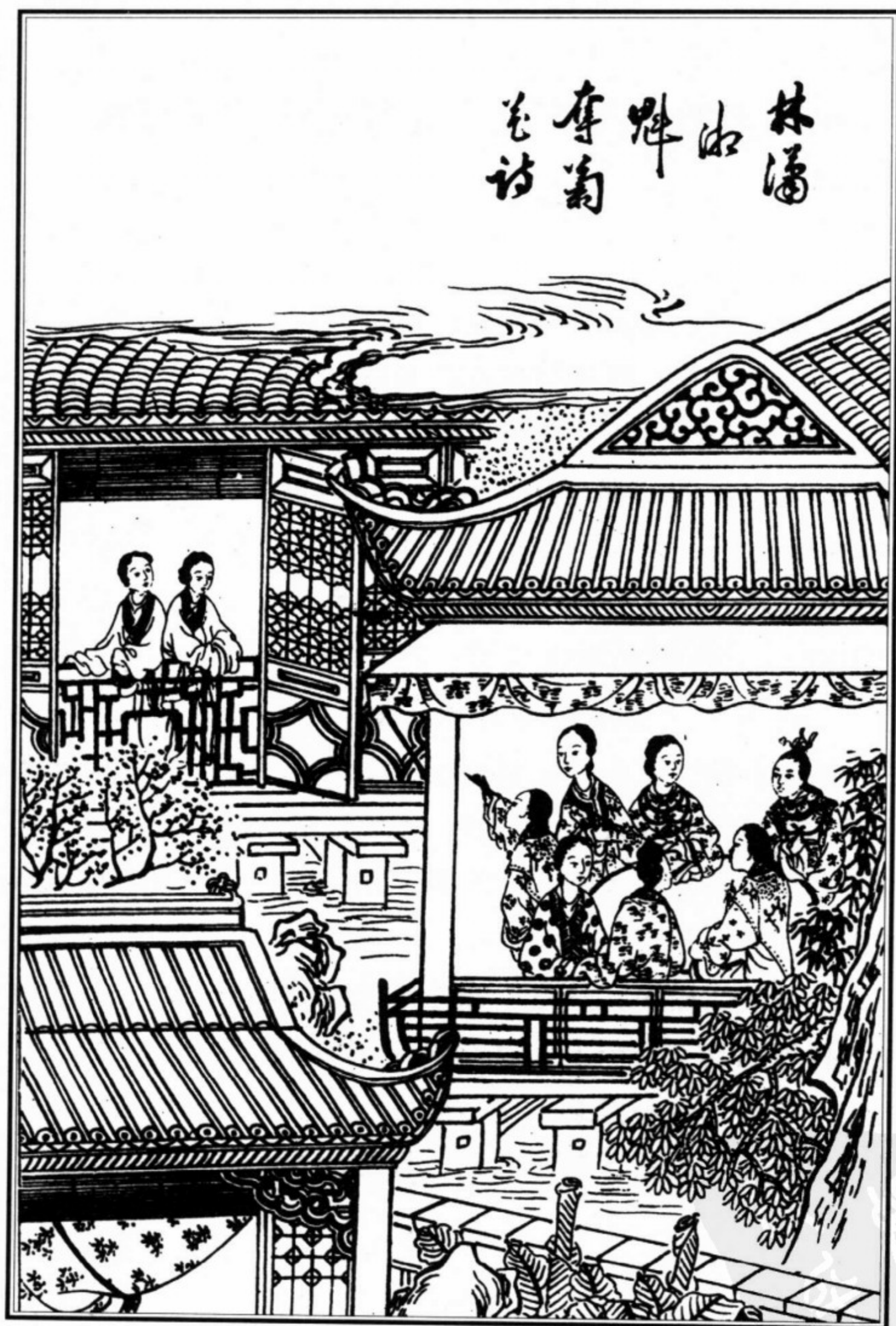
“No, that would be asking too much. We’ll just copy out these themes and stipulate that the seven-character *lushi* form is to be used. We’ll put the notice on the wall tomorrow, and people can choose whichever theme they like. If anyone’s able to write on all twelve, well and good; but it’s all right, too, not to do any. The winner will be the one who writes best and fastest. Once all twelve are done, those who haven’t finished must stop and submit to the penalty.”

Xiangyun agreed to this and, their plans made, the two girls put out the light and went to bed. If you want to know what followed, read the next chapter.











## 第三十八回

### 林潇湘魁夺菊花诗 薛蘅芜讽和螃蟹咏

话说宝钗、湘云二人计议已妥，一宿无话。湘云次日便请贾母等赏桂花。贾母等都说：“倒是他有兴头，须要扰他这雅兴。”至午，果然贾母带了王夫人、凤姐兼请薛姨妈等进园来。贾母因问“那一处好？”王夫人道：“凭老太太爱在那一处，就在那一处。”凤姐道：“藕香榭已经摆下了，那山坡下两棵桂花开的又好，河里的水又碧清，坐在河当中亭子上岂不敞亮，看着水眼也清亮。”贾母听了，说：“这话很是。”说着，引了众人往藕香榭来。原来这藕香榭盖在池中，四面有窗，左右有曲廊可通，亦是跨水接岸，后面又有曲折竹桥暗接。众人上了竹桥，凤姐忙上来搀着贾母，口里说：“老祖宗只管迈大步走，不相干的，这竹子桥规矩是‘咯吱咯喳’的。”

一时进入榭中，只见栏杆外另放着两张竹案，一个上面设着杯箸酒具，一个上头设着茶笼、茶盂各色茶具。那边有两三个丫头煽风炉煮茶，这一边另外几个丫头也煽风炉烫酒呢。贾母欢喜道：“这茶想的到，且是地方，东西都干净。”



## Chapter 38

### The Queen of Bamboos Wins First Place with Her Poems on Chrysanthemums The Lady of the Alpinia Writes a Satire upon Crabs

Having laid their plans Baochai and Xiangyun slept, and the next morning the latter invited the Lady Dowager and others over to enjoy the fragrant osmanthus.

“What a delightful, refined idea,” said the old lady. “We should take advantage of such an invitation.”

At noon she took Lady Wang and Xifeng to invite Aunt Xue to accompany them to the Garden, and asked:

“Which would be the best spot?”

“It’s up to you to choose, madam,” said Lady Wang.

“Preparations have been made in Lotus Fragrance Anchorage,” put in Xifeng. “The two fragrant osmanthus trees at the foot of the slope there are in full bloom, the water flowing past is green and clear, and you get a fine view from the pavilion in midstream. It’s refreshing to look at water.”

The Lady Dowager approved and led the way to Lotus Fragrance Anchorage.

This pavilion, built in the middle of the lake, had windows on all four sides, twisting corridors on left and right leading to both shores and, behind, a winding bamboo bridge connecting it with the bank. As they stepped on to this, Xifeng moved forward quickly to take the old lady’s arm.

“Just step out boldly, Old Ancestress,” she cried. “This bamboo bridge always creaks — it doesn’t matter.”

Upon reaching the pavilion they saw on the balcony two bamboo tables, one laid with cups, chopsticks and wine pots, the other with a tea-service. Beside them a few maids were fanning two stoves: one to brew tea, the other to heat wine.

“Tea — splendid! This is just the place for it,” remarked the Lady



湘云笑道：“这是宝姐姐帮着我预备的。”贾母道：“我说这个孩子细致，凡事想的妥当。”一面说，一面又看见柱上挂的黑漆嵌蚌的对子，命人念。湘云念道：

芙蓉影破归兰桨，菱藕香深写竹桥。

贾母听了，又抬头看匾，因回头向薛姨妈道：“我先小时，家里也有这么一个亭子，叫做什么‘枕霞阁’。我那时也像他们这么大年纪，同姊妹们天天玩去。那日谁知我失了脚掉下去，几乎淹死，好容易救了上来，到底被那木钉把头碰破了。如今这鬓角上那指头顶大一块窝儿就是那残疾了。众人都怕经了水，又怕冒了风，都说活不得了，谁知竟好了。”凤姐不等人说，先笑道：“那时要活不得，如今这么大福可叫谁享呢！可知老祖宗从小儿的福寿就不小，神差鬼使碰出那个窝儿来，好盛福寿的。寿星老儿头上原是一个窝儿，因为万福万寿盛满了，所以倒凸高出些来了。”未及说完，贾母与众人都笑软了。贾母笑道：“这猴儿惯的了不得了，只管拿我取笑起来，恨的我撕你那油嘴。”凤姐笑道：“回来吃螃蟹，恐积了冷在心里，讨老祖宗笑一笑开开心，一高兴多吃两个就无妨了。”贾母笑道：“明日叫你日夜跟着我，我倒常笑笑觉的开心，不许回家去。”王夫人笑道：“老太太因为喜





Dowager. "Everything here is so clean."

Xiangyun said with a smile, "Cousin Baochai helped prepare this."

"Yes, I always say she's most provident, that child, and thinks of everything."

As the old lady made this observation, she noticed two inscriptions inlaid in mother-of-pearl on the black lacquer tablets hanging on the pillars. She asked someone to read them to her. Xiangyun complied:

Magnolia oars shatter the reflections of lotus;  
Caltrops and lotus-root scent the bamboo bridge.

The Lady Dowager glanced up again at the inscription on the board above her head, then turned to Aunt Xue.

"When I was young we had a pavilion like this too at home," she said. "It was called Pillowed Iridescence or something of the sort. I was no bigger than these girls at that time and I used to play with my sisters there every day. Once I slipped and fell into the water and nearly drowned! They managed to pull me out, but a wooden bolt had gashed my head. That's how I got this dent the size of a finger-tip on my temple here. They were all afraid I was done for after that ducking and chill, but I recovered."

Before anyone else could comment Xifeng quipped, "If you hadn't, who'd be enjoying all this good fortune today? Obviously our Old Ancestress was destined from birth to good luck and a long life: that's why the gods dented her head — to hold her good luck! The God of Longevity originally had a dent in his head too, but it was so stuffed with good fortune it swelled up instead into a bump."

Before she had finished, the Lady Dowager and all the others were quite limp from laughing.

"This monkey's so dreadfully spoilt, she even makes fun of me," declared the old lady. "I ought to tear out that glib tongue of yours."

"We'll presently be eating crabs," said Xifeng. "I was afraid you might have indigestion if I didn't first make you laugh. If you're in good spirits it doesn't matter eating a little more."

"I'll make you stay with me day and night to keep me laughing," threatened the Lady Dowager. "I won't let you go home."

欢他，才惯的他这样。还这样说，他明日越发无礼了。”贾母笑道：“我喜欢他这样，况且他又不是那不知高低的孩子。家常没人，娘儿们原该这样。横竖礼体不错就罢了，没的倒叫他从神儿似的作什么。”

说着，一齐进入亭子，献过茶，凤姐忙着摆桌子，要怀箸。上面一桌，贾母、薛姨妈、宝钗、黛玉、宝玉；东边一桌，史湘云、王夫人、迎、探、惜；西边靠门一桌，李纨和凤姐的，虚设坐位，二人皆不敢坐，只在贾母、王夫人两桌上伺候。凤姐吩咐：“螃蟹不可多拿来，仍旧放在蒸笼里，拿十个来，吃了再拿。”一面又要水洗了手，站在贾母跟前剥蟹肉，头次让薛姨妈。薛姨妈道：“我自己剥着吃香甜，不用人让。”凤姐便奉与贾母。二次的便与宝玉，又说：“把酒烫的热热的拿来。”又命小丫头们去取菊花叶儿、桂花蕊熏的绿豆面子来，预备洗手。史湘云陪着吃了一个，就下座来让人，又出至外头，命人盛两盘子与赵姨娘、周姨娘送去。又见凤姐走来道：“你不惯张罗，你吃你的去。我先替你张罗，等散了我再吃。”湘云不肯，又命在那边廊上摆了两桌，让鸳鸯、琥珀、彩霞、彩云、平儿去坐。鸳鸯因向凤姐笑道：“二奶奶在这里伺候，我们可吃去了。”凤姐儿笑道：“你们只管去，都交给我就是了。”说着，史湘云仍入了席。凤姐





"It's because you're so fond of her, madam, that she's so spoilt," interposed Lady Wang. "And by talking like that you'll make her even worse."

"I like her as she is." The old lady chuckled. "Besides, she never really oversteps the mark. When we've no visitors we *should* joke and chat, so long as the young people don't break the main rules of propriety. Why should we expect them to behave like angels?"

Now that everyone was in the pavilion tea was served, after which Xifeng set the tables. The one at the head was for the Lady Dowager, Aunt Xue, Baochai, Daiyu and Baoyu; that on the east for Xiangyun, Lady Wang, Yingchun, Tanchun and Xichun; and the small one near the door on the west for Li Wan and Xifeng. The seats at this were unoccupied, however, as they were waiting on the tables of the Lady Dowager and Lady Wang.

"Don't bring too many crabs," Xifeng told the maids. "Fetch us ten and keep the rest in the steamer, to be brought in as we need them."

Having called for water to wash her hands, she stood by the old lady and shelled a crab, offering the meat to Aunt Xue. But the latter declined it.

"Please don't trouble," she said. "I prefer to do it myself."

So Xifeng gave this crab to the Lady Dowager, the second to Baoyu. She then sent for piping hot wine and ordered some young maids to fetch powdered green beans scented with chrysanthemum leaves and fragrant osmanthus, for use when they washed their hands.

Xiangyun, after eating one crab with her guests, left her seat to help the others and also went outside to give instructions that two dishes of crabs should be sent to the concubines Zhao and Zhou.

"You're not used to entertaining," said Xifeng coming over to her. "Go back and eat while I look after your guests for you. I'll eat after they've left."

But Xiangyun, declining this offer, had two more tables placed on the balcony for Yuanyang, Hupo, Caixia, Caiyun and Pinger.

"Since you're seeing to things here, madam," said Yuanyang to Xifeng, "we may as well go and eat."

"Yes, go along, all of you. Leave everything to me."



和李纨也胡乱应个景儿。凤姐仍是下来张罗，一时出至廊上，鸳鸯等正吃的高兴，见他来了，鸳鸯等站起来道：“奶奶又出来作什么？让我们也受用一会子。”凤姐笑道：“鸳鸯小蹄子越发坏了，我替你当差，倒不领情，还抱怨我。还不快斟一钟酒来我喝呢。”鸳鸯笑着忙斟了一杯酒，送至凤姐唇边，凤姐一扬脖子吃了。琥珀、彩霞二人也斟上一杯，送至凤姐唇边，那凤姐也吃了。平儿早剔了一壳黄子送来，凤姐道：“多倒些姜醋。”一面也吃了，笑道：“你们坐着吃罢，我可去了。”鸳鸯笑道：“好没脸的，吃我们的东西。”凤姐儿笑道：“你和我少作怪。你知道你琏二爷爱上了你，要和老太太讨了你作小老婆呢。”鸳鸯道：“啐，这也是作奶奶说出来的话！我不拿腥手抹你一脸算不得。”说着赶来就要抹。凤姐儿央道：“好姐姐，饶我这一遭儿罢。”琥珀笑道：“鸳丫头要去了，平丫头还饶他？你们看看他，没有吃了两个螃蟹，倒喝了一碟子醋，他也算会揽酸的了。”平儿手里正剥了个满黄的螃蟹，听如此奚落他，便拿着螃蟹照着琥珀脸上来抹，口内笑骂：“我把你这嚼舌根的小蹄子……”琥珀也笑着往旁边一躲，平儿使空了，往前一撞，正恰恰的抹在凤姐儿腮上。凤姐儿正和鸳鸯嘲笑，不防唬了一跳，“嗳呀”了一声。众人撑不住都哈哈的大笑起来。凤姐也禁不住笑骂道：







At that Xiangyun went back to her seat and, after Xifeng and Li Wan had eaten a few hurried mouthfuls as a matter of form, Xifeng left the table again to do the honours. Presently she stepped out on to the balcony where the maids were enjoying the crabs. At her approach they rose and Yuanyang asked:

“Why have you come out here, madam? Do let us enjoy our crabs in peace!”

“This little bitch has become quite impossible!” cried Xifeng laughing. “Instead of thanking me for doing your job, you’re complaining. Hurry up and pour me some wine.”

Smiling, Yuanyang made haste to fill a cup and hold it to her lips. Xifeng tossed it off. Then Hupo and Caixia poured two more cups and held them to her lips, and she drank them too. By this time Pinger had ready a shellful of yellow crab meat.

“Add plenty of ginger and vinegar,” said Xifeng. And when this was eaten she told them, “Sit down and go on with your meal. I’m leaving you.”

“How shameless!” Yuanyang tittered. “Cadging from *us*.”

“You’d better behave,” warned Xifeng. “You know your Master Lian is in love with you and means to ask the old lady to let him have you as his concubine.”

“Bah!” Yuanyang spat out. “What a way for a lady to talk! I’m going to smear your face with my dirty hands to get even.”

She stood up as if to carry out her threat.

“Let me off this time, good sister!” pleaded Xifeng.

“If Yuanyang becomes a concubine, Pinger will make things hot for her.” Hupo giggled. “Just look at her. She’s drunk a whole saucer of vinegar with less than two crabs — that’s soured her.”

Pinger had just scooped out the yellow flesh of a crab, and at this gibe she aimed it at Hupo’s face, laughing.

“You foul-mouthed bitch!” she swore.

Hupo giggled and dodged so that Pinger, stumbling forward, smeared Xifeng’s cheek with the crab flesh. Xifeng, still joking with Yuanyang, cried out with a start which made everyone burst out laughing. Unable to help joining in herself, she cursed:

“死娼妇!吃瞎了眼了,混抹你娘的。”平儿忙赶过来替他擦了,亲自去端水。鸳鸯道:“阿弥陀佛!这是个报应。”贾母那边听见,一叠连声问:“见了什么这样乐,告诉我们也笑笑。”鸳鸯等忙高声笑回道:“二奶奶来抢螃蟹吃,平儿恼了,抹了他主子一脸的螃蟹黄子。主子奴才打架呢。”贾母和王夫人等听了也笑起来。贾母笑道:“你们看他可怜见的,把那小腿子脐子给他点子吃也就完了。”鸳鸯等笑着答应了,高声又说道:“这满桌子的腿子,二奶奶只管吃就是了。”凤姐洗了脸走来,又伏侍贾母等吃了一回,黛玉独不敢多吃,只吃了一点儿夹子肉就下来了。

贾母一时不吃了,大家方散,都洗了手,也有看花的,也有弄水看鱼的,游玩了一回。王夫人因回贾母说:“这里风大,才又吃了螃蟹,老太太还是回房去歇歇罢了。若高兴,明日再来逛逛。”贾母听了,笑道:“正是呢。我怕你们高兴,我走了,又怕扫了你们的兴。既这么说,咱们就都去罢。”回头又嘱咐湘云:“别让你宝哥哥、林姐姐多吃了。”湘云答应着。又嘱咐湘云、宝钗二人说:“你两个也别多吃。那东西虽好吃,不是什么好的,吃多了肚子疼。”二人忙应着送出园外,仍旧回来,命将残席收拾了另摆。宝玉道:“也不用摆,咱们且作诗。把那大团圆桌子放在当中,酒菜都放着。也不必拘定坐位,有爱吃的去吃,大家散坐,岂不便宜?”宝钗道:“这话极是。”湘云道:“虽如此说,还有别



“Damn slut! Have you no eyes that you smear anyone?”

Pinger hastily wiped Xifeng’s face and went to fetch water.

“Gracious Buddha!” cried Yuanyang. “This is just retribution.”

“What’s happened?” called the Lady Dowager. “What are you laughing at? Let us into the joke.”

Yuanyang and the others, still shaking with mirth, called back loudly, “Madam Lian came here to steal our crabs. Then Pinger flared up and smeared her face with yellow crab meat. Now mistress and maid are scrapping.”

Amid general laughter the Lady Dowager said, “Do take pity on the poor thing and give her some of the smaller legs and innards.”

Yuanyang cheerfully assented and cried loudly, “The table is covered with legs. Just help yourself, madam.”

Then Xifeng, having washed her face, went back to wait on the Lady Dowager.

Daiyu, the only one afraid to eat much, had contented herself with a little meat from the pincers, after which she left the table.

As soon as the old lady had had enough they all left their places to wash their hands, then strolled off to look at the flowers, play with the water or watch the fish.

“It’s windy here, and you’ve just been eating crab, madam,” said Lady Wang presently to her mother-in-law. “You’d better go back and rest. If you’ve enjoyed this you can come again tomorrow.”

“Very well,” replied the Lady Dowager. “I didn’t want to spoil your fun by leaving; but since you suggest it, let’s go.” She turned to Xiangyun. “Don’t let your cousins Baoyu and Daiyu eat too much.” When Xiangyun agreed, she advised her and Baochai, “You two had better not eat too much either. Crabs are delicious but not very wholesome. If you overeat you’ll have a stomach-ache.”

Having assented and seen her out of the Garden, they returned and ordered the tables to be cleared and reset.

“There’s no need for that,” Baoyu objected. “It’s time to write poems now. Just put the wine and dishes on the big round table in the middle there. You needn’t assign seats either. We can help ourselves and sit wherever we please. Wouldn’t that be more comfortable?”

人。”因又命另摆一桌，拣了热螃蟹来，请袭人、紫鹃、司棋、待书、入画、莺儿、翠墨等一处共坐。山坡桂树底下铺下两条花毡，命答应的女子并小丫头等也都坐了，只管随意吃喝，等使唤再来。

湘云便取了诗题，用针绱在墙上。众人看了，都说：“新奇，新奇，只怕作不出来。”湘云又把不限韵的原故说了一番，宝玉道：“这才是正理，我也最不喜限韵。”林黛玉因不大吃酒，又不吃螃蟹，自命人掇了一个绣墩倚栏坐着，拿了钓竿钓鱼。宝钗手里拿着一枝桂花玩了一回，俯在窗槛上捋了桂蕊掷向水面，引的游鱼浮上来唼喋。湘云出一回神，又让一回袭人等，又招呼山坡下的众人只管放量吃。探春和李纨、惜春立在垂柳阴中看鸥鹭。迎春又独在花阴下拿着花针穿茉莉花。宝玉又看了一回黛玉钓鱼，一回又俯在宝钗旁边说笑两句，一回又看袭人等吃螃蟹，自己也陪他饮两口酒；袭人又剥一壳肉给他吃。黛玉放下钓竿，走至座间，拿起那乌银梅花自斟壶来，拣了一个小小的海棠冻石蕉叶杯。丫鬟看见，知他要饮酒，忙着走上来斟。黛玉道：“你们只管吃去，让我自斟，才有趣儿。”说着便斟了半盏，看时却是黄酒，因说道：“我吃了一点子螃蟹，觉得心口微微的疼，须得热热的吃口烧酒。”宝玉忙道：“有烧酒。”便命将那合欢花





“An excellent idea,” Baochai approved.

“That’s all very well,” said Xiangyun, “but we mustn’t forget the others.”

She had another table set and more hot crabs brought for Xiren, Zijuan, Siqu, Shishu, Ruhua, Yinger and Cuimo. Two rugs were spread at the foot of the slope under the fragrant osmanthus trees for the serving-women and the younger maids, who were urged to eat and drink as much as they liked and not to come unless called.

Then Xiangyun pinned the themes on one wall. And the others crowding round to look exclaimed:

“How original! But this isn’t going to be easy.”

She explained why they had chosen no definite rhymes.

“Quite right too,” approved Baoyu. “I don’t like hard-and-fast rhyme schemes either.”

As Daiyu did not want much wine or crab, she sent her maid for an embroidered cushion and sat by the balustrade angling for fish. Baochai played for a while with a spray of fragrant osmanthus, then leaned out of the window to toss some petals into the water so that the fish would come and nibble at them. Xiangyun roused herself from a brown study to urge Xiren’s party and the maids at the foot of the slope to eat their fill. Tanchun, Li Wan and Xichun stood in the shade of the willows watching the waterfowl, while Yingchun, standing apart in the shade of the blossom, threaded jasmine flowers with a needle.

Baoyu first watched Daiyu fishing, then went over to make a few remarks to Baochai, after which he joined Xiren and the rest and sipped some wine with them while Xiren prepared a shellful of meat for him.

At this point Daiyu, laying down her rod, walked over to the table. She picked up a tarnished silver pot with a plum-blossom design and chose a tiny red soapstone cup shaped like a palm leaf. To the maid who hurried forward to pour her a drink she said:

“Go on with your meal. Let me pour my own wine, that’s more fun.”

By now she had poured half a cup and could see it was yellow wine.

“After eating a bit of crab I’ve slight indigestion,” she said. “What I really want is a mouthful of hot spirits.”

“There’s some here,” said Baoyu promptly. He told the maids to heat

浸的酒烫一壶来。黛玉也只吃了一口便放下了。宝钗也走过来，另拿了一个杯来，也饮了一口放下，便蘸笔至墙上把头一个《忆菊》勾了，底下又赘了一个“蘅”字。宝玉忙道：“好姐姐，第二个我已经有了四句了，你让我作罢。”宝钗笑道：“我好容易有了一首，你就忙的这样。”黛玉也不说话，接过笔来把第八个《问菊》勾了，接着把第十一个《菊梦》也勾了，写一个“潇”字。宝玉也拿起笔来，将第二个《访菊》也勾了，也写上一个“绛”字。探春走来看看道：“竟无人作《簪菊》，让我作这《簪菊》。”又指着宝玉笑道：“才宣过总不许带出闺阁字样来，你可要留神。”说着，只见史湘云走来，将第四、第五《对菊》、《供菊》一连两个都勾了，也写上一个“湘”字。探春道：“你也该起个号。”湘云笑道：“我们家里如今虽有几处轩馆，我又不住着，借了来也没趣。”宝钗笑道：“方才老太太说，你们家也有这个水亭叫‘枕霞阁’，难道不是你的？如今虽没了，你到底是旧主人。”众人都道有理，宝玉不待湘云动手，便代将“湘”字抹了，改了一个“霞”字。又有顿饭工夫，十二题已全，各自誊出来，都交与迎春，另拿了一张薛涛笺过来，一并写录出来，某人作的底下写明某人的号。李纨等从头看道：



a pot of spirits in which acacia flowers had been steeped.

After just one sip Daiyu put the cup down. Baochai, coming over just then, picked up another cup and drank a mouthful before wetting her brush and ticking off the first title on the wall *Thinking of the Chrysanthemum*, beside which she wrote "Alpinia."

"Dear cousin," put in Baoyu hastily. "I've got four lines already for the second. Do leave that one for me."

"I've only just taken one, yet what a fluster you're in!" replied Baochai mockingly.

Daiyu silently took the brush from her and ticked off the eighth subject, *Questioning the Chrysanthemum*, as well as the eleventh, *A Dream of Chrysanthemums*, writing "Bamboo" beside them. Baoyu, the next to take the brush, ticked off the second title *Visiting the Chrysanthemum* and wrote "Red" by it.

Tanchun, strolling over now to look, remarked, "If no one's doing *Wearing the Chrysanthemum*, I'll try that." She wagged a finger teasingly at Baoyu. "It's just been announced that no allusions to the inner chambers are allowed, so be careful!"

Meanwhile Xiangyun had come over to tick off numbers four and five, *Facing the Chrysanthemum* and *Displaying the Chrysanthemum*, next to which she wrote her name.

"You should have a pen-name too," Tanchun objected.

"Though we've still a few pavilions and lodges at home, I'm not living there now," replied Xiangyun. "And there's no point in using a borrowed name."

Baochai countered, "Just now the old lady said your house has a water pavilion called Pillowed Iridescence. That's yours all right. Even though it's in other hands now, you're after all its old mistress."

"That's right," approved the rest.

Before Xiangyun could make any move, Baoyu blotted out her name and wrote up "Iridescence" in its place.

Then, in less time than it takes for a meal, the twelve poems were finished, written out and handed to Yingchun, who copied them out on a fresh sheet of coloured Xue Tao stationery<sup>1</sup>, adding the pen-name of the author to each. Li Wan and the others read them.



忆菊

蘅芜君

怅望西风抱闷思，蓼红苇白断肠时。  
空篱旧圃秋无迹，瘦月清霜梦有知。  
念念心随归雁远，寥寥坐听晚砧痴。  
谁怜我为黄花病，慰语重阳会有期。

访菊

怡红公子

闲趁霜晴试一游，酒杯药盏莫淹留。  
霜前月下谁家种，槛外篱边何处秋。  
蜡屐远来情得得，冷吟不尽兴悠悠。  
黄花若解怜诗客，休负今朝挂杖头。

种菊

怡红公子

携锄秋圃自移来，篱畔庭前处处栽。  
昨夜不期经雨活，今朝犹喜带霜开。  
冷吟秋色诗千首，醉酌寒香酒一杯。  
泉溉泥封勤护惜，好知三径绝尘埃。

对菊

枕霞旧友

别圃移来贵比金，一丛浅淡一丛深。  
萧疏篱畔科头坐，清冷香中抱膝吟。  
数去更无君傲世，看来惟有我知音。  
秋光荏苒休辜负，相对原宜惜寸阴。







### THINKING OF THE CHRYSANTHEMUM

I gaze around in the west wind, sick at heart;  
A sad season this of red smartweed and white reeds;  
No sign is there of autumn by the bare fence round my plot.  
Yet I dream of attenuated blooms in the frost.  
My heart follows the wild geese back to the distant south,  
Sitting lonely at dusk I hear pounding of washing blocks.  
Who will pity me pining away for the yellow flowers?  
On the Double Ninth Festival they will reappear.

*The Lady of the Alpinia*

### VISITING THE CHRYSANTHEMUM

Seize the chance to ramble out on a clear frosty day  
Rather than linger over wine or tea.  
Who has planted this flower before the frost under the moonlight?  
Whence springs this autumn glory by balustrade and fence?  
Waxed sandals patter, come gaily from far away,  
In soaring spirits he chants endless poems;  
If the yellow bloom will take pity on the poet,  
Let it welcome him with a string of cash hung from his cane.

*The Happy Red Prince*

### PLANTING CHRYSANTHEMUMS

With my hoe I moved them from their bed in autumn  
To plant them by the fence before my court;  
An unexpected rain last night revived them,  
How good to see them flower in this morning's frost.  
I chant a thousand poems to this autumn splendour  
And drunk with wine toast its cold fragrance,  
Seal its roots with mud and water it with spring water  
To keep it free from dust by the three paths to the house of the recluse.

*The Happy Red Prince*

### FACING THE CHRYSANTHEMUM

Brought from another plot, more precious than gold,  
One clump is pale, one dark;  
Sitting bareheaded by the lonely fence,  
In the cold clean scent I hug my knees and chant.  
None, surely, in the world as proud as you;  
I alone, it seems, know your worth.





供菊

弹琴酌酒喜堪俦，几案婷婷点缀幽。  
隔座香分三径露，抛书人对一枝秋。  
霜清纸帐来新梦，圃冷斜阳忆旧游。  
傲世也因同气味，春风桃李未淹留。

枕霞旧友

咏菊

无赖诗魔昏晓侵，绕篱欹石自沉音。  
毫端蕴秀临霜写，口齿噙香对月吟。  
满纸自怜题素怨，片言谁解诉秋心。  
一从陶令平章后，千古高风说到今。

潇湘妃子

画菊

诗余戏笔不知狂，岂是丹青费较量。  
聚叶泼成千点墨，攒花染出几痕霜。  
淡浓神会风前影，跳脱秋生腕底香。  
莫认东篱闲采掇，粘屏聊以慰重阳。

蘅芜君

问菊

欲讯秋情众莫知，漫将幽意叩东篱。  
孤标傲世偕谁隐，一样花开为底迟？  
圃露庭霜何寂寞，鸿归蛩病可相思？  
休言举世无谈者，解语何妨话片时。

潇湘妃子





We should make the most of autumn, gone so soon,  
And facing you I treasure every moment.

*Old Friend of Pillowed Iridescence*

#### DISPLAYING THE CHRYSANTHEMUM

Music and wine gladly accompany  
Chrysanthemum adorning a desk with style.  
By the seat dewy fragrance as if from the garden path;  
Tossing my book aside I face a spray of autumn.  
Fresh dreams penetrate the curtain in clear frost,  
Sunset in chill garden recalls a former visit.  
You too disdain the world, for we share the same taste,  
Not lingering by breezy spring's peach and plum blossom.

*Old Friend of Pillowed Iridescence*

#### WRITING ABOUT THE CHRYSANTHEMUM

Day and night the imp of poetry assails men;  
Skirting the fence, leaning on the rock, they start chanting;  
With the tip of the brush, by the rime, they write fine lines,  
Or facing the moon croon their sweet melodies.  
We may fill a page with sorrow and self-pity,  
But who can put into words what autumn means?  
Ever since Tao Yuanming of old passed judgement  
This flower's worth has been sung through the centuries.

*The Queen of Bamboos*

#### PAINTING THE CHRYSANTHEMUM

Painting for pleasure after writing verses  
One brushes on the reds and blues at random;  
A thousand ink-dots form the leaves,  
Traces of frost stain the clustering flowers;  
Dark and light their shadows overlap in the breeze,  
Under one's hand autumn exhales its fragrance.  
Don't think these flowers are picked by the east fence,  
They are fixed to the screen for the Double Ninth Festival.

*The Lady of the Alpinia*

#### QUESTIONING THE CHRYSANTHEMUM

My questions about autumn none can answer,  
Musing alone I stroll to the eastern fence.  
Proud recluse, with what hermit are you taking refuge?





簪菊

瓶供篱栽日日忙，折来休认镜中妆。  
长安公子因花癖，彭泽先生是酒狂。  
短鬓冷沾三径露，葛巾香染九秋霜。  
高情不入时人眼，拍手凭他笑路旁。

蕉下客

菊影

秋光叠叠复重重，潜度偷移三径中。  
窗隔疏灯描远近，篱筛破月锁玲珑。  
寒芳留照魂应驻，霜印传神梦也空。  
珍重暗香休踏碎，凭谁醉眼认朦胧。

枕霞旧友

菊梦

篱畔秋酣一觉清，和云伴月不分明。  
登仙非慕庄生蝶，忆旧还寻陶令盟。  
睡去依依随雁断，惊回故故恼蛩鸣。  
醒时幽怨同谁诉，衰草寒烟无限情。

潇湘妃子





All flowers must bloom, what makes you bloom so late?  
So lonely in dewy gardens and frosty courts,  
When swans fly off, crickets chirp, does your heart ache?  
Say not there is none in the world worth talking to;  
Since you understand, why don't we chat awhile?

*The Queen of Bamboos*

WEARING THE CHRYSANTHEMUM

Busy every day planting by the fence, picking for vases,  
Not to adorn himself before the mirror,  
The young lord of Changan is infatuated with flowers,  
Just as the poet of Pengze<sup>2</sup> was crazy for wine.

His short hair is wet with cold dew from the path,  
His coarse cap stained with autumn frost and fragrance;  
This eccentric recluse is scorned by the men of today,  
But let them clap their hands and jeer by the roadside.

*The Stranger Under the Plantain*

THE CHRYSANTHEMUM'S SHADOW

The teeming, diverse shades of autumn splendour  
Quietly loiter about the mountain path;  
The few lamps inside windows far or near cast their shadows,  
Chequered patterns of moonlight filtered through wicker fence.  
The soul of cold fragrance should dwell in these reflections,  
Empty even in dreams the frost tracery of their spirit;  
Tread softly and take good care of this dark sweetness,  
For who can discern it in his drunken eyes?

*Old Friend of Pillowed Iridescence*

A DREAM OF CHRYSANTHEMUMS

A refreshing sleep by the fence while autumn mellows  
And clouds and moonlight mingle hazily;  
No need to envy Zhuang Zi his butterfly dream;  
Recalling old friends, let me seek out Tao Yuanming.  
In sleep the vision recedes with the flight of swans,  
Aroused with a start we resent the chirp of crickets;  
Awake, to whom can I describe my grief,  
The infinite melancholy of cold mist and withered grass?

*The Queen of Bamboos*



残菊

蕉下客

露凝霜重渐倾欹，宴赏才过小雪时。  
蒂有余香金淡泊，枝无全叶翠离披。  
半床落月蛩声病，万里寒云雁阵迟。  
明岁秋风知再会，暂时分手莫相思。

众人看一首，赞一首，彼此称扬不绝。李纨笑道：“等我从公评来。通篇看来，各有各人的警句。今日公评：《咏菊》第一，《问菊》第二，《菊梦》第三，题目新，诗也新，立意更新，怨不得要推潇湘妃子为魁了；然后《簪菊》、《对菊》、《供菊》、《画菊》、《忆菊》次之。”宝玉听说，喜的拍手叫“极是，极公道。”黛玉道：“我那首也不好，到底伤于纤巧些。”李纨道：“巧的却好，不露堆砌生硬。”黛玉道：“据我看来，头一句好的是‘圃冷斜阳忆旧游’，这句背面傅粉。至‘抛书人对一枝秋’已经妙极，将供菊说完，没处再说，故翻回来想到未折未供之先，意思深透。”李纨笑道：“固如此说，你的‘口齿噙香’一句也敌过了。”探春又道：“到底要算蘅芜君沉着，‘秋无迹’，‘梦有知’，把



### THE WITHERED CHRYSANTHEMUM

Slowly drooping below congealed dew and heavy frost  
Just after a feast in its honour on the Day of Light Snow.  
The pale golden petals still retain some fragrance,  
But the marred green leaves are withering on the stem.  
Crickets chirp sadly under denuded boughs,  
Wild geese wing slowly through far-flung frosty clouds;  
Next year in autumn we shall meet again,  
No need to sorrow over this brief parting.

*The Stranger Under the Plantain*

As they read each poem they praised it, heaping compliments on each other.

“Let me try to pass fair judgement now,” said Li Wan with a smile. “On the whole each poem has striking lines but, speaking impartially, I rank *Writing About the Chrysanthemum* first, *Questioning the Chrysanthemum* second, and *A Dream of Chrysanthemums* third; for all three show originality in the theme, ideas and style. The Queen of Bamboos will have to be given first place. Next in order of merit come *Wearing the Chrysanthemum*, *Facing the Chrysanthemum*, *Displaying the Chrysanthemum*, *Painting the Chrysanthemum* and *Thinking of the Chrysanthemum*.”

Baoyu clapped his hands in delight at this, exclaiming, “Absolutely right. Very fair.”

“Mine didn’t amount to much,” Daiyu observed. “They’re rather contrived.”

“But aptly so,” rejoined Li Wan. “Not stiff and overloaded.”

“To my mind,” continued Daiyu, “the best line of all is ‘Sunset in chill garden recalls a former visit’ which presents such a strong contrast. And ‘Tossing my book aside I face a spray of autumn’ is perfect, leaving nothing more to be said about displaying chrysanthemums, so that she had to revert to the time before the flower was plucked and put in the vase. Very penetrating, very subtle.”

“Quite so. Still, your line about ‘sweet melodies’ is even better,” countered Li Wan.

Tanchun put in, “And what about the Lady of the Alpinia? ‘No sign is

个忆字竟烘染出来了。”宝钗笑道：“你的‘短鬓冷沾’，‘葛巾香染’，也就把簪菊形容的一个缝儿也没了。”湘云道：“‘偕谁隐’，‘为底迟’，真个把个菊花问的无言可对。”李纨笑道：“你的‘科头坐’，‘抱膝吟’，竟一时也舍不得离开，菊花有知，也必腻烦了。”说的大家都笑了。宝玉笑道：“我又落第。难道‘谁家种’，‘何处秋’，‘蜡屐远来’，‘冷吟不尽’，都不是访，‘昨夜雨’，‘今朝霜’，都不是种不成？但恨敌不上‘口齿噙香对月吟’、‘清冷香中抱膝吟’、‘短鬓’、‘葛巾’、‘金淡泊’、‘翠离披’、‘秋无迹’、‘梦有知’这几句罢了。”又道：“明日闲了，我一个人作出十二首来。”李纨道：“你的也好，只是不及这几句新巧就是了。”

大家又评了一回，复又要了热蟹来，就在大圆桌子上吃了一回。宝玉笑道：“今日持螯赏桂，亦不可无诗。我已吟成，谁还敢作呢？”说着，便忙洗了手提笔写出。众人看道：

### 食螯

持螯更喜桂阴凉，泼醋搯姜兴欲狂。  
饕餮王孙应有酒，横行公子却无肠。





there of autumn' and 'yet in dream I see' bring out the idea of nostalgia so vividly."

Baochai smiled and replied, "Your 'short hair wet with cold dew' and 'coarse cap stained with fragrance' do full justice to the subject too."

Xiangyun remarked gaily, "Questions like 'With what hermit are you taking refuge?' and 'What makes you bloom so late?' are bound to stump the flower."

Li Wan retorted, "I daresay your sitting bareheaded and hugging your knees while you chant, refusing to leave, would get on the flower's nerves too — if it had any."

At that there was general laughter.

"I'm last again," said Baoyu cheerfully. "But surely my 'Who has planted this flower?' 'Whence springs this autumn glory?', 'waxed sandals come from far away,' and 'chants endless poems' describe visiting the chrysanthemum all right? And don't 'rain last night' and 'this morning's frost' describe the planting? It's just that they're not up to such images as 'facing the moon croon their sweet melodies,' 'In the cold clean scent I hug my knees and chant,' 'short hair,' 'coarse cap,' 'pale gold,' 'the marred green leaves are withering,' 'no sign is there of autumn' and 'seen in dreams.'" He added, "Tomorrow when I've time, I mean to write on all twelve themes."

"Your verses aren't bad," Li Wan told him. "They're not as distinctive as the others though."

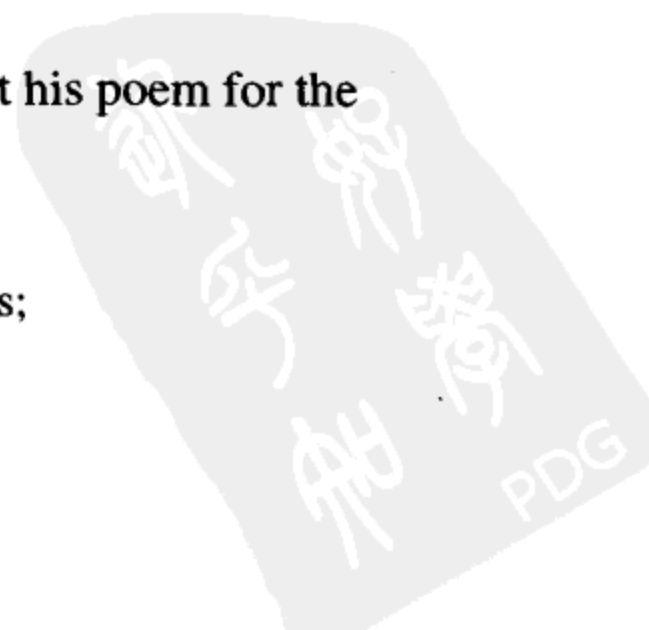
After some further discussion of the poems they called for more hot crabs and sat round the big table to eat.

"Now that we're enjoying the fragrant osmanthus and eating crabs, we should write verses about this too," said Baoyu presently. "I've already made one. Who else is game?"

With that he hastily washed his hands and wrote out his poem for the others.

#### EATING CRABS

How fine to eat crabs in the cool shade of osmanthus;  
Gaily we pile on ginger, splash vinegar on each part;  
A true gourmand should also have wine;





脐间积冷馋忘忌，指上沾腥洗尚香。

原为世人美口腹，坡仙曾笑一生忙。

黛玉笑道：“这样的诗，要一百首也有。”宝玉笑道：“你这会子才力已尽，不说不能作了，还贬人家。”黛玉听了，并不答言，也不思索，提起笔来一挥，已有了一首。众人看道：

铁甲长戈死未忘，堆盘色相喜先尝。

螯封嫩玉双双满，壳凸红脂块块香。

多肉更怜卿八足，助情谁劝我千觞。

对斯佳品酬佳节，桂拂清风菊带霜。

宝玉看了正喝彩，黛玉便一把撕了，命人烧去，因笑道：“我的不及你的，我烧了他。你那个很好，比方才的菊花诗还好，你留着他给人看。”宝钗接着笑道：“我也勉强了一首，未必好，写出来取笑儿罢。”说着也写了出来。大家看时，写道是：

桂霭桐阴坐举觞，长安涎口盼重阳。

眼前道路无经纬，皮里春秋空白黄。

看到这里，众人不禁叫绝。宝玉道：“写得痛快！我的诗也该烧了。”又看底下道：





But this creature scuttling sidewise has no heart.  
In our greed we forget how hard it is to digest,  
Our fingers washed, the reek of its oil will remain;  
The crab's sole function is to please men's palate,  
And Su Dongpo<sup>3</sup> laughed because its whole life it's busy in vain.

"If you call that a poem," scoffed Daiyu, "I can write you a hundred."

"No, you've exhausted your talent, you can't write any more. All you can do is to disparage other people."

Instead of answering and without stopping to think, she picked up the brush and promptly wrote a verse:

Girt even in death with iron armour and long spears.  
On the plate, delicious, it's sat,  
Its pincers packed with meat like tender jade,  
Its shell bulging with red, tasty fat.  
How I love those eight succulent legs —  
But who'll urge me to drink a thousand cups till  
my grief is overcome?  
Let us toast this dainty at our feast today  
When breeze ruffles fragrant osmanthus and frost  
gathers on chrysanthemum.

Baoyu reading this was loud in his praise, but Daiyu tore it up and told the maids to burn it.

"Mine isn't as good as yours, so I'm burning it," she told him with a smile. "Yours is fine. Better than your chrysanthemum poems. You should keep it to show other people."

"I've made a feeble attempt too," Baochai put in with a laugh. "It's not much good, but I'll write it out to amuse you."

She did so and they read:

We sit, cups raised, in the shade of osmanthus and *Wu-tong*;  
Mouths watering, for the Double Ninth we pine;  
It crawls sidewise because the ways of the world are crooked,  
And, white and yellow, harbours a dark design.

They all exclaimed at this point in admiration.

"That's the style!" cried Baoyu. "My verse will have to be burned

紅樓夢  
PDG

酒未敌腥还用菊，性防积冷定须姜。

于今落釜成何益，月浦空余禾黍香。

众人看毕，都说这是食螃蟹绝唱，这些小题目，原要寓大意才算是大才，只是讽刺世人太毒了些。说着，只见平儿复进园来。不知作什么，且听下回分解。





too.”

Then they read on:

Wine won't purge the smell without chrysanthemums,  
And ginger is needed dyspepsia to prevent;  
What can it do now, fallen into the cauldron?  
On the moonlit bank all that remains is the millet's scent.

“It takes real talent to get deep significance into such a small subject as eating crabs,” the others commented. “But as a satire, this is rather hard on the world!”

They were interrupted by Pinger's return to the Garden. To know what her business was, you must read the next chapter.



### 第三十九回

村老姬是信口开河 痴情子偏寻根究底

话说众人见平儿来了，都说：“你们奶奶作什么呢，怎么不来了？”平儿笑道：“他那里得空儿来？因为说没有好生吃得，又不得来，所以叫我来问还有没有，叫我要几个拿了家去吃罢。”湘云道：“有，多着呢。”忙命人拿了十个极大的。平儿道：“多拿几个团脐的。”众人又拉平儿坐，平儿不肯。李纨拉着笑道：“偏要你坐。”拉着他身旁坐下，端了一杯酒送到他嘴边。平儿忙喝了一口就要走，李纨道：“偏不许你去。显见得只有凤丫头，就不听我的话了。”说着又命嬷嬷们：“先送了盒子去，就说我留下平儿了。”那婆子一时拿了盒子回来说：“二奶奶说，叫奶奶和姑娘们别笑话要嘴吃。这个盒子里是方才舅太太那里送来的菱粉糕和鸡油卷儿，给奶奶、姑娘们吃的。”又向平儿道：“说使唤你来你就贪住玩不去了，劝你少喝一杯儿罢。”平儿笑道：“多喝了，又把我怎么样？”一面说，一面只管喝，又吃螃蟹。李纨揽着他笑道：“可惜这么个好体面模样儿，命却平常，只落得屋里使唤。不知道的人，谁不拿你当作奶奶、太太看。”

数字图书馆  
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## Chapter 39

### An Old Village Woman Tells Tall Stories A Romantic Youth Insists on Following Them Up

On Pinger's return she was asked, "What's your mistress doing? Why hasn't she come back?"

"She's too busy," replied Pinger, smiling. "As she didn't get a chance to eat properly and can't come, she's sent me to ask whether there are any crabs left. If so, I'm to take a few back for her to eat."

"There are plenty left," Xiangyun assured her.

She promptly ordered ten of the largest crabs to be brought.

"Mostly female ones if you please!" added Pinger.

They tried to make her take a seat, but she refused.

"We insist!" cried Li Wan laughingly.

She forced her on to the seat beside her own, filled a cup with wine and held it to her lips. But after one hurried sip Pinger rose to go.

"Oh no, you don't," said Li Wan. "I can see the only one who counts for you is Xifeng. You won't listen to what *I* say."

She ordered some matrons to deliver the hamper of crabs and tell Xifeng that she was keeping Pinger there.

Presently a matron returned with the empty hamper.

"Madam Lian says you and the young ladies mustn't laugh at her greediness, madam," she reported. "In this hamper are some caltrop cakes and chicken-fat rolls sent by Aunt Wang for you, madam, and the young ladies." She then turned to Pinger. "She says she knew, once she sent you here, you'd stay to amuse yourself; but you mustn't drink too much."

"And what if I do?" retorted Pinger, as she went on helping herself to wine and crab.

"Such a lovely girl!" cried Li Wan, taking her arm. "What a pity she's fated to wait on other people. Anyone not in the know would take





平儿一面和宝钗、湘云等吃喝，一面回头笑道：“奶奶，别只管摸的我怪痒的。”李氏道：“暖哟！这硬的是什么？”平儿道：“钥匙。”李氏道：“什么钥匙？要紧梯己东西怕人偷了去，却带在身上。我成日家和人说笑，有个唐僧取经，就有个白马来驮他；刘智远打天下，就有个瓜精来送盔甲；有个凤丫头，就有个你。你就是你奶奶的一把总钥匙，还要这钥匙作什么。”平儿笑道：“奶奶吃了酒，又拿了我来打趣着，取笑儿了。”宝钗笑道：“这倒是真话。我们没事评论起人来，你们这几个都是百个里头挑不出一个来的，妙在各人有各人的好处。”李纨道：“大小都有个天理。譬如老太太屋里，要没那个鸳鸯如何使得？从太太起，那一个敢驳老太太的回，他现敢驳回；偏老太太只听他一个人的话。老太太的那些穿戴的，别人不记得，他都记得，要不是他经管着，不知叫人诓骗了多少去呢。那孩子心也公道，虽然这样，倒常替人说好话儿，还倒不依势欺人的。”惜春笑道：“老太太昨儿还说呢，他比我们还强呢。”平儿道：“那原是个好的，我们那里比的上他。”宝玉道：“太太屋里的彩霞，是个老实人。”探春道：“可不是，外头老实，心里有数儿。太太是那么佛爷似的，事情上不留心，他都知道。凡百一应事都是他提着太太行。连老爷在家出外去的一应大小事，他都知道。太太忘了，他背地里告诉太太。”李纨道：“那也罢了。”指





you for the mistress of the house.”

Pinger, eating and drinking with Baochai and Xiangyun, turned her head to protest with a smile, “Don’t tickle me, madam.”

“My, what are these hard things?” asked Li Wan.

“Keys,” was the answer.

“Why, what valuables are you afraid of people stealing that you carry these keys about on you? It’s as I always say: When Monk Tripitaka<sup>1</sup> was searching for Buddhist scriptures, a white horse turned up to carry him; when Liu Zhiyuan<sup>2</sup> was fighting for the empire, a melon spirit appeared to give him armour. In the same way, Xifeng has you. You’re her master-key. What does she want these keys for?”

Pinger laughed.

“Now you’re making fun of me in your cups, madam.”

“It’s true all the same,” said Baochai. “When we’ve nothing to do but gossip, we always agree that each single one of you girls is one in a hundred. And the wonderful thing is that each one of you has her own good qualities.”

“Providence orders all things, great and small,” chimed in Li Wan. “For instance, what would the old lady do without Yuanyang? Nobody else, not even Lady Wang, dares contradict the old lady; but when Yuanyang does, the old lady listens to her. Nobody else can remember all the clothes and trinkets the old lady has, but Yuanyang remembers. If not for her being in charge, goodness knows how many things would have been swindled out of them. Even so, the girl’s broad-minded and instead of throwing her weight about she often puts in a good word for others.”

“Only yesterday,” remarked Xichun with a smile, “the old lady was saying she’s better than any of us.”

“She’s really fine,” agreed Pinger. “We others can’t compare with her.”

“Caixia in my mother’s apartments is an honest girl too,” put in Baoyu.

“Yes, she appears simple,” said Tanchun, “yet she’s smart. Her Ladyship is as unworldly as a Buddha, but if she overlooks anything Caixia sees to it for her. She keeps an eye on everything down to the least details of our father’s affairs at home and outside. So if her mistress forgets anything she quietly reminds her.”



着宝玉道：“这一个小爷屋里要不是袭人，你们度量，到个什么田地！凤丫头就是楚霸王，也得这两只膀子，好举千斤鼎。他不是这丫头，就得这么周到了？”平儿笑道：“先时陪了四个丫头，死的死，去的去，只剩下我一个孤鬼了。”李纨道：“你倒是有造化的，凤丫头也是有造化的。想当初，你珠大爷在日，何曾也没两个人。你们看我还是那容不下人的？天天只见他两个不自在。所以你珠大爷一没了，趁年轻我都打发了。若有一个守得住，我倒有个臂膀。”说着滴下泪来。众人都道：“又何必伤心，不如散了倒好。”说着便都洗了手，大家约往贾母、王夫人处问安。

众婆子、丫头打扫亭子，收拾杯盘。袭人和平儿同往前去，让平儿到房里坐坐，便问道：“这个月的月钱，为什么还不放？”平儿见问，忙悄悄说道：“迟两天就放了。这个月的月钱，我们奶奶早已支了，放给人使呢。等利钱收齐了，才放呢。你可不许告诉一个人去。”袭人笑道：“他难道还短钱使！何苦还操这心？”平儿笑道：“这几年拿着这一项银子，他的公费月例放出去利钱，一年不到，上千的银子呢。”袭人笑道：“拿着我们的钱，你们主子、奴才赚利钱，哄的我们呆等。”平儿道：“你又说没良心的话，你难道还少钱使？”袭





“True enough,” said Li Wan. She pointed at Baoyu, “And think what would happen in *this* young gentleman’s rooms, if not for Xiren’s good judgement. As for Xifeng, why, even if she had the strength of the Conqueror of Chu who could lift a tripod weighing a thousand catties, how could she handle everything without Pinger here?”

“Four of us came with our mistress at the time of her marriage,” said Pinger. “But the others have either died or gone, so that now I’m the only one left.”

“So much the better for you as well as for Xifeng,” commented Li Wan. “When your Master Zhu was alive we had two maids too, and I’m not the jealous type, am I? But they bickered so much every day that after his death I married them both off while they were still young. If there’d been just one worth keeping, I’d have someone to help me now.” Tears ran down her cheeks.

“Why let this upset you?” said the others. “You’re better off without them.”

So saying they washed their hands and went to pay their respects to the Lady Dowager and Lady Wang. While the other maids swept the pavilion and cleared away the cups and dishes, Xiren took Pinger back with her to her room. And once seated there she asked her:

“Why has no one received the allowance for this month yet?”

“It’ll be coming in a couple of days,” Pinger whispered. “My mistress got this month’s allowance some time ago but has loaned it out. She’ll distribute it as soon as she’s collected the interest. But mind you don’t pass this on.”

“I can’t believe she’s short of money. Why should she put herself to all that trouble?”

Pinger smiled.

“These last few years she’s been lending out this money for the monthly allowances together with her own. The interest she gets on these loans comes to more than a thousand taels of silver a year.”

“So the two of you, mistress and maid, have been using our money to get interest and kept us waiting like regular fools!” said Xiren with a smile.

“There you go again, talking in that heartless way! You’re not short,



人道：“我虽不少，只是我也没地方使去，就只预备我们那一个。”平儿道：“你倘若有要紧事，用钱使，我那里还有几两银子，你先拿来使，明日我扣下你的就是了。”袭人道：“此时也用不着，怕一时要用起来不够了，我打发人去取就是了。”

平儿答应着，一径出了园门，来至家内，只见凤姐儿不在房里。忽见上回来打抽丰的那刘姥姥和板儿又来了，坐在那边屋里，还有张材家的、周瑞家的陪着，又有两三个丫头在地下倒口袋里的枣子、倭瓜并些野菜。众人见他进来，都忙站起来了。刘姥姥因上次来过，知道平儿的身分，忙跳下地来问“姑娘好”，又说：“家里都问好。早要来请姑奶奶的安，看姑娘来的，因为庄稼忙。好容易今年多打了两石粮食，瓜果菜蔬也丰盛。这是头一起摘下来的，并没敢卖呢，留的尖儿孝敬姑奶奶、姑娘们尝尝。姑娘们天天山珍海味的也吃腻了，这个吃个野意罢，也算是我们的穷心。”平儿忙道：“多谢费心。”又让坐，自己也坐了。又让“张婶子、周大娘坐”，又命小丫头倒茶去。周瑞、张材两家的因笑道：“姑娘今日脸上有些春色，眼圈儿都红了。”平儿笑道：“可不是。我原是不吃的，大奶奶和姑娘们只是拉着死灌，不得已喝了两杯，脸就红了。”张材家的笑道：“我倒想着要吃呢，又没人让我。明日再有人请姑娘，可带了我去罢。”说





are you?"

"No, I'm not. *I've* nothing to spend money on, but I need a reserve for him."

"If you need money urgently, I still have a few taels you can be going on with. I'll deduct it later from your allowance."

"I don't need any at the moment, but if we run out I'll send somebody to fetch it."

Pinger, having agreed to this, left the Garden and returned to her own quarters.

Xifeng was out when she got back. But seated in her room, accompanied by the wives of Zhang Cai and Zhou Rui, were Granny Liu and Baner who had called before to ask for help. A few maids were emptying on to the floor some sacks of dates, pumpkins and other farm produce. They stood up when Pinger came in.

Granny Liu, who knew Pinger's status from her last visit, scrambled off the *kang* to greet her.

"All at home send their compliments," she said. "We'd have come before this to pay our respects to the mistress and to you, miss, but we've been very busy on the farm. This year we managed to get in a couple of piculs more of grain and a good crop of pumpkins, fruit and vegetables. These here are our first pickings. We didn't like to sell them but kept the best for you to taste. You young ladies must be tired of the delicacies you eat every day, and you may care to try our country fare. This is just our poor way of showing our gratitude."

Pinger thanked her for her trouble and asked her to take a seat. Having sat down herself she urged Mrs. Zhang and Mrs. Zhou to be seated too, then told a maid to bring tea.

"You're rather flushed today, miss," remarked the stewards' wives. "Why, even your eyes are red."

"I know," replied Pinger. "I really can't drink, but Madam Li Wan and the young ladies simply forced me. I had to swallow one or two cups, which made my face red."

"I wouldn't mind a drink myself, but nobody treats me," joked Mrs. Zhang. "Next time you get an invitation, miss, I hope you'll take me along."



着，大家都笑了。周瑞家的道：“早起我就看见那螃蟹了，一斤只好秤两个、三个。这么三大篓，想是有七八十斤呢。”周瑞家的道：“若是上上下下，只怕还不够。”平儿道：“那里够，不过都是有名儿的吃两个子。那些散众的，也有摸的着的，也有摸不着的。”刘姥姥道：“这样螃蟹，今年就值五分一斤。十斤五钱，五五二两五，三五一十五，再搭上酒菜，一共倒有二十多两银子。阿弥陀佛！这一顿的钱够我们庄稼人过一年的了。”平儿因问：“想是见过奶奶了？”刘姥姥道：“见过了，叫我们等着呢。”说着又往窗外看天色，说道：“天好早晚了，我们也去罢，别出不去城才是饥荒呢。”周瑞家的道：“这话倒是，我替你瞧瞧去。”说着一径去了，半日方来，笑道：“可是你老的福来了，竟投了这两个人的缘了。”平儿等问怎么样，周瑞家的笑道：“二奶奶在老太太跟前呢。我原是悄悄的告诉二奶奶，‘刘姥姥要家去呢，怕晚了赶不出城去。’二奶奶说：‘大远的，难为他扛了些沉东西来，晚了就住一夜明日去罢。’这可不投上二奶奶的缘了。这也罢了，偏生老太太又听见了，问刘姥姥是谁，二奶奶便回明白了。老太太说：‘我正想个积古的老人家说话儿，请了来我见一见。’这可不是想不到天上缘分了。”说着，催刘姥姥下来前去。刘姥姥道：“我这生像儿怎好见的？好嫂子，你就说我去罢了。”平儿忙道：“你快去罢，不相干的。我们



Everybody laughed.

"I saw those crabs this morning," remarked Mrs. Zhou. "I reckon two or three of them must weigh a catty. Three big crates like those must have weighed nearly eighty catties." She added, "Still, I don't suppose there were enough for everyone, high and low."

"Of course not," said Pinger. "Only people of some consequence had a couple. Of the others, some were lucky and some weren't."

"Crabs that size cost five silver cents a catty this year," put in Granny Liu. "That's fifty cents for ten catties. Five times fifty makes two taels fifty; three times five makes fifteen. Together with the wine and eatables, that adds up to more than twenty taels of silver. Gracious Buddha! That's enough to keep us country folk for a whole year."

"Have you seen our mistress yet?" Pinger asked her.

"Yes," replied Granny Liu. "She told us to wait." Looking out of the window at the sky she added, "It's getting late. We ought to be going. If we found the city gate closed we'd be in a fine fix."

"True," said Mrs. Zhou. "I'll go and see what she's doing."

She went out and reappeared after some time, beaming.

"Luck must be with you today, granny," she announced. "The two ladies have taken quite a fancy to you."

Pinger and the others asked her what she meant.

"Madam Lian was with the old lady," replied Mrs. Zhou. "I told her quietly, 'Granny Liu wants to leave, so as to reach the city gate before it's closed.' She said, 'She's come all that way with a load of things; let her spend the night here and go back tomorrow.' Doesn't that show she's taken a fancy to you?"

"That's not all either. The old lady happened to overhear us and asked, 'Who's this Granny Liu?' When that was explained by Madam Lian she said, 'I've been wanting to have a chat with some experienced old soul. Ask her over to see me.' Who could have imagined such a stroke of luck?"

She urged Granny Liu to go at once to the Lady Dowager.

"I'm not fit to be seen," objected Granny Liu. "Good sister, just tell her I've left."

"Go on, don't worry about that," said Pinger. "Our old lady is good-

老太太最是惜老怜贫的，比不得那个拿三作四的那些人。想是你怯上，我和周大娘送你去。”说着，同周瑞家的，引了刘姥姥往贾母这边来。

二门口该班的小厮们见了平儿出来，都站起来了，有两个又跑上来，赶着平儿叫“姑娘”。平儿问：“又说什么？”那小厮笑道：“这会子也好早晚了，我妈病了，等着我去请大夫。好姑娘，我讨半日假可使用的？”平儿道：“你们倒好，都商议定了，一天一个告假，又不回奶奶，只和我胡缠。前日住儿去了，二爷偏生叫他，叫不着，我应起来了，还说我作了情。你今日又来了。”周瑞家的道：“当真的他妈病了，姑娘也替他应着，放了他罢。”平儿道：“明日一早来。听着，我还要使你呢，再睡的日头晒着屁股才来！你这一去，带个信儿给来旺，就说奶奶的话，问着他那剩的利钱。明日若不交了来，奶奶也不要了，就越性送他使罢。”那小厮欢天喜地答应去了。

平儿等来至贾母房中，彼时大观园中姊妹们都在贾母前承奉。刘姥姥进去，只见满屋里珠围翠绕，花枝招展，并不知都系何人。只见一张榻上歪着一位老婆婆，身后坐着一个纱罗裹的，美人一般的丫鬟在那里捶腿，凤姐儿站着正说笑。刘姥姥便知是贾母了，忙上来陪着笑，福了几福，口里说：“请老寿星安。”贾母亦欠身问好，又命周瑞家的端过椅子来让坐着。那板儿仍是怯人，不知问候。贾母道：“老亲家，你今年多大年纪了？”刘姥姥忙起身答道：“今年七十五





ness itself to the old and needy. She's not haughty and high-handed like some people. If you're shy, Mrs. Zhou and I can come with you."

So she and Zhou Rui's wife set out with Granny Liu for the Lady Dowager's quarters.

When the pages on duty at the inner gate saw Pinger, they all stood at attention. Then two of them ran over to her, calling out a respectful greeting.

"Now what is it?" she asked.

"It's late, miss," said one boy, smiling. "My mother's ill and wants me to go for a doctor. Can I have a few hours off, please?"

"A fine lot you are," cried Pinger. "Ganging up to ask for leave in turn every day, and not reporting to the mistress either but pestering me instead. After Zhuer went the other day, Master Lian happened to call for him; and when he wasn't to be found I was blamed for giving him leave. Now *you're* trying it on."

"It's quite true that his mother is ill," Mrs. Zhou confirmed. "Do let him go, miss."

"Come back early tomorrow then," stipulated Pinger. "And listen, I've an errand for you, so don't wait till the sun bakes your behind before coming back. And take a message for me on your way to Lai Wang. Tell him from the mistress that if he doesn't bring in the rest of that interest tomorrow, she doesn't want it — he can keep it for himself."

The boy assented and made off in high spirits.

Pinger and the two others proceeded then to the Lady Dowager's apartments where all the girls from the Garden were assembled. Granny Liu had no idea who all these beauties decked out with pearls and emeralds could be; but she saw an old lady on a couch with a pretty silk-clad girl massaging her legs while Xifeng stood chatting to her. Concluding that this was the Lady Dowager, the old woman stepped forward, smiling, and curtseyed to her.

"Greetings, Goddess of Long Life!" she cried.

The Lady Dowager raised herself to greet her in return and ordered Mrs. Zhou to fetch a chair for her. Baner, of course, was still too shy to pay his respects.

"How old are you, venerable kinswoman?" asked the Lady Dowager.



了。”贾母向众人道：“这么大年纪了，还这么健朗。比我大好几岁呢。我要到这么大年纪，还不知怎么动不得呢。”刘姥姥笑道：“我们生来是受苦的人，老太太生来是享福的。若我们也这样，那些庄稼活也没人作了。”贾母道：“眼睛、牙齿都还好？”刘姥姥道：“都还好，就是今年左边的槽牙活动了。”贾母道：“我老了，都不中用了，眼也花，耳也聋，记性也没了。你们这些老亲戚，我都不记得了。亲戚们来了，我怕人笑我，我都不会，不过嚼的动的吃两口，睡一觉，闷了时和这些孙子、孙女儿玩笑一回就完了。”刘姥姥笑道：“这正是老太太的福了。我们想这么着，也不能。”贾母道：“什么福，不过是个老废物罢了。”说的大家都笑了。贾母又笑道：“我才听见凤哥儿说，你带了好些瓜菜来，叫他快收拾去，我正想个地里现摘的瓜儿菜儿吃。外头买的，不像你们田地里的好吃。”刘姥姥笑道：“这是野意儿，不过吃个新鲜。依我们想鱼肉吃，只是吃不起。”贾母又道：“今日既认着亲，别空空儿的就去。不嫌我这里，就住一两天再去。我们也有个园子，园子里头也有果子，你明日也尝尝，带些家去，你也算看亲戚一趟。”凤姐儿见贾母喜欢，也忙留道：





ger.

Granny Liu rose to answer, "Seventy-five."

"So old, yet so hale and hearty! Why, you're older than I am by several years. If I live to your age, I doubt whether I shall be so spry."

"We're born to put up with hardships, madam, and you to enjoy good fortune," replied Granny Liu with a smile. "If we were all like you, who'd do the farming?"

"And your eyes and teeth, are they still good?"

"I can't complain. But this year one of my back teeth on the left side has come loose."

"I'm old and useless now," rejoined the Lady Dowager. "My sight's failing, I'm hard of hearing, and my memory's going. I can't even remember all our old relatives. When they call I don't see them for fear they'll laugh at me, I've become so helpless. All I can do is eat pap, sleep, or amuse myself for a while with these grandchildren when I'm bored."

Granny Liu smiled.

"That's your good fortune, madam. We couldn't manage it even if we wanted to."

"Good fortune? I'm nothing but a useless old thing."

Everyone laughed at that.

"Just now Xifeng told me you've brought us a lot of pumpkins and vegetables," the Lady Dowager went on. "I've asked to have them cooked at once. I've been longing for some freshly picked things of this kind. Those we buy outside aren't as good as yours, straight from the fields."

"This is rough country fare but at least it's fresh," Granny Liu answered. "We'd rather eat meat and fish ourselves, only we can't afford it."

"Now that we relatives have met, you mustn't leave with nothing to show for your visit. If you don't dislike our place, do stay for a couple of days. We have a garden too with fruit in it. Tomorrow you must try some and take some home, to show you've visited your relatives here."

Xifeng also pressed Granny Liu to stay, seeing what a liking the old lady had taken to her.

“我们这里虽不比你们的场院大，空屋子还有两间。你住两天，把你们那里新闻故事儿说些与我们老太太听听。”贾母笑道：“凤丫头别和他取笑儿。他是乡屯里的人，老实，那里搁的住你打趣他。”说着，又命人去先抓果子与板儿吃，板儿见人多了，又不敢吃。贾母又命拿些钱给他，叫小幺儿们带他外头玩去。刘姥姥吃了茶，便把些乡村中所见所闻的事情说与贾母，贾母越发得了趣味。正说着，凤姐儿便命人来请刘姥姥吃晚饭。贾母又将自己的菜拣了几样，命人送过去与刘姥姥吃。

凤姐知道合了贾母的心，吃了饭便又打发过来。鸳鸯忙命老婆子带了刘姥姥去洗了澡，自己挑了两件随常的衣服命给刘姥姥换上。那刘姥姥那里见过这般行事，忙换了衣裳出来，坐在贾母榻前，又搜寻些话出来说。彼时宝玉姊妹们也都在这里坐着，他们何曾听见过这些话，自觉比那些瞽目先生说的书还好听些。那刘姥姥虽是个村野人，却生来的有些见识，况且年纪老了，世情上经历过的，见头一个贾母高兴，第二见这些哥儿姐儿们都爱听，便没了话也编出些话来讲。因说道：“我们村庄上种地种菜，每年每日，春夏秋冬，风里雨里，那里有个坐着的空儿，天天都是在那地头子上作歇马凉亭，什么奇奇怪怪的事不见呢。就像去年冬天，接连下了几天雪，地下压了三四尺深。我那日起的早，还没出房门，只听外头柴草响。我想着必定是有人偷柴草来了。我爬着窗眼儿一瞧，却不是我们村庄上的人。”贾母道：“必定是过路的客人们冷了，见现成的柴，抽些烤火去也是有的。”



“Though our place here isn’t as large as your farm we have a couple of empty rooms,” she said. “Do stay for a day or two, and tell our old lady some of your village news and stories.”

“You’re not to make fun of her, you baggage,” warned the Lady Dowager. “She’s an honest village woman, how can she stand up to your teasing?”

She told the maids to offer Baner some fruit, but with so many people about the boy dared not eat. So she ordered them to give him some cash and sent him off to play with the pages outside. Then Granny Liu, after sipping a cup of tea, regaled the Lady Dowager with some village gossip which quite delighted her.

Granny Liu was still holding forth when Xifeng told a maid to invite her to dinner, and the Lady Dowager sent her some of her own dishes. Knowing how pleased the old lady was with her, Xifeng sent Granny Liu back again after her meal; and Yuanyang deputed an old nurse to take her to have a bath while she picked a simple change of clothing for her. Granny Liu, who was having the time of her life, changed quickly. Then, seated in front of the Lady Dowager’s couch, she found some more gossip to tell her. Baoyu and the girls were there too and never having heard such talk before they found it more diverting than the ballads of blind folk-singers.

Now Granny Liu though a countrywoman was no fool. Besides, being old and experienced she could see how delighted the old lady was and how eagerly the young people were listening. So when she ran out of gossip she drew on her imagination.

“In our village we grow grain and vegetables year in, year out,” she said. “Spring, summer, autumn and winter, in wind and rain, what time have we to sit idle? We just knock off for a rest each day in the fields, and I can assure you we see all kinds of queer doings.

“Last winter, for example, the snow fell for several days on end and piled up on the ground three or four feet deep. I got up early one day and hadn’t yet left the house when I heard a noise from the woodpile. I peeped through the window, thinking it must be someone filching our firewood. But it wasn’t anybody from our village.”

“I suppose it was some passer-by who felt cold,” put in the Lady



刘姥姥笑道：“也并不是客人，所以说来奇怪。老寿星当个什么人？原来是一个十七八岁的极标致的一个小姑娘，梳着溜油光的头，穿着大红袄儿，白绫裙儿……”才说到这里，忽听外面人吵嚷起来，又说：“不相干的，别吓着老太太。”贾母等听了，忙问怎么了，丫鬟回说“南院马棚里走了水，不相干，已经救下去了。”贾母最胆小的，听了这话，忙起身扶了人出至廊上来瞧，只见东南上火光犹亮，吓的口内念佛，忙命人去火神跟前烧香。王夫人等也忙过来请安，又回说“已经下去了，老太太请进房去罢。”贾母看着真的火光息了方领众人进来。宝玉且忙着问刘姥姥：“那女孩儿大雪地作什么抽柴草？倘或冻出病来呢？”贾母道：“都是才说抽柴草惹出火来了，你还问呢。别说这个了，再说别的罢。”宝玉听说，心里虽不乐，也只得罢了。刘姥姥便又想了一篇话，说道：“我们庄子东边庄上，有个老奶奶子，今年九十多岁了。他天天吃斋念佛，谁知就感动了观音菩萨夜里来托梦说：‘你这样虔心，原本你该绝后的，如今奏了玉皇，给你一个孙子。’原来这老奶奶只有一个儿子，这儿子也只一个儿子，好容易养到十七八岁上死了，哭的什么似的。后来果然又养了一个，今年才十三四岁，生的雪团儿一般，聪明伶俐





Dowager. "Seeing fuel ready at hand he took some to make a fire. That might well be."

"It wasn't a passer-by either," Granny Liu chortled. "That's what was so strange. Who d'you think it was, my lady? A slip of a girl of seventeen or eighteen, pretty as a picture, with hair as glossy as oil, wearing a red tunic and a white silk skirt...."

Just then a sudden commotion broke out outside.

"It's not serious," someone shouted. "Don't alarm the old lady."

At once they asked what had happened. A maid explained that a fire had broken out in the stables in the south court, but there was no danger as it was now under control.

The Lady Dowager, being very easily frightened, got up quickly and made them help her out to the verandah. At sight of flames in the southeast part of the grounds she invoked Buddha in her terror, then ordered incense to be burned to the God of Fire. Lady Wang and the others hurried over to the Lady Dowager's apartments to comfort her.

"It'll soon be put out," they assured her. "Do go back inside, madam."

But the old lady waited till all the flames had died down before leading the whole company indoors again. At once Baoyu asked Granny Liu:

"Why was that girl taking firewood when the snow lay so deep? Did she catch cold?"

"It was this talk about firewood that *caused* the fire," put in his grandmother. "Yet you still keep on asking about it. Don't mention it any more. Let's talk about something else."

Much against his will Baoyu had to drop the subject, and Granny Liu thought up another tale.

"To the east of our village," she said, "there lives an old woman who's over ninety this year. She fasts and prays to Buddha every day. And would you believe it, this so moved the Goddess of Mercy that she appeared to her one night in a dream. 'You were fated to have no descendants,' she said. 'But I've told the Jade Emperor how devout you are, and he's going to give you a grandson.'

"The fact is, this old woman had only one son. This son, too, had just the one son; but they only managed to bring him up to the age of seventeen or eighteen when he died, nearly breaking their hearts. In due time,

非常。可见这些神佛是有的。”这一夕话，暗合了贾母、王夫人的心事，连王夫人也都听住了。

宝玉心中只记挂着抽柴的故事，因闷闷的心中筹画。探春因问他：“昨日扰了史大妹妹，咱们回去商议着邀一社，又还了席，请老太太赏菊花，何如？”宝玉笑道：“老太太说了，还要摆酒还史妹妹的席，叫咱们作陪呢。等着吃了老太太的，咱们再请不迟。”探春道：“越往前去越冷了，老太太未必高兴。”宝玉道：“老太太又喜欢下雨下雪的。不如咱们等下头场雪，请老太太赏雪岂不好？咱们雪下吟诗，也更有趣了。”林黛玉忙笑道：“咱们雪下吟诗？依我说，还不如弄一捆柴火，雪下抽柴，还更有趣儿呢。”说着，宝钗等都笑了。宝玉看了他一眼，也不答话。

一时散了，背地里宝玉真的拉了刘姥姥，细问那女孩儿是谁。刘姥姥只得编了告诉他道：“那原是我们庄北沿地埂子上有一个小祠堂里供的，不是神佛，当先有个什么老爷……”说着又想名姓。宝玉道：“不拘什么名姓，你不必想了，只说原故就是了。”刘姥姥道：“这老爷没有儿子，只有一位小姐，名叫茗玉。小姐知书识字，老爷、太太爱如珍宝。可惜这茗玉小姐生到十七岁，一病死了。”宝玉听了，跌足叹惜，又问后来怎么样。刘姥姥道：“因为老爷、太太





sure enough, another son was born to them. He's just fourteen now, as plump and white as a snowball and the sharpest lad you ever set eyes on. This shows, doesn't it, that there really *are* gods and spirits?"

This story was just the kind that appealed to the Lady Dowager and Lady Wang, hence even the latter listened with close attention. Baoyu, however, was still trying to imagine what could have become of the girl who took the firewood, when he was addressed by Tanchun.

"Yesterday Xiangyun treated us," she said. "When we go back let's talk over our next meeting and how to ask her back. Suppose we invite the old lady to come and look at the chrysanthemums?"

"The old lady says she means to give a party herself in return for Xiangyun's, and we'll be invited too," replied Baoyu. "So we'd better wait till after that."

"If we wait until it's cold, though, the old lady may not like it."

"Why not? She enjoys rain and snow. Better wait for the first fall of snow and then ask her to a snow party. We'll have more fun ourselves too, writing poems in the snow."

"Writing poems in the snow?" put in Daiyu mockingly. "I don't think that would be half as much fun as building a woodpile and having a campfire in the snow."

Baochai and the others laughed, while Baoyu flashed a glance at Daiyu but said nothing.

As soon as the party broke up, he quietly took Granny Liu aside to ask her who the girl in her story was. This forced the old woman to improvise again.

"In the fields just north of our village there stands a small shrine," she said. "It wasn't built for any god or Buddha, but there was once a gentleman ...." She stopped to think of a name.

"Never mind," said Baoyu. "Names don't matter, just tell me the story."

"This gentleman had no son, only one daughter called Mingyu," continued Granny Liu. "She could read and write and was her parent's most precious treasure, but when she reached the age of seventeen the poor girl fell ill and died...."

Baoyu stamped his foot and sighed.

思念不尽，便盖了这祠堂，塑了这茗玉小姐的像，派了人烧香拨火。如今日久年深的，人也没了，庙也烂了，那像就成了精。”宝玉忙道：“不是成精，规矩这样人是虽死不死的。”刘姥姥道：“阿弥陀佛！原来如此。不是哥儿说，我们都当他成精。他时常变了人出来，各村庄店道上闲逛。我才说这抽柴火的就是他了。我们村庄上的人还商议着要打了这塑像平了庙呢。”宝玉忙道：“快别如此。若平了庙，罪过不小。”刘姥姥道：“幸亏哥儿告诉我，我明日回去拦住他们就是了。”宝玉道：“我们老太太、太太都是善人，合家大小也都好善喜舍，最爱修庙塑神的。我明日做一个疏头，替你化些布施，你就做香头，攒了钱把这庙修盖，再装潢了泥像，每月给你香火钱烧香岂不好？”刘姥姥道：“若这样，我托那小姐的福，也有几个钱使了。”宝玉又问他地名庄名，来往远近，坐落何方。刘姥姥便顺口胡诌了出来。

宝玉信以为真，回至房中，盘算了一夜。次日一早，便出来给了茗烟几百钱，按着刘姥姥说的方向地名，着茗烟去先踏看明白，回来再做主意。那茗烟去后，宝玉左等也不来，右等也不来，急的热锅上的蚂蚁一般。好不容易等到日落，方见茗烟兴兴头头的回来。宝玉忙问：“可有庙了？”茗



“What happened afterwards?” he asked.

“Her parents were so heartbroken that they built this shrine, had an effigy made of the girl, and kept someone there to burn incense and keep the lamp burning. That was many years ago. Those people are dead now, the temple is in ruins, and a spirit has taken possession of the effigy.”

“It’s not that a spirit’s taken possession of it,” he retorted quickly. “The rule is that people of this kind are immortal.”

“You don’t say! Gracious Buddha! If you hadn’t told me, I’d have sworn it was magic. She often takes human form to roam about through the villages, farmsteads and highways, and it was *she* who took that firewood. In our village they’re talking of smashing up this image and razing the shrine to the ground.”

“Don’t let them do that!” urged Baoyu hastily. “It would be a great sin to destroy that shrine.”

“I’m glad you told me, sir,” said Granny Liu. “When I go back tomorrow I’ll stop them.”

“My grandmother and my mother are both charitable people. In fact, our whole family, old and young, like to do good deeds and give alms; and they take the greatest delight in building temples and having images made. So tomorrow I’ll draw up a subscription notice to collect donations for you. When enough contributions have come in, you can take charge of repairing the shrine and restoring the image, and every month I’ll give you money for incense. Wouldn’t that be a good thing?”

“If you do that I’ll have a few cash to spend too, all thanks to this young lady!”

Baoyu then asked her the name of the district and village, how far it was there and back, and just where the shrine stood. She made up answers at random but he believed her, and on his return to his room he spent the whole night thinking the matter over.

The next morning, as soon as it was light, he sent Mingyan with several hundred cash to find the place described by Granny Liu and bring him back a clear report so that he could make further plans.

Baoyu waited hour after hour for Mingyan’s return, as frantic as an ant on a hot pan. He waited and waited till sunset, when his page came back looking very pleased with himself.

烟笑道：“爷听的不明白，要我好找。那地名坐落不似爷说的一样，所以找了一日，找到东北上田埂子上才有一个破庙。”宝玉听说，喜的眉开眼笑，忙说道：“刘姥姥有年纪的人，一时错记了也是有的。你且说你见的。”茗烟道：“那庙门却倒是朝南开的，也是稀破的。我找的正没好气，一见这个，我说‘可好了’，连忙进去。一看泥胎，唬的我跑出来了，活似真的一般。”宝玉喜的笑道：“他能变化人了，自然有些生气。”茗烟拍手道：“那里有什么女孩儿，竟是一位青脸红发的瘟神爷。”宝玉听了，啐了一口，骂道：“真是一个无用的杀才！这点子事也干不来。”茗烟道：“二爷又不知看了什么书，或者听了谁的混话，信真了，把这件没头脑的事派我去碰头，怎么说我没用呢？”宝玉见他急了，忙抚慰他道：“你别急。改日闲了你再找去。若是他哄我们呢，自然没了；若竟是有的，你岂不也积了阴骘。我必重重的赏你。”正说着，只见二门上的小厮来说：“老太太房里姑娘们站在二门口找二爷呢。”且听下回分解。



“Did you find it?” demanded Baoyu eagerly.

“You must have got it wrong, Master Bao. You led me a fine dance,” replied Mingyan, smiling. “It’s not where you said, and the name’s different too. So it took me a whole day to track it down. Then I found a tumbledown temple in the fields to the northeast.”

Baoyu beamed with joy.

“Granny Liu’s old,” he said. “Her memory probably plays tricks with her. Well, what did you find? Go on!”

“The temple gate faces south all right, and the place is tumbling down. I was fed up with hunting for it, and as soon as I saw it I said to myself, ‘At last!’ I marched straight in. One look at the image, though, made me take to my heels — it’s so fearfully lifelike!”

“She can take human form, so naturally she looks lifelike,” replied Baoyu cheerfully.

“But it isn’t a girl.” Mingyan clapped his hands together. “It’s blue-faced and red-haired — the God of Plague!”

“You useless fool,” swore Baoyu in disgust. “You can’t handle the least little job.”

“I don’t know what books you’ve been reading, Master Bao, or what nonsensical talk you’ve been swallowing, to send me on a wild-goose chase of this sort. And now you say I’m useless.”

“Don’t get so worked up,” rejoined Baoyu soothingly. “You must try again some other day when you’ve time. If she was having me on, of course there’s no such place; but if there is, you’ll be doing a good deed and you can be sure I’ll reward you handsomely.”

Just then a page from the inner gate announced, “Some girls from the old lady’s apartments are waiting for you, Master Bao, at the inner gate.”

If you want to know what this meant, read the next chapter.







史太君  
兩宴大觀園



## 第四十回

### 史太君两宴大观园 金鸳鸯三宣牙牌令

话说宝玉听了，忙进来看时，只见琥珀站在屏风跟前说：“快去吧，立等你说话呢。”宝玉来至上房，只见贾母正和王夫人、众姊妹商议给史湘云还席。宝玉因说道：“我有个主意。既没有外客，吃的东西也别定了样数，谁素日爱吃的拣样儿做几样。也不要按桌席，每人跟前摆一张高几，各人爱吃的东西一两样，再一个什锦攒心盒子，自斟壶，岂不别致。”贾母听了，说“很是”，命人传与厨房：“明日就拣我们爱吃的东西作了，按着人数，再装了盒子来。早饭也摆在园里吃。”商议之间早又掌灯，一夕无话。

次日清早起来，可喜这日天气晴朗。李纨清晨先起，看着老婆子、丫头们扫那些落叶，并擦抹桌椅，预备茶酒器皿。只见丰儿带了刘姥姥、板儿进来，说：“大奶奶倒忙的紧。”李纨笑道：“我说你昨儿去不成，只忙着要去。”刘姥姥笑道：“老太太留下我，叫我也热闹一天去。”丰儿拿了儿把大小钥匙，说道：“我们奶奶说了，外头的高几恐不够使，不如开了楼，把那收的拿下来使一天罢。奶奶原该亲自来







## Chapter 40

### The Lady Dowager Feasts Again in Grand View Garden Yuanyang Presides over a Drinking Game

Baoyu hurried over at this summons and found Hupo by the screen.

"Come quickly," she urged him. "The old lady's waiting for you."

He went to the Lady Dowager's apartments, where she was discussing with Lady Wang and the girls how to repay Xiangyun's hospitality.

"I've a suggestion," said Baoyu. "As we're not inviting outsiders, there's no need for too many dishes; let's just have a few we like. There's no need for tables either; each of us can have a teapoy with a couple of dishes we fancy, as well as a ten-compartment box of titbits and a winepot apiece. Wouldn't that be more original?"

The Lady Dowager approved. She sent instructions to the kitchen to prepare their favourite dainties the next day and put them in separate boxes, and to serve breakfast in the Garden too. By the time this was settled the lamps were lit, and they retired for the night.

The next morning, as luck would have it, the weather was fine. Li Wan rose at daybreak to supervise the matrons and maids as they swept up fallen leaves, dusted tables and chairs, and prepared the tea-services and wine vessels. While she was doing this, Fenger arrived with Granny Liu and Baner.

"How busy you are, madam!" remarked Granny Liu.

"I knew you wouldn't be able to leave yesterday," replied Li Wan with a smile. "Yet you were in such a hurry to get away."

"The old lady made me stay to enjoy myself for a day," chuckled Granny Liu.

Fenger produced a bunch of keys and announced, "Madam Lian says there may not be enough teapoys out: we'd better unlock the attic in the tower and fetch some down to use for a day. She wanted to see to it

的，因和太太说话呢，请大奶奶开了，带着人搬罢。”李氏便命素云接了钥匙，又命婆子出去把二门上的小厮叫几个来。李氏站在大观楼下往上看，令人上去开了缀绵阁，一张一张往下抬。小厮、老婆子、丫头一齐动手，抬了二十多张下来。李纨道：“好生着，别慌慌张张鬼赶来似的，仔细碰了牙子。”又回头向刘姥姥笑道：“姥姥，你也上去瞧瞧。”刘姥姥听说，巴不得一声儿，便拉了板儿登梯上去。进至里面，只见乌压压的堆着些围屏、桌椅、大小花灯之类，虽不大认得，只见五彩炫耀，各有奇妙。念了几声佛，便下来了。然后锁上门，一齐才下来。李纨道：“恐怕老太太高兴，越性把船上划子、篙桨、遮阳幔子都搬了下来预备着。”众人答应，又复开了，色色的搬了下来。命小厮传驾娘们到船坞里撑出两只船来。

正乱着安排，只见贾母已带了一群人进来了。李纨忙迎上去，笑道：“老太太高兴，倒进来了。我只当还没梳头呢，才撷了菊花要送去。”一面说，一面碧月早捧过一个大荷叶式的翡翠盘子来，里面盛着各色的折枝菊花。贾母便拣了一朵大红的簪于鬓上。因回头看见了刘姥姥，忙笑道：“过来带花儿。”一语未完，凤姐便拉过刘姥姥来，笑道：“让我打扮



herself, but she's talking with Lady Wang. So do you mind opening the attic, madam, and having the things brought out?"

Li Wan made Suyun take the keys, and sent one of the matrons to fetch a few page boys from the inner gate. Standing with raised head at the foot of Grand View Pavilion, she ordered them to go up and open the Tower of Variegated Splendour and carry down the teapoys one by one. Pages, matrons and maids set to work then to bring down more than twenty, while Li Wan warned:

"Careful! Steady on! You're not being chased by ghosts. Mind you don't bump them."

Then she turned to ask Granny Liu, "Would you care to go up too and have a look?"

The old woman needed no pressing but promptly pulled Baner up the stairs with her. She found the attic chock-a-block with screens, tables, chairs, ornamental lanterns large and small, and other similar objects. Although ignorant of the function of most of them, she was dazzled by their gay colours and fine workmanship.

"Gracious Buddha!" she exclaimed.

When she withdrew the door was locked and everyone came down.

Then it occurred to Li Wan that the old Lady might feel disposed to go boating. So on her instructions they unlocked the door once more and brought down oars, punt-poles and awnings. Pages were also sent to the boatwomen to order two barges from the boathouse.

In the middle of this bustle, along came the Lady Dowager with a whole company of people.

"How bright and early you are, madam!" cried Li Wan hurrying to meett her. "I didn't think you'd have finished your toilet yet. I'd just picked some chrysanthemums to send you."

Biyue held out a large emerald plate in the form of a lotus leaf, on which were chrysanthemums of different kinds. The Lady Dowager selected a red one and pinned it in her hair. Then, turning, she caught sight of Granny Liu.

"Come here and take a few flowers to wear!" she called with a smile.

While the words were still on her lips, Xifeng pulled Granny Liu for-



你老人家。”说着，将一盘子花横三竖四的插了一头。贾母和众人笑的不住，刘姥姥笑道：“我这头也不知修了什么福，今儿这样体面起来。”众人笑道：“你还不拔下来摔到他脸上呢，把你打扮的成了个老妖精了。”刘姥姥笑道：“我虽老了，年轻时也风流，爱个花儿粉儿的，今儿老风流才好。”

说笑之间，来至沁芳亭子上。丫鬟们抱了一个大锦褥子来，铺在栏杆榻板上。贾母倚柱坐下，命刘姥姥也坐在旁边，因问他：“这园子好不好？”刘姥姥念佛说道：“我们乡下人到了年下，都上城来买画儿贴。时常闲了，大家都说，怎么得也到画儿上去逛逛。想着那个画儿也不过是假的，那里有这个真地方呢。谁知我今儿进这园里一瞧，竟比那画儿还强十倍。怎么得有人也照着这个园子画一张，我带了家去，给他们见见，死了也得好处。”贾母听说，便指着惜春笑道：“你瞧我这个小孙女儿，他就会画。等明儿叫他画一张如何？”刘姥姥听了，喜的忙跑过来，拉着惜春说道：“我的姑娘，你这么大年纪儿，又这么个好模样，还有这个能干，别是神仙托生的罢。”

贾母少歇了一回，便要领着刘姥姥都见识见识。先到了潇湘馆。一进门，只见两边翠竹夹路，土地下苍苔布满，中间羊肠一条石子漫的路。刘姥姥让出路来与贾母众人走，自己却走上土地。琥珀拉着他说道：“姥姥，你上来走，仔细苔





ward.

“Let me make you beautiful, granny!” she cried.

Seizing all the flowers on the plate, she stuck them this way and that in the old woman’s hair, reducing everyone present to helpless laughter.

“I don’t know what meritorious deed my head’s done to deserve this good fortune,” cackled Granny Liu. “What a dash I’m cutting today!”

“Why don’t you pull them out and throw them in her face?” gasped the others. “She’s got you up to look a real old vampire.”

“I’m old now, but when I was young I was flighty too and fond of flowers,” chuckled Granny Liu. “So it’s right I should be an old flibbertigibbet today.”

While laughing and chatting they had come to Seeping Fragrance Pavilion. Maids spread a large brocade cushion they had brought on the railing of the balcony. The Lady Dowager, seating herself there with her back against a pillar, made Granny Liu sit beside her.

“Well, what do you think of this garden?” she inquired.

“Gracious Buddha!” ejaculated Granny Liu. “We country folk come to town before New Year to buy pictures to stick up; and when we’re at a loose end we often say, ‘If only we could take a stroll in these pictures!’ We always reckoned the places shown were too good to be true, but coming to this garden today I can see it’s ten times better than any painting. I wish someone would paint me a picture of it to show the folk at home. Then I’d die content.”

The Lady Dowager pointed to Xichun. “See this young grand-daughter of mine?” she asked. “She can paint. Shall I get her to do a painting for you tomorrow?”

This offer so delighted Granny Liu that she hurried over to take Xichun’s hand.

“Why, miss! So young and pretty, yet so clever too — you must be a goddess come down to the earth.”

After a short rest the Lady Dowager started showing Granny Liu round, going first to Bamboo Lodge. Inside its gate, a narrow pebbled path flanked with bamboos met their gaze. The ground on either side of it was carpeted with dark moss. Granny Liu left the path for the others, walking on the verge herself.

滑了。”刘姥姥道：“不相干的，我们走熟了的，姑娘们只管走罢。可惜你们的那绣鞋，别沾脏了。”他只顾上头和人说话，不防底下果跣滑了，“咕咚”一跤跌倒。众人拍手都哈哈的笑起来，贾母笑骂道：“小蹄子们，还不搀起来，只站着笑。”说话时，刘姥姥已爬了起来，自己也笑了，说道：“才说嘴就打了嘴。”贾母问他：“可扭了腰了不曾？叫丫头们捶一捶。”刘姥姥道：“那里说的我这么娇嫩了，那一天不跌两下子。都要捶起来，还了得呢。”紫鹃早打起湘帘，贾母等进来坐下。林黛玉亲自用小茶盘捧了一盖碗茶来奉与贾母。王夫人道：“我们不吃茶，姑娘不用倒了。”林黛玉听说，便命丫头把自己窗下常坐的一张椅子挪到下首，请王夫人坐了。刘姥姥因见窗下案上设着笔砚，又见书架上磊着满满的书，刘姥姥道：“这必定是那位哥儿的书房了。”贾母笑指黛玉道：“这是我这外孙女儿的屋子。”刘姥姥留神打量了黛玉一番，方笑道：“这那里像个小姐的绣房，竟比那上等的书房还好。”贾母因问：“宝玉怎么不见？”众丫头们答说：“在池子里船上呢。”贾母道：“谁又预备下船了？”李纨忙回说：“才开楼拿几子，我恐怕老太太高兴，就预备下了。”贾母听了方欲说话时，有人回说：“姨太太来了。”贾母等才站起





"Come up here, granny," urged Hupo taking her arm. "That moss is slippery."

"That's all right, I'm used to it," said the old woman. "Just go ahead, young ladies. Take care not to get your embroidered slippers dirty."

Intent on talking, she slipped and fell with a thud, at which the whole company clapped their hands and laughed.

"You wretches!" scolded the Lady Dowager. "Help her up. Don't just stand there laughing."

"That was to punish me for boasting," chuckled Granny Liu as she scrambled to her feet.

"Did you strain your back?" asked the Lady Dowager. "Let one of the maids pummel it."

"I'm not so finicky. Hardly a day goes by without my falling. How could I get someone to pummel my back each time?"

Zijuan had the bamboo portière raised ready for them. The Lady Dowager and others went in and took seats, after which Daiyu with her own hands brought her grandmother a covered bowl of tea on a small tray.

"No tea for *us*," said Lady Wang. "Don't trouble to pour any more."

Then Daiyu told a maid to fetch her favourite chair from the window for Lady Wang. Granny Liu, meanwhile, was struck by the brushes and inkstones on the desk by the window and the bookcase piled with books.

"This must be the young master's study," she said.

The Lady Dowager smiled and pointed at Daiyu.

"This is my grand-daughter's room."

Granny Liu looked intently at Daiyu.

"This isn't like a young lady's chamber," she remarked. "But it's far better than the best study."

"Where is Baoyu?" asked the Lady Dowager.

"Boating on the lake," the maids told her.

"Who ordered boats?"

"I did," replied Li Wan hastily. "As we were fetching things from the attic just now, it occurred to me you might feel inclined for a turn on the lake, madam."

Before the old lady could answer, Aunt Xue was announced. And



来，只见薛姨妈早进来了，一面归坐，笑道：“今日老太太高兴，这早晚就来了。”贾母笑道：“我才说来迟了的要罚他，不想姨太太就来迟了。”

说笑一会，贾母因见窗上纱颜色旧了，便和王夫人说道：“这个纱，新糊上好看，过了后来，就不翠了。这个院子里头又没有个桃杏树，这竹子已是绿的，再拿这绿纱糊上反不配。我记得咱们先有四五样颜色糊窗的纱呢，明日给他把这窗上的换了。”凤姐儿忙道：“昨日我开库房，看见大板箱里还有好些匹银红蝉翼纱，也有各样折枝花样的，也有流云卍福花样的，也有百蝶穿花花样的，颜色又鲜，纱又轻软，我竟没见过这样的。拿了两匹出来，作两床绵纱被，想来一定是好的。”贾母听了笑道：“呸，人人都说你没有不经过没见过，连这个纱还不认得呢，明日还说嘴。”薛姨妈等都笑说：“凭他怎么经过见过，他如何敢比老太太呢。老太太何不教导了他，我们也听听。”凤姐也笑说：“好祖宗，教给我罢。”贾母笑向薛姨妈众人道：“那个纱，比你们年纪还大呢。怪不得他认作蝉翼纱，原也有些像，不知道的，都认作蝉翼纱。正经名字叫作‘软烟罗’。”凤姐儿道：“这个名儿也好听。只是我这么大了，纱罗也见过几百样，从没听说过这个名儿。”贾母笑道：“你能活了多大，见过几样没处放的东西，就说嘴来了。那个软烟罗只有四样颜色：一样雨过天晴，一样秋香色，一样松绿的，一样就是银红的。若是做了帐子，糊了窗屉，远远的看着，就似烟雾一样，所以叫作

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even as they rose to their feet she came in. When they had resumed their seats she remarked:

“You must be in good spirits, madam, to have come here so early.”

“Only a minute ago I was saying all late-comers must be fined,” the Lady Dowager chuckled. “I’d no idea the offender would be you.”

They chatted for a while. Then the Lady Dowager noticed that the gauze on the window had faded.

“This gauze is pretty when new,” she remarked to Lady Wang, “but it soon loses its vivid emerald colour. Anyway, as there are no peach or apricot trees in this courtyard and the bamboos are green themselves, green gauze is out of place here. We used to have window gauze in four or five colours, I remember. Tomorrow we shall have to change this for her.”

“When I opened the storeroom yesterday,” put in Xifeng, “I saw several rolls of pink cicada-wing gauze in one of the chests. There are several different designs — sprays of blossom, floating clouds and bats, butterflies and flowers — the colours so vivid and the gauze so soft, I’ve never seen anything like it. I took out two rolls, thinking they’d make good coverlets.”

“Bah!” the Lady Dowager snorted. “Everybody says there’s nothing you haven’t seen or done, but you don’t even know what this gauze is. You must stop bragging in future.”

“However knowledgeable she may be, she can’t compare with you, madam,” said Aunt Xue. “Do enlighten her and let us hear as well.”

“Yes, good Ancestress, do enlighten me,” begged Xifeng smiling.

Then the Lady Dowager told them all, “That gauze is older than any of you. No wonder she mistook it for cicada-wing gauze. As a matter of fact, the two are so alike that those not in the know always mix them up. Its proper name is soft-mist silk.”

“What a charming name,” cried Xifeng. “I’ve seen hundreds of kinds of silk, but never heard of this one.”

“How long have *you* lived?” retorted the old lady. “How many rarities have you seen? What have *you* to brag about? This soft-mist silk comes in four colours only: light blue, russet, pine-green and pink. Used for bed-curtains or window gauze, from a distance it looks like smoke or

‘软烟罗’。那银红的又叫作‘霞影纱’。如今上用的府纱也没有这样软厚轻密的了。”薛姨妈笑道：“别说凤丫头没见，连我也没听说过。”凤姐儿一面说，早命人取了一匹来了，贾母说：“可不是这个！先时原不过是糊窗屉，后来我们拿这个作被，作帐子，试试也竟好。明儿就找出几匹来，拿银红的替他糊窗子。”凤姐答应着。众人都看了，称赞不已。

刘姥姥也觑着眼看个不了，念佛说道：“我们想他作衣裳也不能，拿着糊窗子，岂不可惜？”贾母道：“倒是做衣裳不好看。”凤姐忙把自己身上穿的一件大红绵纱袄子襟儿拉了出来，向贾母、薛姨妈道：“看我的这袄儿。”贾母、薛姨妈都说：“这也是上好的了，这是如今的上用内造的，竟比不上这个。”凤姐儿道：“这个薄片子，还说是上用内造呢，竟连这个官用的也比不上了。”贾母道：“再找一找，只怕还有青的。若有时都拿出来，送这刘亲家两匹，做一个帐子我挂，下剩的配上里子，做些夹背心子给丫头们穿，白收着霉烂了。”凤姐忙答应了，仍命人送去。贾母起身笑道：“这屋里窄，再往别处逛去。”刘姥姥念佛道：“人人都说大家子住大房。昨儿见了老太太正房，配上大箱、大柜、大桌子、大



mist — that's how it got its name. The pink's also called rosy-cloud gauze. Even the Imperial gauze used in the Palace today isn't so soft and fine."

"I'm not surprised Xifeng hadn't seen it before," interposed Aunt Xue. "I'd never even heard of it either."

By now a roll had been fetched on Xifeng's instructions.

"That's it!" exclaimed the Lady Dowager. "We used it first just for windows, then found it was good for quilts and bed-curtains too. You must get some more out tomorrow and screen the windows here with some of the pink."

Xifeng promised to attend to this while the whole party admired the material. As for Granny Liu, her eyes were nearly popping out of her head.

"Gracious Buddha!" she gasped. "We couldn't afford to make *clothes* of this. It seems a shame to use it for windows."

"Clothes of this don't look well," said the Lady Dowager.

Xifeng promptly showed them the lapel of the red gauze tunic she was wearing, saying, "Look at this tunic of mine."

"Very nice too," said the Lady Dowager and Aunt Xue. "This is made nowadays for the Palace. Still, it can't compare with the other."

"You mean to say this shoddy stuff is made for the Imperial use?" exclaimed Xifeng. "Why, it's not even up to the gauze made for officials."

"We must see if there's any more of the blue," said the Lady Dowager. "If there is, give a couple of rolls to Granny Liu to make a bed-curtain. What's left can be matched with some lining and made into lined sleeveless jackets for the maids. Don't leave it there to be spoiled by the damp."

Xifeng agreed, and had the stuff put away. Then the Lady Dowager rose to her feet.

"Let's stroll on," she suggested. "Why should we stay cooped up here?"

Invoking Buddha again, Granny Liu remarked: "Everyone says 'The great live in great houses.' When I saw your room yesterday, madam, it was a grand sight with all those big cases, big wardrobes, big tables and



床，果然威武。那柜子比我们那一间房子还大，还高。怪道后院子里有个梯子。我想，又不上房晒东西，预备个梯子作什么？后来我想起来，定是为开顶柜收放东西，离了那梯子，怎么得上去呢。如今又见了这小屋子，更比大的益发齐整了。满屋里的东西都只好看，都不知叫什么，我越看越舍不得离了这里。”凤姐道：“还有好的呢，我都带你瞧瞧。”说着一径离了潇湘馆。

远远望见池中一群人在那里撑船。贾母道：“他们既预备下船，咱们就坐。”一面说着，便向紫菱洲蓼溆一带走来。未至池前，只见几个婆子手里都捧着一色捏丝戗金五彩大盒子走来。凤姐忙问王夫人早饭在那里摆，王夫人道：“问老太太在那里，就在那里罢了。”贾母听说，便回头说：“你三妹妹那里好。你就带了人摆去，我们从这里坐了船去。”凤姐听说，便回身同了探春、李纨、鸳鸯、琥珀带着端饭的人等，抄着近路到了秋爽斋，就在晓翠堂上调开桌案。鸳鸯笑道：“天天咱们说外头老爷吃酒吃饭都有一个蔑片相公，拿他取笑儿。咱们今日也得了一个女蔑片了。”李纨是个厚道人，听了不解。凤姐儿却知是说的刘姥姥了，也笑说道：“咱们今日就拿他取个笑儿。”二人便如此这般的商议。李纨笑劝道：“你们一点好事也不做，又不是个小孩儿，还这么淘气，仔细老太太说。”鸳鸯笑道：“很不与你相干，有我呢。”





big bed. The wardrobes alone are bigger and higher than one of our whole *rooms*. No wonder you keep that ladder in the back yard. I couldn't think at first what it was for, as you don't sun things on the roof. Then I saw it must be for opening the tops of wardrobes to take things out or put them in, for without a ladder how could you get up? But this small room is even better furnished than that big one, with all these fine things — whatever they're called — in it. The more I see of it, the less I want to leave."

"I'll show you better places than this," promised Xifeng.

Upon leaving Bamboo Lodge they saw a punting party out on the lake.

"Since they've got the boats ready, we may as well go aboard," suggested the Lady Dowager.

They were on their way to Purple Caltrop Isle and Smartweed Bank when they met several matrons carrying multicoloured lacquered hampers inlaid with gilt designs. Xifeng at once asked Lady Wang where they should breakfast.

"Wherever the old lady chooses," was the reply.

The Lady Dowager, hearing this, called over her shoulder to Xifeng, "Your third cousin's place is pleasant. Take some people there to get it ready while we go by boat."

Then Xifeng turned back with Li Wan, Tanchun, Yuanyang and Hupo, accompanied by the attendants with the food. Having taken a short cut to the Studio of Autumn Freshness, they arranged the tables in Morning Emerald Hall.

Yuanyang remarked with a chuckle, "We often say that when the gentlemen feast outside they've someone who can raise a laugh to entertain them. Today we've a female entertainer too."

Li Wan was too good-natured to catch on, but Xifeng knew that Granny Liu was meant.

"Yes, she should be good for some laughs today," she agreed.

Then the two of them began to lay their plans.

"You're up to no good," protested Li Wan, smiling. "As bad as children. Mind the old lady doesn't scold you!"

"You won't be involved. Just leave the old lady to me," Yuanyang



正说着，只见贾母等来了，各自随便坐下。先着丫鬟端过两盘茶来，大家吃毕。凤姐手里拿着西洋布手巾，裹着一把乌木三镶银箸，按人位数，按席摆下。贾母因说：“把那一张小楠木桌子抬过来，让刘亲家近我这边坐着。”众人听说，忙抬了过来。凤姐一面递眼色与鸳鸯，鸳鸯便拉了刘姥姥出去，悄悄的嘱咐了刘姥姥一席话，又说：“这是我们家的规矩，若错了，我们就笑话呢。”调停已毕，然后归坐。薛姨妈是吃过饭来的，不吃，只坐在一边吃茶。贾母带着宝玉、湘云、黛玉、宝钗一桌，王夫人带着迎春姊妹三个一桌，刘姥姥傍着贾母一桌。贾母素日吃饭，皆有小丫鬟在旁边，拿着漱盂、麈尾、巾帕之物。如今鸳鸯是不当这差的了，今日鸳鸯偏接过麈尾来拂着。丫鬟们知道他要撮弄刘姥姥，便躲开让他。鸳鸯一面侍立，一面悄向刘姥姥说道：“别忘了。”刘姥姥道：“姑娘放心。”那刘姥姥入了座，拿起箸来，沉甸甸的不伏手。原是凤姐和鸳鸯商议定了，单拿一双老年四楞象牙镶金的筷子与刘姥姥。刘姥姥见了，说道：“这叉爬子比俺那里铁锨还沉，那里掣的过他。”说的众人都笑起来。

只见一个媳妇端了一个盒子站在当地，一个丫鬟上来揭去盒盖，里面盛着两碗菜。李纨端了一碗放在贾母桌上，凤姐儿偏拣了一碗鸽子蛋放在刘姥姥桌上。贾母这边说声“请”，刘姥姥便站起身来，高声说道：“老刘，老刘，食量

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giggled.

As they were talking the rest of the party arrived. They sat where they pleased and were first served tea by the maids. Then Xifeng placed before each the ebony chopsticks inlaid with silver which she had brought wrapped in a cambric napkin.

“Bring that small cedar table over here,” directed the Lady Dowager. “I want our kinswoman to sit next to me.”

As her order was carried out Xifeng cast Yuanyang a meaning glance, and the maid led Granny Liu aside to give her some whispered instructions.

“This is the custom of our house,” she concluded. “If you disregard it people will laugh at you.”

When all was ready they took seats at the tables. All but Aunt Xue who, having breakfasted already, did not eat anything but sat on one side sipping tea. The old lady had Baoyu, Xiangyun, Daiyu and Baochai at her table; Lady Wang had Yingchun, Tanchun and Xichun; while Granny Liu sat at the table next to the Lady Dowager’s.

Usually Yuanyang left the younger maids to wait on the old lady during meals, holding ready her rinse bowl, whisk and handkerchief. Today, however, she held the whisk herself and the other maids kept out of the way, realizing that she meant to bait Granny Liu.

Yuanyang, standing there, now whispered to the old woman, “Don’t forget!”

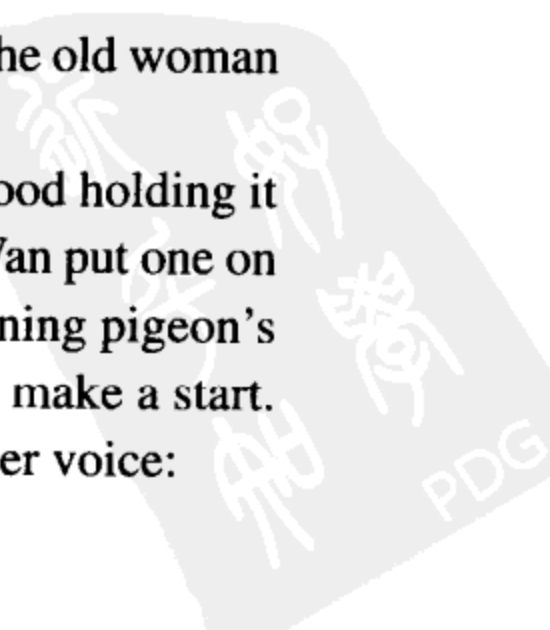
“Don’t worry, miss,” was the answer.

Having taken her seat Granny Liu picked up the chopsticks, but found them too awkward to manage. For Xifeng and Yuanyang had decided to give her an old-fashioned pair of square-edged ivory chopsticks inlaid with gold.

“Why, these prongs are heavier than our iron shovels,” the old woman complained. “How can I handle them?”

As everyone laughed, a matron brought in a box and stood holding it while a maid removed the cover, revealing two bowls. Li Wan put one on the Lady Dowager’s table and Xifeng set the other, containing pigeon’s eggs, before Granny Liu. The Lady Dowager urged her to make a start.

Granny Liu stood up then and declaimed at the top of her voice:



大似牛，吃个老母猪，不抬头。”自己却鼓着腮不语。众人先是发怔，后来一听，上上下下都哈哈大笑起来。史湘云撑不住，一口饭都喷了出来；林黛玉笑岔了气，伏着桌子叫“嗝哟”；宝玉早滚到贾母怀里，贾母笑的搂着宝玉叫“心肝”；王夫人笑的用手指着凤姐儿，只说不出话来；薛姨妈也撑不住，口里茶喷了探春一裙子；探春手里的饭碗都合在迎春身上；惜春离了坐位，拉着他奶母叫揉一揉肠子。地下的无一个不弯腰屈背，也有躲出去蹲着笑去的，也有忍着笑上来替他姊妹换衣裳的，独有凤姐、鸳鸯二人撑着，还只管让刘姥姥。刘姥姥拿起箸来，只觉不听使，又说道：“这里的鸡子也俊，下的这蛋小巧，怪俊的。我且匀攘一个。”众人方住了笑，听见这话又笑起来。贾母笑的眼泪出来，琥珀在后捶着。贾母笑道：“这定是凤丫头促狭鬼儿闹的，快别信他的话了。”那刘姥姥正夸鸡蛋小巧，要匀攘一个，凤姐儿笑道：“一两银子一个呢，你快尝尝罢，那冷了就不好吃了。”刘姥姥便伸箸子要夹，那里夹的起来，满碗里闹了一阵，好





“Old woman Liu, I vow,  
Eats more than any cow,  
And down she settles now  
To gobble an enormous sow.”

Then she dried up abruptly, puffing out her cheeks and staring down at her bowl.

The others had been staggered at first but now everyone, high and low, started roaring with laughter. Xiangyun shook so uncontrollably that she sputtered out the rice she had in her mouth, while Daiyu nearly choked and collapsed over the table gasping, “Mercy!” Baoyu fell convulsively into his grand mother’s arms and she chuckled as she hugged him to her crying, “My precious!” Lady Wang wagged one finger at Xifeng but was laughing too much to speak. Aunt Xue, too exploded in such mirth that she sprayed tea all over Tanchun’s skirt, making her upset her bowl over Yingchun, while Xichun left her seat and begged her nurse to rub her stomach for her.

As for the maids, some doubled up in hysterics, others sneaked outside to squat down in a fit of giggles, yet others controlled themselves sufficiently to fetch clean clothes for their young mistresses.

Xifeng and Yuanyang, the only ones with straight faces, urged Granny Liu to eat. But when she picked up the chopsticks she still found them unwieldy.

“Even your hens here are refined,” she remarked, “laying such tiny, dainty eggs as these. Well, let me ‘fuck’ one of them.”

This caused a fresh outburst of laughter. The Lady Dowager laughed so much that tears streamed from her eyes and Hupo had to pat her on the back.

“That wretch Xifeng’s up to her tricks again,” she gasped. “Don’t believe a word she says.”

Granny Liu was still admiring the dainty eggs and saying she wanted to “fuck” one, when Xifeng told her merrily:

“They cost one tael of silver each. Better try one while they’re hot.”

The old woman reached out with her chopsticks but failed to secure an egg. After chasing them round the bowl for a time she finally suc-



容易撮起一个来，才伸着脖子要吃，偏又滑下来滚在地下，忙放下箸子要亲自去捡，早有地下的人捡了出去了。刘姥姥叹道：“一两银子，也没听见响声儿就没了。”众人已没心吃饭，都看着他取笑。贾母又说：“这会子又把那个筷子拿了出来，又不请客摆大筵席。都是凤丫头指使的，还不换了呢。”地下的人原不曾预备这牙箸，本是凤姐和鸳鸯拿了来的，听如此说，忙收了过去，也照样换上一双乌木镶银的。刘姥姥道：“去了金的，又是银的，到底不及俺们那个伏手。”凤姐儿道：“菜里若有毒，这银子下去了就试的出来。”刘姥姥道：“这个菜里有毒，俺们那些都成了砒霜了。那怕毒死了也要吃尽了。”贾母见他如此有趣，吃的又香甜，把自己的菜也都端过来与他吃。又命一个老嬷嬷来，将各样的菜给板儿夹在碗上。

一时吃毕，贾母等都往探春卧室中去闲话。这里收拾过残桌，又放了一桌。刘姥姥看着李纨与凤姐儿对坐着吃饭，说道：“别的罢了，我只爱你们家这行事。怪道说‘礼出大家’。”凤姐儿忙笑道：“你可别多心，才刚大家不过取笑儿。”一言未了，鸳鸯也进来笑道：“姥姥别恼，我给你老人家赔个不是。”刘姥姥笑道：“姑娘说那里话，咱们哄着老太太开个心儿，可有什么恼的！你先嘱咐我，我就明白了，不过大家取个笑儿。我要心里恼，也就不说了。”鸳鸯便骂人





ceeded in catching one; but as she craned forward to eat it, the egg slipped and fell to the floor. She hastily put down her chopsticks and stooped to retrieve it. However, a maid had already picked it up.

“A tael of silver!” Granny Liu sighed. “And gone without a sound.”

The others had long since stopped eating to watch her antics.

“This isn’t a formal banquet. Who gave her those chop sticks?” demanded the Lady Dowager. “This is all the doing of that minx Xifeng. Get her another pair.”

It was, indeed, not the maids but Xifeng and Yuanyang who had brought the ivory chopsticks. Now these were removed, an ebony pair inlaid with silver taking their place.

“After the gold comes the silver,” observed Granny Liu. “They’re not as handy, though, as the ones we use.”

“If there’s poison in the dish,” Xifeng explained, “the silver will show it.”

“Poison! If this food is poison, ours is pure arsenic. But I’m going to finish the lot, even if it kill me.”

The Lady Dowager found her so amusing as she munched away with relish that she passed her some of her own dishes, at the same time instructing an old nurse to help Baner to everything that was going.

When presently the meal ended, the Lady Dowager and some of the others adjourned to Tanchun’s bedroom for a chat while the tables were cleared and another laid for Li Wan and Xifeng.

Granny Liu watching this said, “Leaving everything else aside, what I like best is the way things are done in your household. No wonder they say, ‘Good manners come from great households.’”

“You mustn’t take offence,” responded Xifeng quickly. “We were only having fun just now.”

Yuanyang promptly stepped forward too.

“Don’t be cross, granny,” she begged with a smile. “Please accept my apologies.”

“What a thing to say, miss!” Granny Liu laughed. “We were trying to amuse the old lady, why should I be cross? When you tipped me off, I knew it was all in fun. If I’d been annoyed I would have kept my mouth shut.”

“为什么不倒茶给姥姥吃？”刘姥姥忙道：“才刚那个嫂子倒了茶来，我吃过了。姑娘也该用饭了。”凤姐儿便拉着鸳鸯：“坐下，你和我们吃了罢，省的回来又闹。”鸳鸯便坐下了。婆子们添上碗筷来，三人吃毕。刘姥姥笑道：“我看你们这些人都只吃这一点儿就完了，亏你们也不饿。怪道的风儿都吹的倒。”鸳鸯便问：“今日剩的菜不少，都那去了？”婆子们道：“都还没散呢，在这里等着一齐散与他们吃。”鸳鸯道：“他们吃不了这些，挑两碗给二奶奶屋里平丫头送去。”凤姐儿道：“他早吃了饭了，不用给他。”鸳鸯道：“他不吃了，喂你们的猫。”婆子听了，忙拣了两样拿盒子送去。鸳鸯道：“素云那去了？”李纨道：“他们都在这里一处吃，又找他作什么。”鸳鸯道：“这就罢了。”凤姐道：“袭人不在这里，你倒是叫人送两样给他去。”鸳鸯听说，便命人也送两样去后，鸳鸯又问婆子们：“回来吃酒的攒盒可装上了？”婆子道：“想必还得一会子。”鸳鸯道：“催着些儿。”婆子答应了。

凤姐儿等来至探春房中，只见他娘儿们正说笑。探春素喜阔朗，这三间屋子并不曾隔断。当地放着一张花梨大理石大案，案上磊着各种名人法帖，并数十方宝砚，各色笔筒，笔海内插的笔如松林一般。那一边设着斗大的一个汝窑花



Yuanyang then scolded the maids for not serving granny with tea.

"That sister-in-law there brought me some just now," put in Granny Liu hastily. "No more, thank you. you ought to have your own breakfast now, miss."

"Come and eat with us," said Xifeng to Yuanyang, making her sit down at their table. "That'll save another commotion later on."

So Yuanyang sat down with them and the matrons brought an extra bowl and chopsticks. The three of them finished so soon that Granny Liu commented with a smile:

"It's a marvel to me what small appetites you have. No wonder a gust of wind can blow you over."

"What's happened to all the left-overs?" asked Yuanyang.

"Nothing's been done with them yet," replied the matrons. "They're still waiting here to be shared out."

"There's more than enough for the people here," said Yuanyang. "Choose two dishes for Pinger and send them round to Madam Lian's quarters."

"She's eaten already," put in Xifeng. "There's no need."

"If she doesn't eat them your cat can have them," said Yuanyang.

A matron promptly chose two dishes and took them off in a hamper.

"Where's Suyun?" Yuanyang asked next.

"They'll all eat here together," said Li Wan. "Why single her out?"

"That's all right then," replied Yuanyang.

"Xiren's not here," Xifeng reminded her. "You might send her a couple of dishes."

Yuanyang saw that this was done, then asked the matrons whether the boxes of titbits to go with the wine were ready yet or not. On being told that this would probably still take some time, she sent them off to expedite matters.

Xifeng and the others now joined the rest of the party who were chatting in Tanchun's room. This was really three rooms in one, as Tanchun liked plenty of space. On the big rosewood marble-topped desk in the centre were piles of albums by noted calligraphers, several dozen good inkstones and an array of jars and other containers holding a regular forest of brushes. On one side a *Ru*-ware vase the size of a peck mea-

囊，插着满满的一囊水晶球的白菊。西墙上当中挂着一大幅米襄阳《烟雨图》，左右挂着一副对联，乃是颜鲁公墨迹，其联云：

烟霞闲骨格

泉石野生涯

案上设着大鼎。左边紫檀架上放着一个大观窑的大盘，盘内盛着数十个娇黄玲珑大佛手；右边洋漆架上悬着一个白玉比目磬，旁边挂着小锤。那板儿略熟了些，便要摘那锤子要击，丫鬟们忙拦住他。他又要那佛手吃，探春拣了一个与他说：“玩罢，吃不得的。”东首便设着卧榻，拔步床上悬着葱绿双绣花卉草虫的纱帐。板儿又跑过来看，说“这是蝈蝈，这是蚂蚱”。刘姥姥忙打了他一巴掌，骂道：“下作黄子，没干没净的乱闹。倒叫你进来瞧瞧，就上脸了。”打的板儿哭起来，众人忙劝解方罢。贾母因隔着纱窗往后院内看了一回，因说：“这后廊檐下的梧桐也好了，就只细些。”正说话，忽一阵风过，隐隐听得鼓乐之声。贾母问：“是谁家娶亲呢？这里临街倒近。”王夫人等笑回道：“街上的那里听的见，这是咱们那十来个女孩子们演习吹打呢。”贾母便笑道：“既是他们演，何不叫他们进来演习。他们也逛一逛，咱们可又乐了。”凤姐听说，忙命人出去叫来，又一面吩咐摆下条桌，铺下红毡子。贾母道：“就铺排在藕香榭的水亭子



sure was filled with chrysanthemums white as crystal balls. In the middle of the west wall hung a large painting by Mi Fu, *Mist and Rain*, flanked by a couplet in Yan Zhenqing's<sup>1</sup> calligraphy:

Indolent fellow among mist and clouds,  
Rustic life amidst rocks and springs.

On another table was a large tripod. To its left, on a red sandalwood stand, a big dish of *Guan*-ware porcelain was heaped with several dozen handsome golden Buddha's-hands. To its right, suspended on a lacquer frame, was a white jade musical stone with a small hammer next to it. Baner, over the worst of his shyness now, was reaching out for the hammer to strike the jade when one of the maids quickly stopped him. Then he wanted a Buddha's-hand to eat. Tanchun gave him one explaining that it was to play with, not to eat.

At the east end of the room stood a large bed, its leek-green gauze curtain embroidered on both sides with flowers and insects. Baner ran over to have a look.

"Here's a cricket!" he exclaimed. "Here's a locust!"

Granny Liu promptly gave him a slap.

"Little wretch!" she scolded. "Pawing everything with your dirty hands. If you're allowed in to look, don't raise such a rumpus."

At this Baner set up a howl and the others had to intercede to soothe him. Meanwhile the Lady Dowager had been looking through the window gauze at the back yard.

"That *wu-tung* tree under the eaves looks well," she remarked. "It's not sturdy enough though."

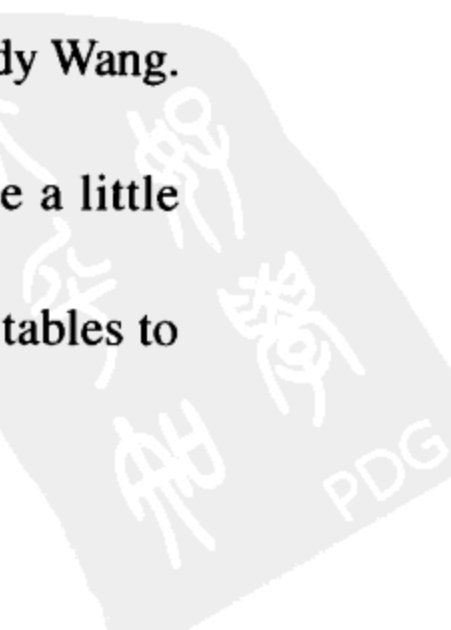
Just then a gust of wind carried them the strains of distant music.

"Who's having a wedding?" she asked. "We must be quite near the street here."

"Not near enough to hear sounds from the street," replied Lady Wang. "It's those child-actresses of ours rehearsing their music."

"If they're rehearsing, let's get them to do it here. It'll be a little outing for them and we'll have fun too."

Xifeng promptly sent for the actresses and gave orders for tables to be brought and a red carpet spread.



上，借着水音更好听的。回来咱们就在缀锦阁底下吃酒，又宽阔，又听的近。”众人都说那里好。贾母向薛姨妈笑道：“咱们走罢。他们姊妹们都不大喜欢人来坐着，怕脏了屋子。咱们别没眼色，正经坐一回子船喝酒去。”说着大家起身便走。探春笑道：“这是那里的话，求着老太太、姨太太来坐坐还不能呢。”贾母笑道：“我的这三丫头却好，只有两个玉儿可恶。回来吃醉了，咱们偏往他们屋里闹去。”

说着，众人都笑了，一齐出来。走不多远，已到了荷叶渚。那姑苏选来的几个驾娘早把两只棠木舫撑来，众人扶了贾母、王夫人、薛姨妈、刘姥姥、鸳鸯、玉钏儿上了这一只，落后李纨也跟上。凤姐儿也上去，立在船头上，也要撑船。贾母在舱内道：“这不是玩的，虽不是河里，也有好深的。你快不要给我进来。”凤姐儿笑道：“怕什么！老祖宗只管放心。”说着便一篙点开。到了池当中，船小人多，凤姐只觉乱晃，忙把篙子递与驾娘，方蹲下了。然后迎春姊妹等并宝玉上了那只，随后跟来。其余老嬷嬷与众丫鬟俱沿河随行。宝玉道：“这些破荷叶可恨，怎么还不叫人来拔去。”宝钗笑道：“你瞧这几日，何曾饶了这园子闲了，天天逛，那里还有叫人来收拾的工夫。”林黛玉道：“我最不喜欢李义山的诗，只喜他这一句：‘留得残荷听雨声’。偏你们又不留着残





“No, let’s use that lake pavilion by Lotus Fragrance Anchorage,” proposed the Lady Dowager. “Music sounds better on the water. And we can drink in the Tower of Variegated Splendour which is roomy and within easy hearing distance.”

All approved this idea.

Then with a smile to Aunt Xue the old lady said, “Let’s go. These girls don’t really welcome visitors for fear their rooms may be dirtied. We mustn’t impose on them. So let’s go boating and then have a few drinks.”

As everyone rose to leave Tanchun protested, “What a thing to say! We only wish you’d come more often.”

“Yes, my third grand-daughter’s good that way,” said the old lady. “It’s Daiyu and Baoyu who are so pernicky. On our way back, when we’re tipsy, we must go there just to annoy them.”

They trooped out, laughing, and soon reached Watercress Isle where some boatwomen from Suzhou had punted two pyrus-wood boats. Into one of these they helped the Lady Dowager, Lady Wang, Aunt Xue, Granny Liu, Yuanyang and Yuchuan. Li Wan followed them and so did Xifeng, who took her stand in the prow meaning to punt.

“It’s not as easy as it looks!” warned the Lady Dowager from the cabin. “We’re not on the river, it’s true, but it’s fairly deep here. So don’t try, and come inside at once.”

“It’s quite safe,” cried Xifeng. “Don’t worry, Old Ancestress.”

She pushed off with a shove for the middle of the lake, but when the small overloaded boat started rocking she thrust the pole into the hands of a boatwoman and hastily squatted down.

Yingchun and the other girls followed in the second boat with Baoyu, while the rest of the attendants walked along the bank.

“How disgusting those withered lotus leaves look,” remarked Baoyu. “Why not get people to pull them out?”

“What time has there been for that?” countered Baochai with a smile. “We’ve been out here enjoying ourselves every day recently.”

Daiyu put in, “I don’t like Li Shangyin’s<sup>2</sup> verses except for that single line:

‘Leave the withered lotus to hear the patter of rain.’



荷了。”宝玉道：“果然好句，以后咱们别叫人拔去了。”说着已到了花溆的芦港之下，觉得阴森透骨，两滩上衰草残茭，更助秋情。

贾母因见岸上的清厦旷朗，便问：“这是你薛姑娘的屋子不是？”众人道：“是。”贾母忙命拢岸，顺着云步石梯上去，一同进了蘅芜院，只觉异香扑鼻。那些奇草仙藤愈冷愈苍翠，都结了实，似珊瑚豆子一般，累垂可爱。及进了房屋，雪洞一般，一色玩器全无，案上只有一个土定瓶中供着数枝菊花，并两部书，茶奁、茶杯而已。床上只吊着青纱帐幔，衾褥也十分朴素。贾母叹道：“这孩子太老实了。你没有陈设，何妨和你姨娘要些。我也不理论，也没想到，你们的东西自然在家里没带了来。”说着，命鸳鸯去取些古董来，又嗔着凤姐儿：“不送些玩器来与你妹妹，这样小器。”王夫人、凤姐儿等都笑回说：“他自己不要的。我们原送了来，他都退回去了。”薛姨妈也笑说：“他在家里也不大弄这些东西的。”贾母摇头道：“使不得。虽然他省事，倘或来一个亲戚，看着不像；二则年轻的姑娘们，房里这样素净，也忌讳。我们这老婆子，越发该住马圈去了。你们听那些书上戏上说的小姐们的绣房，精致的还了得呢。他们姊妹们虽不敢比那些小姐们，也不要很离了格儿。有现成的东西，为什么





But now you two don't want to leave them."

"That's a good line," agreed Baoyu. "All right, we won't have them pulled out."

They had now reached Reed Creek by Flowery Harbour. In the shade here chill penetrated their very bones, while their awareness of autumn was heightened by the withered grass and caltrops on both sides. The Lady Dowager fixed her eyes on the airy lodge on the bank.

"Isn't that where Baochai lives?" she asked.

They told her it was.

At once she ordered the boats to go alongside and, climbing the stone steps to Alpinia Park, they were greeted by a strange fragrance. The advance of autumn had deepened the green of the rare plants and creepers there, from each of which hung charming clusters of berries like coral beads. The room which they now entered was spotless as a snow cave, with hardly an ornament in the whole place. The desk was bare except for a rough crackleware vase with some chrysanthemums in it, two sets of books and a tea-service. The blue gauze bed-curtains and bedding were also of the simplest.

"What a goose this child is!" cried the Lady Dowager. "Why not ask your aunt for some knick-knacks? It didn't occur to me, I just didn't think. Of course you left all your own things at home."

Having told Yuanyang to be sure to fetch some curios, she called Xifeng to task.

"Why didn't you send over some pretty things for your cousin? How very stingy!"

"She wouldn't have them," explained Lady Wang and Xifeng. "She returned all the ones we sent."

"She doesn't care for such things at home either," put in Aunt Xue.

"This will never do." The old lady shook her head. "She may have simple tastes, but this wouldn't look well if relatives were to call. Besides, it'll bring bad luck for girls, this austerity. Why, in that case we old women ought to live in stables! You've all heard those descriptions in ballads and operas of the elegance of young ladies' boudoirs. Maybe these girls of ours can't compare with those young ladies, but they shouldn't go to the other extreme either. When we've knick-knacks



不摆?若很爱素净,少几样倒使得。我最会收拾屋子的,如今老了,没这闲心了。他们姊妹们也还学着收拾的好,只怕俗气,有好东西也摆坏了。我看他们还不俗。如今让我替你收拾,包管又大方又素净。我的梯己两件,收到如今,没给宝玉看见过,若经了他的眼,也没了。”说着叫过鸳鸯来,亲吩咐道:“你把那石头盆景儿和那架纱桌屏,还有个墨烟冻石鼎,这三样摆在这案上就够了。再把那水墨字画白绫帐子拿来,把这帐子也换了。”鸳鸯答应着,笑道:“这些东西都搁在东楼上的不知那个箱子里,还得慢慢找去,明日再拿去也罢了。”贾母道:“明日后日都使得,只别忘了。”说着,坐了一回方出来,一径来至缀锦阁下。文官等上来请过安,因问“演习何曲”。贾母道:“只拣你们生的演习几套罢。”文官等下来,往藕香榭去不提。

这里凤姐儿已带着人摆设整齐,上面左右两张榻,榻上都铺着锦裯蓉簟。每一榻前两张雕漆几,也有海棠式的,也有梅花式的,也有荷叶式的,也有葵花式的,也有方的,也有圆的,其式不一。一个上面放着炉瓶,一分攒盒;一个上面空设着,预备放人所喜食物。上面二榻四几,是贾母、薛姨妈;下面一椅两几,是王夫人的,余者都是一椅一几。东边是刘姥姥,刘姥姥之下便是王夫人。西边便是史湘云,第





ready at hand why not display them? Of course, if your tastes are simple you can have less.

“I used to have a flair for decorating rooms, but now that I’m old I haven’t the energy. These girls should learn how to fix up their rooms too. The only trouble is if you’ve a vulgar taste, for then you’ll make even handsome things look frightful; but I wouldn’t call our girls vulgar. Now let me fit out this room for you, and I promise it’ll be in quiet yet excellent taste. I’ve a couple of nice things which I’ve managed to keep by not allowing Baoyu to set eyes on them — if he had, they’d have disappeared.”

She called Yuanyang over and ordered, “Fetch that miniature rock garden, that little gauze screen and the dark steatite tripod. Those three things will do nicely for the desk. And fetch those white silk bed-curtains with the ink painting and calligraphy in place of these.”

“Very good, madam,” said Yuanyang. “But those things are in some cases in the east attic. They may take a little finding. Suppose I get them tomorrow?”

“Tomorrow or the day after, it doesn’t matter. Don’t forget, that’s all.”

After sitting a little longer they went on to the Tower of Variegated Splendour, where Wenguan and the other young actresses paid their respects and asked which tunes they should play.

“Just choose a few you want to rehearse,” replied the Lady Dowager.

Thereupon the actresses withdrew to Lotus Fragrance Anchorage.

By now Xifeng and her helpers had everything in perfect order. There were two couches on the north side, left and right, spread with brocade cushions and velvet coverlets. In front of each couch stood two carved lacquer teapoy of different shapes with pyrus-blossom, plum-blossom, lotus and sun flower designs, some square, some round, one of which held an incense-burner, a vase and a box of various sweetmeats. The other was empty, ready for their favourite dishes. These two couches with four teapoy were for the Lady Dowager and Aunt Xue. Then there were a chair and two teapoy for Lady Wang, while the others had one chair and teapoy apiece. Granny Liu’s seat was on the east; below it



二便是宝钗，第三便是黛玉，第四迎春，探春、惜春挨次下去，宝玉在末。李纨、凤姐二人之几设于三层槛内，二层纱厨之外。攒盒式样，亦随几之式样。每人一把乌银洋鍱自斟壶，一个十锦珐琅杯。

大家坐定，贾母先笑道：“咱们先吃两杯，今日也行一令才有意思。”薛姨妈等笑道：“老太太自然有好酒令，我们如何会呢，安心要我们醉了。我们都多吃两杯就有了。”贾母笑道：“姨太太今日也过谦起来，想是厌我老了。”薛姨妈笑道：“不是谦，只怕行不上来，倒是笑话了。”王夫人忙笑道：“便说不上来，只多吃了一杯酒，醉了睡觉去，还有谁笑话咱们不成！”薛姨妈点头笑道：“依令。老太太到底吃一杯令酒才是。”贾母笑道：“这个自然。”说着便吃了一杯。

凤姐儿忙走至当地，笑道：“既行令，还叫鸳鸯姐姐来行便好。”众人都知贾母所行之令必得鸳鸯提着，故听了这话，都说“很是”。凤姐儿便拉了鸳鸯过来。王夫人笑道：“既在令内，没有站着的理。”回头命小丫头子：“端一张椅子，放在你二位奶奶的席上。”鸳鸯也半推半就，谢了坐，便坐下，也吃了一杯酒，笑道：“酒令大如军令，不论尊卑，惟我是主。违了我的话，便要受罚的。”王夫人等都笑道：





was that of Lady Wang.

On the west sat Xiangyun, Baochai, Daiyu, Yingchun, Tanchun and Xichun in that order with, last of all, Baoyu. Li Wan and Xifeng had seats outside the inner screen, within the third row of balustrades. The designs on the comfit-boxes matched those of the teapoys. Everyone also had a tarnished silver wine-pot with engraved designs and variegated cloisonné cup.

As soon as the party was seated the Lady Dowager proposed, "Let's begin with a few cups of wine. It would be fun to play a drinking game."

"I know you're good at drinking games, madam," chuckled Aunt Xue. "But how can *we* play them? If you just want to get us drunk, let's simply drink a few cups more apiece."

"How modest you are today!" retorted the Lady Dowager. "Do you find me too old for this company?"

"I'm not being modest. I'm afraid of getting laughed at for giving the wrong answer."

"Even if we can't answer," interposed Lady Wang, "it only means drinking an extra cup. And anyone feeling tipsy can go and lie down. No one will laugh at us."

"Very well then," Aunt Xue agreed. "But you must start off with a cup, madam."

"Of course."

The Lady Dowager drained her cup.

Xifeng stepped forward to propose, "If we're to have a game, let Yuan-yang take charge."

The whole party agreed, knowing that it was always Yuanyang who made the rules for the old lady's drinking games. So Xifeng made her join them.

"If you're joining in, there's no reason why you should stand," said Lady Wang. She then ordered a young maid to fetch a chair and put it by Xifeng's or Li Wan's table.

After making a show of declining, Yuanyang took the seat with thanks and drank a cup, after which she announced:

"Drinking rules are as strict as martial law. Now that I'm in charge I'll be no respecter of persons — anybody who disobeys me must pay a

“一定如此，快些说来。”鸳鸯未开口，刘姥姥便下了席，摆手道：“别这样捉弄人家，我家去了。”众人都笑道：“这却使不得。”鸳鸯喝命小丫头们：“拉上席去！”小丫头们也笑着，果然拉入席中。刘姥姥只叫“饶了我罢！”鸳鸯道：“再多言的罚一壶。”刘姥姥方住了。

鸳鸯道：“如今我说骨牌副儿，从老太太起，顺领说下去，至刘姥姥止。比如我说一副儿，将这三张牌拆开，先说头一张，次说第二张，再说第三张，说完了，合成这一副儿的名字。无论诗词歌赋，成语俗语，比上一句，都要叶韵。错了的罚一杯。”众人笑道：“这个令好，就说出来。”鸳鸯道：“有了一副了。左边是张‘天’。”贾母道：“头上有青天。”众人道：“好。”鸳鸯道：“当中是个‘五与六’。”贾母道：“六桥梅花香彻骨。”鸳鸯道：“剩得一张‘六与么’。”贾母道：“一轮红日出云霄。”鸳鸯道：“凑成便是个‘蓬头鬼’。”贾母道：“这鬼抱住钟馗腿。”说完，大家笑着喝采，贾母饮了一杯。鸳鸯又道：“有了一副。左边是个‘大长五’。”薛姨妈道：“梅花朵朵风前舞。”鸳鸯道：“右边还是‘大五长’。”薛姨妈道：“十月梅花岭上香。”鸳鸯道：“当中‘二五’是杂七。”薛姨妈道：“织女牛郎会七





forfeit.”

The others smiled and Lady Wang said, “Of course. Hurry up and tell us the rules.”

But before Yuanyang could speak Granny Liu left her seat, waving one hand in protest.

“Don’t make fun of me like this. I’m leaving,” she declared.

“That won’t do,” chuckled the others.

Yuanyang ordered some maids to drag Granny Liu back to her table. They did so, giggling, while she pleaded to be let off.

“Anybody who speaks out of turn again will be made to drink a whole pot of wine,” warned Yuanyang.

At this the old woman held her peace.

“I shall use three dominoes,” announced Yuanyang. “We’ll start with the old lady and go round in turn, ending with Granny Liu. For example, I’ll take a set of three dominoes and read out what’s on each of the three in turn, ending with the name of the set. You must say either a line of classical poetry, a proverb or an adage after each; and they must rhyme. A cup of wine is the forfeit for any mistake.”

Laughingly they all approved and begged her to start.

“Here’s a set,” said Yuanyang. “On the left is the ‘sky’.”

“The sky is blue on high,” responded the Lady Dowager.

“Bravo!” applauded the others.

“In the centre’s a ‘five and six,’” Yuanyang continued.

“Six bridges with the scent of plum admix.”

“The last piece is ‘six and one.’”

“From fleecy clouds rises a round red sun.”

“Together they make a ‘ghost distraught.’”

“By his leg the ghost-catcher he’s caught.”

While the whole party laughed and cheered, the Lady Dowager tossed off a cup of wine.

Then Yuanyang resumed, “Here’s another set. The one on the left is a ‘double five.’”

Aunt Xue responded: “Plum blossom dances when soft winds arrive.”

“A ‘double five’ again here on the right.”

Chinese characters and the acronym PDG are visible as a watermark in the bottom right corner of the page.



夕。”鸳鸯道：“凑成‘二郎游五岳’。”薛姨妈道：“世人不及神仙乐。”说完，大家称赏，饮了酒。鸳鸯又道：“有了一副。左边‘长么’两点明。”湘云道：“双悬日月照乾坤。”鸳鸯道：“右边‘长么’两点明。”湘云道：“闲花落地听无声。”鸳鸯道：“中间还得‘么四’来。”湘云道：“日边红杏倚云栽。”鸳鸯道：“凑成‘樱桃九熟’。”湘云道：“御园却被鸟衔出。”说完饮了一杯。鸳鸯道：“有了一副。左边是‘长三’。”宝钗道：“双双燕子语梁间。”鸳鸯道：“右边是‘三长’。”宝钗道：“水荇牵风翠带长。”鸳鸯道：“当中‘三六’九点在。”宝钗道：“三山半落青天外。”鸳鸯道：“凑成‘铁锁练孤舟’。”宝钗道：“处处风波处处愁。”说完饮毕。鸳鸯又道：“左边一个‘天’。”黛玉道：“良辰美景奈何天。”宝钗听了，回头看着他。黛玉只顾怕罚，也不理论。鸳鸯道：“中间‘锦屏’颜色俏。”黛玉道：“纱窗也没有红娘报。”鸳鸯道：“剩了‘二六’八点齐。”黛玉道：“双瞻玉座引朝仪。”鸳鸯道：“凑成‘篮子’好采花。”黛玉道：“仙杖香挑芍药花。”说完，饮了一口。鸳鸯道：“左边‘四





"In the tenth month plum blossom scents the height."

"In the middle 'two and five' make seven."

"The Weaving Maid and Cowherd<sup>3</sup> meet in Heaven."

"The whole: O'er the Five Peaks the young god wends his way."

"Immortal joys are barred to mortal clay."

All applauded Aunt Xue's performance and she drank a cup.

"Here's another set," said Yuanyang. "On the left 'two aces' combine."

Xiangyun capped this: "The sun and moon on earth and heaven shine."

Yuanyang continued, "On the right 'double aces' are found."

"The idle flowers fall, noiseless, to the ground."

"In the middle, a 'four and a one.'"

"Red apricot leans on clouds beside the sun."

"Together: The cherries ripen nine times in all."

"Birds in the Palace orchard make them fall."

Her turn finished, Xiangyun drained her cup.

"Next one," said Yuanyang. "On the left is a 'double three.'"

Baochai responded, "Pairs of swallows chirp merrily."

"Another 'double three' upon the right."

"The wind-trailed weeds seem belts of malachite."

"In the middle, 'three and six' make nine."

"Three hills across the azure sky incline."

"Together: A lonely boat moored by a chain."

"The wind and waves bring sorrow in their train."

In conclusion Baochai drank her wine.

Yuanyang resumed, "The sign of 'heaven' on the left."

Daiyu answered, "A fair season, a season bereft."<sup>4</sup>

Baochai turned to dart her a glance, but for fear of a penalty Daiyu ignored her.

Yuanyang continued, "In the middle a 'screen' finely wrought."

"No maid a message to the gauze window has brought."<sup>5</sup>

"That leaves only eight, by 'two and six' shown."

"Together they pay homage at the jade throne."

"Combined: A basket in which to gather posies."

"On her fairy wand she carries peonies."

红楼梦  
PDG



五’成花九。”迎春道：“桃花带雨浓。”众人道：“该罚！错了韵，而且又不像。”迎春笑着饮了一口。原是凤姐儿和鸳鸯都要听刘姥姥的笑话，故意都命说错，都罚了。至王夫人，鸳鸯代说了，过下便该刘姥姥。刘姥姥道：“我们庄稼人闲了，也常会几个人弄这个，但不如说的这么好听。少不得我也试一试。”众人都笑道：“容易说的。你只管说，不相干。”鸳鸯笑道：“左边‘长四’是个人。”刘姥姥听了，想了半日，说道：“是个庄稼人罢。”众人哄堂笑了。贾母笑道：“说的好，就是这样说。”刘姥姥也笑道：“我们庄稼人，不过是现成的本色，众位别笑。”鸳鸯道：“中间‘三四’绿配红。”刘姥姥道：“大火烧了毛毛虫。”众人笑道：“这是有的，还说你的本色。”鸳鸯道：“右边‘幺四’真好看。”刘姥姥道：“一个萝卜一头蒜。”众人又笑了。鸳鸯笑道：“凑成便是一枝花。”刘姥姥两只手比着，说道：“花儿落了结个大倭瓜。”众人大笑起来。只听外面乱嚷，且听下回分解。





Having finished her turn Daiyu took a sip of wine.

Yuanyang went on, "On the left, 'four and five' make nine."

Yingchun responded, "The peach blossom is heavy with rain."

"Fine her! Fine her!" cried the others. "That doesn't rhyme. Besides, why peach blossom?"

Yingchun smiled and took a sip. The fact is that Xifeng and Yuanyang were so eager to hear Granny Liu make a fool of herself that they had urged the others to give wrong answers, so that all were fined. When it came to Lady Wang's turn, Yuanyang answered for her. Then it was Granny Liu's turn.

"We country folk sometimes get together and play this when we've nothing better to do," said the old woman. "Mind you, our answers aren't so fine-sounding as yours. Still, I suppose I must try."

"It's easy," they assured her. "Just go ahead, it doesn't matter."

Smiling, Yuanyang announced, "On the left, 'four and four' make a man."

Granny Liu thought this over, then suggested, "A farmer?"

The company roared with laughter.

"Good," the Lady Dowager encouraged her. "That's the style."

"We country people can only talk about the things we know," said Granny Liu, laughing herself. "You mustn't make fun of me."

Yuanyang continued, "'Three and four,' green and red, in the centre."

"A big fire burns the hairy caterpillar."

The others chortled, "That's right. Go on in your own way."

Yuanyang said, "On the right a really fine 'double ace.'"

"A turnip and head of garlic in one place."

Giggles broke out again.

Yuanyang went on, "They make up 'flowers' in all."

Gesturing with both hands Granny Liu responded, "And a huge pumpkin forms when the flower fall."

The others were shaking with laughter when they heard a commotion outside. What had happened will be told in the next chapter.

紅樓夢  
第40回  
PDG





## NOTES

### Chapter 21

- <sup>1</sup> Bad Luck.
- <sup>2</sup> Orchid.

### Chapter 22

- <sup>1</sup> Mount Wutai was a holy Buddhist mountain.
- <sup>2</sup> Homophone for “stand on a branch.”
- <sup>3</sup> Assuredly (*bi*) is a homophone for writing-brush.
- <sup>4</sup> The object described in this verse is a joss-stick.

### Chapter 23

- <sup>1</sup> “Assails men.”
- <sup>2</sup> Two of the Confucian *Four Books*.
- <sup>3</sup> Lines from *The Western Chamber*.

### Chapter 24

- <sup>1</sup> Homophone for “not a human being.”

### Chapter 26

- <sup>1</sup> This line and the two quoted later by Baoyu come from *The Western Chamber*.
- <sup>2</sup> The Chinese characters for Geng Huang (庚黃), and Tang Yin (唐寅) look somewhat alike. For Tang Yin see Note 6 in Chapter 2.
- <sup>3</sup> Xue Pan does not know the Ming artist Tang Yin’s name, so he makes the mistake of calling him “sweet-silver,” which reads like “Tang Yin” in Chinese.

### Chapter 28

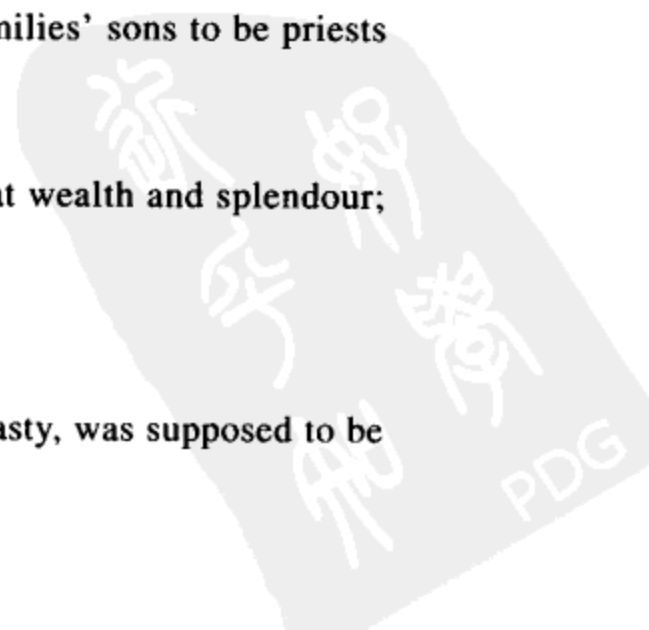
- <sup>1</sup> This was interpreted as a sign of a husband’s return.

### Chapter 29

- <sup>1</sup> By this superstitious practice rich people used to pay poor families’ sons to be priests or monks in their stead in order to ward off evil.
- <sup>2</sup> A story about Guo Ziyi of the Tang Dynasty.
- <sup>3</sup> Based on a Tang story in which a scholar had a dream of great wealth and splendour; then he woke up and found it was just an empty dream.

### Chapter 30

- <sup>1</sup> Lady Yang, favourite of Emperor Minghuang of the Tang Dynasty, was supposed to be



rather plump.

<sup>2</sup> Lady Yang's cousin who through nepotism became prime minister. Corrupt and lawless, he was put to death by the Imperial Guards during the Tang general An Lushan's rebellion.

<sup>3</sup> Xi Shi was a famous beauty in the ancient Kingdom of Yue. Dong Shi was an ugly girl who tried to imitate her ways.

#### Chapter 34

<sup>1</sup> Referring to a kind of bamboo with dark spots. According to a Chinese legend, after King Shun died, his two wives mourned for him and their tears made dark spots on the bamboo.

#### Chapter 35

<sup>1</sup> "Huang" means "yellow" and "ying" means "oriole."

#### Chapter 37

<sup>1</sup> A famous Tang calligrapher.

<sup>2</sup> Monk Huiyuan of the Jin Dynasty organized this society in Lushan.

<sup>3</sup> The Jin Dynasty landlord-official Xie An used to organize cultured gatherings in his country retreat.

<sup>4</sup> A legendary sage king who was said to have died in the course of an inspection tour.

<sup>5</sup> Xiren's family name "Hua" could mean "flower" or "spotted."

#### Chapter 38

<sup>1</sup> Xue Tao, a Tang Dynasty poetess, made beautiful stationery.

<sup>2</sup> Tao Qian or Tao Yuanming, famous Jin Dynasty poet.

<sup>3</sup> Su Shi, Song Dynasty poet.

#### Chapter 39

<sup>1</sup> Monk Xuan Zang of the Tang Dynasty.

<sup>2</sup> King of the Later Han in the Five Dynasties Period.

#### Chapter 40

<sup>1</sup> See Note 1 in Chapter 37.

<sup>2</sup> A Tang Dynasty poet.

<sup>3</sup> Names of constellations in Chinese astronomy. According to Chinese folklore, the Weaving Maid and the Cowherd were lovers.

<sup>4</sup> A line from the Ming drama *The Peony Pavilion*.

<sup>5</sup> A line from the Yuan drama *The Western Chamber*.

