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## 红楼梦

## A DREAM OF RED MANSIONS



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汉英对照

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Chinese-English

# 红楼梦

## A Dream of Red Mansions

VI



曹雪芹 高 鹗 著  
杨宪益 戴乃迭 译

*Written by Cao Xueqin and Gao E*

*Translated by Yang Xianyi and Gladys Yang*

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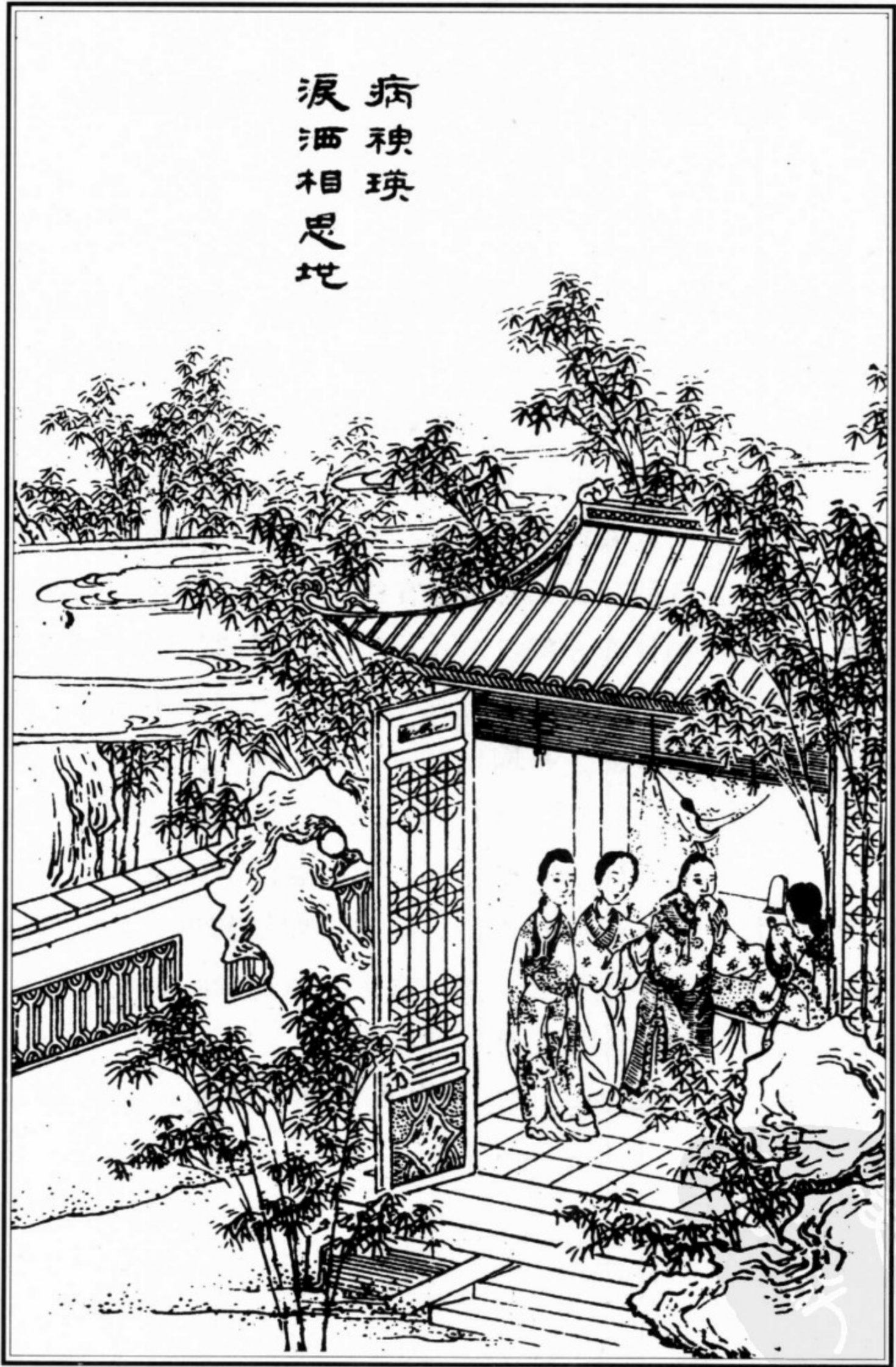


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病 疎 瑛  
淚 洒 相 思 地





## 第九十八回

苦绛珠魂归离恨天 病神瑛泪洒相思地

话说宝玉见了贾政，回至房中，更觉头昏脑闷，懒怠动弹，连饭也没吃，便昏沉睡去。仍旧延医诊治，服药不效，索性连人也认不明白了。大家扶着他坐起来，还是像个好人。一连闹了几天。那日恰是回九之期，说是若不过去，薛姨妈脸上过不去；若说去呢，宝玉这般光景，明知是为黛玉而起，欲要告诉明白，又恐气急生变。宝钗是新媳妇，又难劝慰，必得姨妈过来才好。若不回九，姨妈嗔怪。便与王夫人凤姐商议道：“我看宝玉竟是魂不守舍，起动是不怕的。用两乘小轿，叫人扶着，从园里过去，应了回九的吉期；以后请姨妈过来安慰宝钗，咱们一心一计的调治宝玉，可不两全？”王夫人答应了，即刻预备。幸亏宝钗是新媳妇，宝玉是个疯傻的，由人掇弄过去了，宝钗也明知其事，心里只怨母亲办得糊涂，事已至此，不肯多言。独有薛姨妈看见宝玉这般光景，心里懊悔，只得草草完事。

回家，宝玉越加沉重，次日连起坐都不能了；日重一



## Chapter 98

### Unhappy Vermilion Pearl's Spirit Returns in Sorrow to Heaven Deranged Shen Ying<sup>1</sup> Sheds Tears in the Lodge of His Loved One

Baoyu returned to his room after seeing his father more dizzy, confused and listless than before. Without even eating his meal he drifted off to sleep. Doctors were called in again but their remedies proved ineffectual — he could not even recognize those around him, although when helped to sit up he looked normal enough. And this state of affairs continued for several days.

The ninth day after the wedding had now come — the day on which newly-weds should visit the bride's family. If they stayed away, Aunt Xue might well feel slighted; but how could they go with Baoyu so distraught on account of Daiyu? On the other hand, they feared that if told of her death he might die himself of chagrin. His bride could hardly reason with him either — for that, her mother was needed there. Yet if they neglected to pay this courtesy call, Aunt Xue would take offence.

The Lady Dowager consulted Lady Wang and Xifeng and proposed, "Baoyu may have lost his mind, but I can't see that going out would hurt him. Let's order two small sedan-chairs and have them escorted over through the Garden to keep up appearances; then we can invite Aunt Xue here to comfort Baochai, while we give our whole minds to curing Baoyu. Wouldn't that be best on both scores?"

Lady Wang agreed and had preparations made without delay. As Baochai was a new bride and Baoyu was crazed, neither objected to being taken over; for although Baochai knew how things stood and at heart blamed her mother for this injudicious match, it was too late now to protest. True, Aunt Xue reproached herself bitterly when she saw Baoyu's condition; still, they had to go through with the ceremonies in a perfunctory way.

On their return Baoyu took a turn for the worse. The next morning he





日，甚至汤水不进。薛姨妈等忙了手脚，各处遍请名医，皆不识病源。只有城外破寺中住着个穷医姓毕别号知庵的，诊得病源是悲喜激射，冷暖失调，饮食失时，忧忿滞中，正气壅闭：此内伤外感之症。于是度量用药。至晚服了，二更后，果然省些人事，便要喝水。贾母王夫人等才放了心，请了薛姨妈带了宝钗，都到贾母那里，暂且歇息。

宝玉片时清楚，自料难保，见诸人散后，房中只有袭人，因唤袭人至跟前，拉着手哭道：“我问你：宝姐姐怎么来的？我记得老爷给我娶了林妹妹过来，怎么叫宝姐姐赶出去了？他为什么霸占住在这里？我要说呢，又恐怕得罪了他。你们听见林妹妹哭的怎么样了？”袭人不敢明说，只得说道：“林姑娘病着呢。”宝玉又道：“我瞧瞧他去。”说着，要起来，那知连日饮食不进，身子岂能动转，便哭道：“我要死了！我有一句心里的话，只求你回明老太太：横竖林妹妹也是要死的，我如今也不能保，两处两个病人，都要死的！死了越发难张罗，不如腾一处空房子，趁早把我和林妹妹两个抬在那里，治着也好一处医治、伏侍，死了也好一处停放。你依我这话，不枉了几年的情分。”袭人听了这些话，又急，又笑，又痛。

宝钗恰好同着莺儿过来，也听见了，便说道：“你放着病不保养，何苦说这些不吉利的话呢？老太太才安慰了些，你





could not sit up, and he wasted away day by day until he could not even take liquid nourishment. In panic Aunt Xue and the others searched everywhere for good doctors, but not one was able to diagnose his illness until a certain Bi Zhan, a poor physician who lived in a ruined temple outside town, ascribed it to both internal and external factors: sudden transports of joy and grief depriving him of his senses and appetite and pent-up indignation resulting in congestion. He made out his prescription accordingly, and Baoyu took the first dose that evening. After the second watch, sure enough, he came to and asked for a drink of water. Their Ladyships in relief invited Aunt Xue and Baochai to the old lady's room to rest.

Baoyu, now that his mind had cleared, was convinced that he was dying. As the others had gone, leaving only Xiren there, he called her over to him and clasped her hand.

"Tell me," he sobbed, "what is Cousin Baochai doing here? I remember my father choosing Cousin Lin to marry me, so how did she get driven out by Cousin Baochai? Why should she force her way in here? I don't like to ask her for fear of offending her. And what news have you of Cousin Lin? Is she crying her heart out?"

Xiren prevaricated, "Miss Lin is ill."

"I'll go and see her then."

He tried to get up, but after several days without nourishment of any kind he was too weak to move.

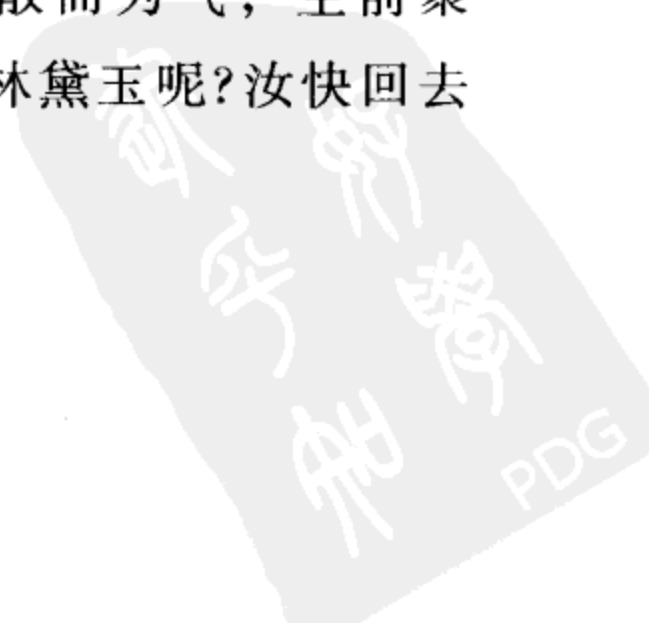
"I'm dying!" he exclaimed. "But I've one request which I beg you to pass on to the old lady. Cousin Lin will be sobbing herself to death too and I'm done for now anyway, so that's two of us mortally ill in different places. If we die apart that'll make more trouble for you, so why not turn out a spare room and move the two of us there? You can nurse us both together while we're still living, and when we're dead you can lay us out together. For the sake of our friendship these years, please do this for me!"

Xiren was so affected by his words that she sobbed convulsively. And Baochai, coming back then with Yinger, heard him too.

"Why talk in that unlucky way instead of resting well so as to recover?" she asked. "The old lady's just feeling a bit easier in her mind,

又生出事来。老太太一生疼你一个，如今八十多岁的人了，虽不图你的诰封，将来你成了人，老太太也看着乐一天，也不枉了老人家的苦心。太太更是不必说了，一生的心血精神，抚养了你这一个儿子，若是半途死了，太太将来怎么样呢？我虽是薄命，也不至于此：据此三件看来，你就要死，那天也不容你死的，所以你是不能死的。只管安稳着养个四五天后，风邪散了，太和正气一足，自然这些邪病都没有了。”宝玉听了，竟是无言可答，半晌，方才嘻嘻的笑道：“你是好些时不和我说话了，这会子说这些大道理的话给谁听？”宝钗听了这话，便又说道：“实告诉你说罢：那两日你不知人事的时候，林妹妹已经亡故了。”宝玉忽然坐起，大声诧异道：“果真死了吗？”宝钗道：“果真死了。岂有红口白舌咒人死的呢！老太太、太太知道你姐妹和睦，你听见他死了，自然你也要死，所以不肯告诉你。”

宝玉听了，不禁放声大哭，倒在床上，忽然眼前漆黑，辨不出方向，心中正自恍惚，只见眼前好像有人走来。宝玉茫然问道：“借问此是何处？”那人道：“此阴司泉路。你寿未终，何故至此？”宝玉道：“适闻有一故人已死，遂寻访至此，不觉迷途。”那人道：“故人是谁？”宝玉道：“姑苏林黛玉。”那人冷笑道：“林黛玉生不同人，死不同鬼，无魂无魄，何处寻访？凡人魂魄，聚而成形，散而为气，生前聚之，死则散焉。常人尚无可寻访，何况林黛玉呢？汝快回去





yet here you are starting fresh trouble. You've always been the old lady's favourite, and now she's over eighty. Though she's not expecting you to win her honours, if you turn out well that will please her and the pains she's taken over you won't be wasted. As for your mother, it goes without saying she's given her heart's blood to bring you up, and if you die young what's to become of her? And I, though I may be ill-fated, don't deserve this. Because of the three of us, even if you want to die Heaven won't allow it! So just rest quietly for four or five days till you're over this chill and your vital forces are restored; then this disorder will naturally disappear."

This silenced Baoyu for some minutes. Then he sniggered, "You stopped talking to me for so long, why start haranguing me now?"

"Let me tell you the truth," she continued. "While you were in a coma for two days Cousin Lin died."

He sat up abruptly.

"Is that true?" he demanded.

"Of course it is. I wouldn't say such a fearful thing if it wasn't. The old lady and your mother, knowing how fond of her you were, were afraid the news would kill you too. That's why they didn't tell you."

Baoyu burst out sobbing and fell back on his pillows. All before him was black and he could not make out where he was. He was feeling lost when he saw a figure approaching.

"Excuse me," he blurted out. "What is this place?"

"The way to Hell," was the answer. "But what are *you* doing here? Your span of life has not ended."

"I just heard that a friend had died, and looking for her here I lost my way."

"What friend?"

"Lin Daiyu of Suzhou."

"Lin Daiyu in life was no ordinary mortal; in death she is no ordinary ghost," said the apparition with a scornful laugh. "As she has no ghost, where can you find her? The spirits of men assume a form only when concentrated; when dissipated they change into vapour. In life they have a form; after death they scatter. So even ordinary mortals cannot be traced after death, let alone Lin Daiyu. You had better go back at once."



罢。”宝玉听了，呆了半晌，道：“既云死者散也，又如何有这个‘阴司’呢？”那人冷笑道：“那‘阴司’说有便有，说无就无。皆为世俗溺于生死之说，设言以警世，便道上天深怒愚人——或不守分安常；或生禄未终，自行夭折；或嗜淫欲，尚气逞凶，无故自殒者：特设此地狱，囚其魂魄，受无边的苦，以偿生前之罪。汝寻黛玉，是无故自陷也。且黛玉已归太虚幻境，汝若有心寻访，潜心修养，自然有时相见；如不安生，即以自行夭折之罪，囚禁阴司，除父母之外，图一见黛玉，终不能矣。”那人说毕，袖中取出一石，向宝玉心口掷来。宝玉听了这话，又被这石子打着心窝，吓的即欲回家，只恨迷了道路。正在踌躇，忽听那边有人唤他。回首看时，不是别人，正是贾母、王夫人、宝钗、袭人等围绕哭泣叫着，自己仍旧躺在床上。见案上红灯，窗前皓月，依然锦绣丛中，繁华世界。定神一想，原来竟是一场大梦。浑身冷汗，觉得心内清爽。仔细一想，真正无可奈何，不过长叹数声。

起初宝钗早知黛玉已死，因贾母等不许众人告诉宝玉知道，恐添病难治，自己却深知宝玉之病实因黛玉而起，失玉次之，故趁势说明，使其一痛决绝，神魂一归，庶可疗治。贾母王夫人等不知宝钗的用意，深怪他造次，后来见宝玉醒了过来，方才放心，立刻到外书房请了毕大夫进来诊视。那大夫进来诊了脉，便道：“奇怪！这回脉气沉静，神安郁散，





Nonplussed by this Baoyu asked, "If you say the spirit is dissipated after death, why should there be a Hell?"

"Hell exists for those who believe in it," was the disdainful answer. "Because the vulgar herd are afraid of death they tell cautionary tales about the wrath that Heaven visits on fools who are not content with their lot or senselessly cut short their lives by indulging in lust or running amok, making away with themselves for no good reason. So Hell has been dreamed up as a prison where such ghosts will suffer endless torments to expiate their crimes during their lifetime. By searching for Daiyu, you are courting death unjustifiably. The more so, as she has already returned to the Illusory Land of Great Void. If you want to find her, you must cultivate virtue and you will have occasion to meet again. If you chafe at your lot and commit the crime of cutting short your life, you may see your parents again — but never Daiyu!" This said, he took a stone from his sleeve and aimed it at Baoyu's heart.

Terrified by this warning and a pain in the region of his heart, Baoyu longed to go home but did not know the way. He was hesitating when he heard his name and turned to find that the old lady, Lady Wang, Baochai and Xiren had gathered round, tearfully calling him, and he himself was still lying in his bed. The red lamp on his desk, the bright moon outside the window showed that he was still in this vain world, in the lap of luxury. Calming down, he realized that he had been dreaming. Though drenched with cold sweat he felt refreshed and clear-headed. Reflecting that there was in truth no way out for him, he heaved sigh after sigh.

Now Baochai had known from the start of Daiyu's death, but the Lady Dowager forbade any mention of it to Baoyu for fear of making his illness worse, though she herself knew that his breakdown was due to his longing for Daiyu, the loss of his jade being only secondary. She had taken her opportunity to tell him to end his torment and bring him back to his senses, so that he could be cured. The old lady and Lady Wang not knowing her motive, blamed her for her impetuosity; but when Baoyu came to they felt relieved and at once summoned Doctor Bi from the outer study to examine him.

"Strange!" observed the physician after feeling his pulse. "His pulse is steady and there is no sign now of melancholia. We'll give him a re-





明日进调理的药，就可以望好了。”说着出去。众人各自安心散去。

袭人起初深怨宝钗不该告诉，惟是口中不好说出。莺儿背地也说宝钗道：“姑娘忒性急了。”宝钗道：“你知道什么！好歹横竖有我呢。”那宝钗任人诽谤，并不介意，只窥察宝玉心病，暗下针砭。

一日，宝玉渐觉神志安定。虽一时想起黛玉，尚有糊涂。更有袭人缓缓的将“老爷选定的宝姑娘为人和厚，嫌林姑娘秉性古怪，原恐早夭。老太太恐你不知好歹，病中着急，所以叫雪雁过来哄你”的话，时常劝解。宝玉终是心酸落泪。欲待寻死，又想着梦中之言，又恐老太太、太太生气，又不得撩开。又想黛玉已死，宝钗又是第一等人物，方信“金石姻缘”有定，自己也解了好些。宝钗看来不妨大事，于是自己心也安了，只在贾母王夫人等前尽行过家庭之礼后，便设法以释宝玉之忧。宝玉虽不能时常坐起，亦常见宝钗坐在床前，禁不住生来旧病。宝钗每以正言解劝，以“养身要紧，你我既为夫妇，岂在一时”之语安慰他。那宝玉心里虽不顺遂，无奈日里贾母王夫人及薛姨妈等轮流相伴，夜间宝钗独去安寝，贾母又派人服侍，只得安心静养。又见宝钗举动温柔，就也渐渐的将爱慕黛玉的心肠略移在宝钗身上。此是后话。





storative tomorrow, and can hope for a cure.” Then he left and the others dispersed, much easier in their minds.

Xiren, too, had been shocked by Baochai’s disclosure, though she could not very well say so. But Yinger in confidence has taken her to task for her indiscretion.

“You don’t understand,” said Baochai. “Come what may, I’ll take the responsibility.”

She paid no attention to ill-natured gossip, but carefully probed Baoyu’s psychology and quietly needled him for his own good. And little by little he was growing more lucid, only lapsing into senselessness when he remembered Daiyu. It was Xiren who reasoned with him most frequently.

“The master chose Miss Baochai for you because she’s so affable and good,” she told him patiently. “He thought Miss Lin eccentric and suspected that she hadn’t long to live. As for the old lady, she was afraid you might get worked up as you’d taken leave of your senses, so she had Xueyan brought over here to trick you.”

Still Baoyu’s heart ached and he often shed tears, tempted to kill himself. But he checked this impulse, remembering the warning in his dream and reluctant to hurt his grandmother and his mother. He took comfort too from the thought that, although Daiyu was dead, Baochai was a girl in a thousand and there might be something in the prophecy of a “match between gold and jade.” As he seemed unlikely to do anything drastic, Baochai felt easy enough in her mind to wait dutifully on Their Ladyships, devoting the rest of her time to amusing him. Though Baoyu was too weak to sit up for long, the sight of Baochai sitting by his bed rekindled his amorous proclivity. But she would urge him gravely:

“That can wait. We’re already husband and wife, but the main thing now is to recover your health.”

Reluctantly, he had to fall in with her wishes, for during the day his grandmother, mother and Aunt Xue took it in turns to keep him company, and at night Baochai slipped away to sleep elsewhere, leaving nannies sent by the old lady to wait on him. So he had to convalesce quietly. Moreover, Baochai’s gentle ways made him gradually transfer to her some of the love he had felt for Daiyu. But this is anticipating.

却说宝玉成家的那一日，黛玉白日已经昏晕过去，却心头口中一丝微气不断，把个李纨和紫鹃哭的死去活来。到了晚间，黛玉却又缓过来了，微微睁开眼，似有要水要汤的光景。此时雪雁已去，只有紫鹃和李纨在旁。紫鹃便端了一盏桂圆汤和的梨汁，用小银匙灌了两三匙。黛玉闭着眼，静养了一会子，觉得心里似明似暗的。此时李纨见黛玉略缓，明知是回光返照的光景，却料着还有一半耐头，自己回到稻香村，料理了一回事情。

这里黛玉睁开眼一看，只有紫鹃和奶妈并几个小丫头在那里，便一手攥了紫鹃的手，使着劲说道：“我是不中用的人了！你伏侍我几年，我原指望咱们两个总在一处，不想我……”说着，又喘了一会子，闭了眼歇着。紫鹃见他攥着不肯松手，自己也不敢挪动。看他的光景，比早半天好些，只当还可以回转，听了这话，又寒了半截。半天，黛玉又说道：“妹妹！我这里并没亲人，我的身子是干净的，你好歹叫他们送我回去！”说到这里，又闭了眼不言语了。那手却渐渐紧了，喘成一处，只是出气大，入气小，已经促疾的很了。

紫鹃忙了，连忙叫人请李纨，可巧探春来了。紫鹃见了，忙悄悄的说道：“三姑娘！瞧瞧林姑娘罢！”说着，泪如雨下。探春过来，摸了摸黛玉的手，已经凉了，连目光也都散了。探春紫鹃正哭着叫人端水来给黛玉擦洗，李纨赶忙进来了。三个人才见了，不及说话。刚擦着，猛听黛玉直声叫道：“宝玉！宝玉！你好……”说到“好”字，便浑身冷汗，不



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On the day of Baoyu's wedding Daiyu lay in a coma, her life hanging by a thread, while Li Wan and Zijuan wept as if their hearts would break. That evening she recovered consciousness and feebly opened her eyes. She seemed to want something to drink. As Xueyan had gone, leaving only Li Wan and Zijuan there, the latter brought her a bowl of pear juice and dried-longan syrup and gave her two or three sips with a small silver spoon, after which Daiyu closed her eyes to rest again. Li Wan knew that this lucid interval and slight rallying were the prelude to the end, but thinking that still a few hours away she went back to Paddy-Sweet Cottage to see to some business.

Meanwhile Daiyu opened her eyes and saw only Zijuan, her old nanny and some young maids. Claspng Zijuan's hand she addressed her with an effort.

"I'm done for! You've served me for several years, and I'd hoped that the two of us could always stay together. But now...." Stopping to catch her breath, she closed her eyes in exhaustion.

Zijuan, whose hand she was still gripping, dared not move. Because Daiyu seemed better than earlier on she was still hoping for her recovery, and so these words struck chill into her heart.

"Sister!" continued Daiyu presently. "I have no dear one here, I have lived chastely.... Get them to send me home!"

Closing her eyes again, she clasped Zijuan's hand even more tightly as she panted silently, breathing out more than she breathed in — at her last gasp.

Zijuan was frantically sending to fetch Li Wan when luckily Tanchun arrived.

"Look at Miss Lin, miss!" whispered Zijuan, her tears falling like rain.

Tanchun came over and felt Daiyu's hand — it was chill and her eyes were glazed. Weeping, they called for water with which to wash her. Then Li Wan hurried in. The three of them had no time for civilities. They were washing Daiyu when she raised a sudden cry:

"Baoyu, Baoyu! How...."

Those were her last words. She broke out in a cold sweat. Zijuan and the others, holding her as she sweated, felt her body grow colder and



作声了。紫鹃等急忙扶住，那汗愈出，身子便渐渐的冷了。探春李纨叫人乱着拢头穿衣，只见黛玉两眼一翻，呜呼！

香魂一缕随风散，愁绪三更入梦遥！

当时黛玉气绝，正是宝玉娶宝钗的这个时辰，紫鹃等都大哭起来。李纨探春想他素日的可疼，今日更加可怜，便也伤心痛哭。因潇湘馆离新房子甚远，所以那边并没听见。一时，大家痛哭了一阵，只听得远远一阵音乐之声，侧耳一听，却又没有了。探春李纨走出院外再听时，惟有竹梢风动，月影移墙，好不凄凉冷淡。

一时叫了林之孝家的过来，将黛玉停放毕，派人看守，等明早去回凤姐。凤姐因见贾母王夫人等忙乱，贾政起身，又为宝玉昏愤更甚，正在着急异常之时，若是又将黛玉的凶信回了，恐贾母王夫人愁苦交加，急出病来，只得亲自到园。到了潇湘馆内，也不免哭了一场。见了李纨探春，知道诸事齐备，就说：“很好。只是刚才你们为什么不言语，叫我着急？”探春道：“刚才送老爷，怎么说呢？”凤姐道：“这倒是你们两个可怜他些。这么着，我还得那边去招呼那个冤家呢。但是这件事好累坠！若是今日不回，使不得；若回了，恐怕老太太搁不住。”李纨道：“你去见机行事，得回再回方好。”凤姐点头，忙忙的去了。

凤姐到了宝玉那里，听见大夫说不妨事，贾母王夫人略





colder. Tanchun and Li Wan bade her maids dress her hair and change her clothes. But her eyes turned up — alas!

Her sweet soul gone with the wind,  
They sorrow at midnight, lost in fragrant dreams.

It was in the very same hour in which Baoyu and Baochai were married that Daiyu breathed her last. Tanchun, recalling Zijuan and the other maids wept bitterly while Li Wan and Tanchun, recalling her lovable ways, lamented her fate and sobbed too with distress. As Bamboo Lodge was far from the bridal chambers, their wailing could not be heard there. Presently they caught the sound of distant music, but as soon as they pricked up their ears it vanished. When Li Wan and Tanchun stepped into the courtyard to listen, they saw only the wind — tossed bamboos and the shifting moonlight on the wall — a scene of loneliness and desolation.

They sent for Lin Zhixiao's wife, had Daiyu laid out and assigned maids to watch by her corpse, not notifying Xifeng till the next morning.

As Their Ladyships were so busy with Jia Zheng leaving home that morning and Baoyu's increased derangement making the whole household frantic, Xifeng decided not to report Daiyu's death for fear Their Ladyships would fall ill under this fresh burden of grief. So she went herself to the Garden. On reaching Bamboo Lodge, she could not hold back her tears. Then she was told by Li Wan and Tanchun that all preparations had been made for the funeral.

"Well done," she said. "But why didn't you let me know before to save me worrying?"

Tanchun answered, "How could we, when seeing the master off?"

"At least the two of you took pity on her," commented Xifeng. "Very well then, I must go back to cope with the lovesick one over there. What a to-do! Not to report it today would be wrong; but if I report it I'm afraid it may be too much for the old lady."

"Do as you think fit," said Li Wan. "If possible, you should report it."

Nodding, Xifeng hurried away.

When she reached Baoyu's quarters and heard that the doctor had pronounced him out of danger, to Their Ladyships' relief, she broke the

觉放心，凤姐便背了宝玉，缓缓的将黛玉的事回明了。贾母王夫人听得，都唬了一大跳。贾母眼泪交流，说道：“是我弄坏了他了！但只是这个丫头也忒傻气！”说着，便要到园里去哭他一场，又惦记着宝玉，两头难顾。王夫人等含悲共劝贾母：“不必过去，老太太身子要紧。”贾母无奈，只得叫王夫人自去。又说：“你替我告诉他的阴灵：‘并不是我忍心不来送你，只为有个亲疏。你是我的外孙女儿，是亲的了；若与宝玉比起来，可是宝玉比你更亲些。倘宝玉有些不好，我怎么见他父亲呢！’”说着，又哭起来。王夫人劝道：“林姑娘是老太太最疼的，但只寿夭有定，如今已经死了，无可尽心，只是葬礼上要上等的发送。一则可以少尽咱们的心；二则就是姑太太和外甥女儿的阴灵儿也可以少安了。”贾母听到这里，越发痛哭起来。

凤姐恐怕老人家伤感太过，明仗着宝玉心中不甚明白，便偷偷的使人来撒个谎儿，哄老太太道：“宝玉那里找老太太呢。”贾母听见，才止住泪问道：“不是又有什么缘故？”凤姐陪笑道：“没什么缘故，他大约是想老太太的意思。”贾母连忙扶了珍珠儿，凤姐也跟着，过来。走至半路，正遇王夫人过来，一一回明了贾母，贾母自然又是哀痛的；只因要到宝玉那边，只得忍泪含悲的说道：“既这么着，我也不过去了，由你们办罢。我看着心里也难受，只别委屈了他就是了。”王夫人凤姐一一答应了，贾母才过宝玉这边来。见了宝玉，因问：“你做什么找我？”宝玉笑道：“我昨天晚上看见林妹妹来了，他说要回南去。我想没人留的住，还得老太太给我留



news to them about Daiyu without letting Baoyu know. The old lady and Lady Wang were consternated.

"I have her death on my conscience," sobbed the old lady. "But the child was really too foolish!"

She was in a dilemma, wanting to go to the Garden to mourn Daiyu, yet reluctant to leave Baoyu. Lady Wang, suppressing her own grief, persuaded her to remain to look after her health, and the old lady agreed to her going instead.

"Tell her spirit from me," she instructed, "it's not because I'm heartless that I'm not coming to see you off, but there's someone closer here whom I have to see to. As my daughter's daughter you are dear to me; but Baoyu is closer to me even than you. If any harm comes to *him*, how am I to face his father?" She wept again.

"You were very good to her, madam," said Lady Wang soothingly. "But each one's span of life is fixed by Heaven, and now that she's dead there's nothing we can do except give her the best funeral possible. That will show our feeling for her, and her mother's spirit and hers can rest in peace."

This made the old lady weep still more bitterly. And not wanting her to grieve too much, as Baoyu was still bemused Xifeng quietly sent someone with the trumped-up message, "Baoyu is asking for you, madam."

"Has anything happened?" she asked, no longer weeping.

"No, nothing," Xifeng assured her. "I expect he just wants to see you."

The old lady hurried out attended by Zhenzhu and followed by Xifeng. Half-way there they met Lady Wang, whose report on her visit to Bamboo Lodge naturally caused the old lady fresh distress; but she swallowed back her tears because she was going to see Baoyu.

"As all the preparations are made, I won't go over for the time being," she said. "Do as you think fit. Seeing her would make my heart ache. But mind you give her a handsome funeral."

When Lady Wang and Xifeng had agreed to this, she went on to see Baoyu and asked what he wanted her for.

"Last night I saw Cousin Lin," he said with a smile. "She wants to go back south. I'm sure you're the only one who can keep her here for me,





一留他。”贾母听着，说：“使得，只管放心罢。”袭人因扶宝玉躺下。

贾母出来，到宝钗这边来。那时宝钗尚未回九，所以每每见了人，倒有些含羞之意。这一天，见贾母满面泪痕，递了茶，贾母叫他坐下。宝钗侧身陪着坐了，才问道：“听得林妹妹病了，不知他可好些了？”贾母听了这话，那眼泪止不住流下来，因说道：“我的儿！我告诉你，你可别告诉宝玉。都是因你林妹妹，才叫你受了多少委屈！你如今作媳妇了，我才告诉你：这如今你林妹妹没了两三天了，就是娶你的那个时辰死的。如今宝玉这一番病，还是为着这个。你们先都在园子里，自然也都是明白的。”宝钗把脸飞红了；想到黛玉之死，又不免落下泪来。贾母又说了一回话，去了。

自此，宝钗千回万转，想了一个主意，只不肯造次，所以过了回九，才想出这个法子来。如今果然好些，然后大家说话才不至似前留神。

独是宝玉虽然病势一天好似一天，他的痴心总不能解，必要亲去哭他一场。贾母等知他病未除根，不许他胡思乱想，怎奈他郁闷难堪，病多反复。倒是大夫看出心病，索性叫他开散了再用药调理，倒可好得快些。宝玉听说，立刻要往潇湘馆来。贾母等只得叫人抬了竹椅子过来，扶宝玉坐上，贾母王夫人即便先行。到了潇湘馆内，一见黛玉灵柩，贾母已哭得泪干气绝。凤姐等再三劝住。王夫人也哭了一

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madam. Don't let her go!"

"All right. Don't worry," she answered.

Then Xiren made Baoyu lie down again.

After leaving him the old lady went in to see Baochai, who having been married less than a week behaved shyly in company. She noticed that the old lady's face was tear-stained. After she had served tea, she was told to take a seat and perched respectfully on the edge of a chair.

"I heard that Cousin Lin was unwell," she remarked. "Is she any better?"

Bursting into tears the Lady Dowager answered, "I'll tell you, child, but don't let Baoyu know. It's all because of your Cousin Lin that you've been so unfairly treated. Now that you're married I can tell you the truth: your Cousin Lin died a couple of days ago — at the very hour of your wedding. This illness Baoyu has is because of her. You used to live together in the Garden, so I'm sure you know what I mean."

Baochai blushed, then shed tears at the thought of Daiyu's death. And after chatting with her a little longer, the Lady Dowager left.

After this, Baochai weighed the pros and cons carefully before hitting on a plan; but not wanting to act rashly she had waited till after her visit home on the ninth day after their wedding before breaking the news to Baoyu. And now that, sure enough, he was on the mend, they no longer had to keep things secret from him.

But though Baoyu was recovering steadily, he had not overcome his infatuation and he insisted on going to mourn for Daiyu. Knowing that the cause of his illness was not yet uprooted, his grandmother forbade him to give way to foolish fancies, but that only deepened his gloom and brought on a relapse. The doctor, however, saw that he was ill with longing and advised them to allow him to vent his feelings, for then the medicine would be more efficacious. Hearing this, Baoyu at once clamoured to go to Bamboo Lodge. They had to send for a bamboo chair and help him on to it, after which they set off, the old lady and Lady Wang leading the way.

The sight of Daiyu's coffin in Bamboo Lodge made the old lady weep till she had no more tears to shed and was out of breath. Xifeng and the



场。李纨便请贾母王夫人在里间歇着，犹自落泪。宝玉一到，想起未病之先，来到这里，今日屋在人亡，不禁嚎啕大哭。想起从前何等亲密，今日死别，怎不更加伤感！众人原恐宝玉病后过哀，都来解劝。宝玉已经哭得死去活来，大家搀扶歇息。其余随来的，如宝钗，俱极痛哭。

独是宝玉必要叫紫鹃来见，问明姑娘临死有何话说。紫鹃本来深恨宝玉，见如此，心里已回过来些；又有贾母王夫人都在这里，不敢洒落宝玉：便将林姑娘怎么复病，怎么烧毁帕子，焚化诗稿，并将临死说的话一一的都告诉了。宝玉又哭得气噎喉干。探春趁便又将黛玉临终嘱咐带柩回南的话也说了一遍。贾母王夫人又哭起来。多亏凤姐能言劝慰，略略止些，便请贾母等回去。宝玉那里肯舍，无奈贾母逼着，只得勉强回房。

贾母有了年纪的人，打从宝玉病起，日夜不宁，今又大痛一阵，已觉头晕身热，虽是不放心惦着宝玉，却也挣扎不住，回到自己房中睡下。王夫人更加心痛难禁，也便回去，派了彩云帮着袭人照应，并说：“宝玉若再悲戚，速来告诉我们。”宝钗知是宝玉一时必不能舍，也不相劝，只用讽刺的话说他。宝玉倒恐宝钗多心，也便饮泣收心。歇了一夜，倒也安稳。明日一早，众人都来瞧他，但觉气虚身弱，心病倒觉去了几分。于是加意调养，渐渐的好起来。贾母幸不成



others urged her to desist. Meanwhile Lady Wang had wept too. And they shed tears anew even after Li Wan invited them to rest in the inner room.

Baoyu on his arrival thought back to his visits here before his illness. Now the lodge remained but its young mistress was gone. He gave way to a storm of grief. How close they had been, yet today they were parted by death! He felt his heart would break. Alarmed by his frenzied anguish, all tried to comfort him, but already he had almost fainted away. They helped him out to rest. Baochai and the others who had come with him also mourned bitterly.

Now Baoyu insisted on seeing Zijuan to ask her what Daiyu's dying words had been. Zijuan had a deep grudge against him, but his misery softened her heart and in the presence of Their Ladyships she dared take no liberties. So she reported in detail how her young mistress had fallen ill again, how she had burned his handkerchief and her poems, and what her last words had been. Baoyu wailed again until he was hoarse and breathless, and Tanchun seized this chance to repeat Daiyu's dying request to have her coffin taken back to the south, reducing Their Ladyships to tears again. It was Xifeng with her persuasive tongue who succeeded in consoling them a little and urged them to go back. When Baoyu refused, his grandmother had to override his wishes.

Because the Lady Dowager was old and had been on tenterhooks day and night ever since Baoyu fell ill, this fresh access of grief made her so dizzy and feverish that although still worried about him she had to retire to her room to lie down. Lady Wang went back too in even greater anguish, leaving Caiyun to help Xiren, with the instructions:

"If Baoyu breaks down again, send us word at once."

Knowing that his grief must run its course, instead of trying to console him Baochai made some cutting remarks; and suspecting that she was jealous he swallowed back his tears. So the night passed without mishap.

The next morning when others came to see how he was, they found him debilitated but less distracted. They nursed him devotedly till he slowly recovered. Luckily the old lady had not fallen ill; only Lady Wang was still suffering from her heart trouble. When Aunt Xue called she was relieved to find her son-in-law looking better, and she kept the young



病，惟是王夫人心痛未痊。那日薛姨妈过来探望，看见宝玉精神略好，也就放心，暂且住下。

一日，贾母特请薛姨妈过去商量，说：“宝玉的命，都亏姨太太救的。如今想来不妨了，独委屈了你的姑娘。如今宝玉调养百日，身体复旧，又过了娘娘的功服，正好圆房：要求姨太太作主，另择个上好的吉日。”薛姨妈便道：“老太太主意很好，何必问我？宝丫头虽生的粗笨，心里却还是极明白的。他的情性，老太太素日是知道的。但愿他们两口儿言和意顺，从此老太太也省好些心，我姐姐也安慰些，我也放了心了。老太太就定个日子。——还通知亲戚不用呢？”贾母道：“宝玉和你们姑娘生来第一件大事，况且费了多少周折，如今才得安逸，必要大家热闹几天。亲戚都要请的。一来酬愿，二则咱们吃杯喜酒，也不枉我老人家操了好些心。”

薛姨妈听着，自然也是喜欢的，便将要办妆奁的话也说了一番。贾母道：“咱们亲上做亲，我想也不必这么。若说动用的，他屋里已经满了；必定宝丫头他心爱的要你几件，姨太太就拿了来。我看宝丫头也不是多心的人，比不的我那外孙女儿的脾气，所以他不得长寿。”说着，连薛姨妈也便落泪。恰好凤姐进来，笑道：“老太太姑妈又想着什么了？”薛姨妈道：“我和老太太说起你林妹妹来，所以伤心。”凤姐笑道：“老太太和姑妈且别伤心。我刚才听了个笑话儿来了，意思说给老太太和姑妈听。”贾母拭了拭眼泪，微笑道：“你又不知要编派谁呢？你说来，我和姨太太听听。说不笑，我们



couple company for a while.

Some time after this, the Lady Dowager asked Aunt Xue over for a consultation.

“We own Baoyu’s life to you,” she said. “Now he seems out of danger, but we’ve wronged your daughter. As he’s convalesced for the prescribed hundred days and recovered his health, and as the mourning for Her Imperial Highness is over too, it’s time for them to consummate their marriage. Please make the decision and choose a lucky day for this.”

“You know best, madam. Why ask me?” replied Aunt Xue. “Baochai may look stupid but she had good sense — you know what she’s like, madam. I only hope the young couple will live in harmony to spare you worry, and then my sister and I can be easy in our minds too. You settle on a date, madam.... Is there any need to notify relatives?”

“For Baoyu and your daughter, this is the biggest event in their whole lives. Besides, think of all the trouble we had before things turned out well. We must celebrate for a few days and invite all our relatives. For one thing, it’ll be a thanksgiving for Baoyu’s recovery; for another, drinking on this happy occasion will make up to us for all the worries we’ve had.”

Aunt Xue was naturally pleased by this proposal. She described the dowry she meant to give Baochai.

“I don’t think that’s necessary,” said the old lady, “as we were relatives before this marriage. Their rooms already fully furnished; but if there are any things Baochai specially likes you can bring them over, aunt. The child has never struck me as narrow-minded like Daiyu — that was what made her die so young.” At this both of them shed tears.

Just then Xifeng came in and asked with a smile. “What are you ladies discussing?”

“We were speaking about your Cousin Lin,” Aunt Xue told her. “That’s what upset us.”

“Well, don’t be upset,” Xifeng urged them. “I’ve just heard a good joke which I mean to tell you.”

The old lady wiped her tears and said with a smile, “Whom are you making fun of this time I wonder? Go ahead and tell us. But if it isn’t funny, look out!”

可不依。”只见那凤姐未从张口，先用两只手比着，笑弯了腰了。未知他说出些什么来，下回分解。





Xifeng, before she even started to speak, gesticulated with both hands and doubled up with laughter. If you want to know what she told them, read the next chapter.





## 第九十九回

守官箴恶奴同破例 阅邸报老舅自担惊

话说凤姐见贾母和薛姨妈为黛玉伤心，便说：“有个笑话儿说给老太太和姑妈听。”未从开口，先自笑了。因说道：“老太太和姑妈打谅是那里的笑话儿？就是咱们家的那二位新姑爷新媳妇啊！”贾母道：“怎么了？”凤姐拿手比着道：“一个这么坐着，一个这么站着；一个这么扭过去，一个这么转过来；一个又——”说到这里，贾母已经大笑起来，说道：“你好生说罢！倒不是他们两口儿，你倒把人恁的受不了。”薛姨妈也笑道：“你往下直说罢，不用比了。”凤姐才说道：“刚才我到宝兄弟屋里，我听见好几个人笑。我只道是谁，巴着窗户眼儿一瞧，原来宝妹妹坐在炕沿上，宝兄弟站在地下。宝兄弟拉着宝妹妹的袖子，口口声声只叫：‘宝姐姐！你为什么不会说话了？你这么说一句话，我的病包管全好！’宝妹妹却扭着头，只管躲。宝兄弟又作了一个揖，上去又拉宝妹妹的衣裳。宝妹妹急的一扯，宝兄弟自然病后是脚软的，索性一栽，栽在宝妹妹身上了。宝妹妹急的红了脸，说道：‘你越发比先不尊重了！’”说到这里，贾母和薛姨妈都笑起来。凤姐又道：“宝兄弟站起来，又笑着说：‘亏了这一栽，好容易才栽出你的话来了！’”薛姨妈笑道：“这是宝丫头古怪。这有什





## Chapter 99

### An Upright Official Has Venal Underlings A Perusal of the *Court Gazette* Fills Jia Zheng with Concern for His Nephew

Xifeng offered to tell a joke to stop the Lady Dowager and Aunt Xue from grieving over Daiyu.

"Can you ladies guess whom this joke is about?" she asked, laughing herself before embarking on it. "Our new bridegroom and his bride!"

"What's happened?" the old lady wanted to know.

"One was sitting like this, one standing like this," began Xifeng, miming. "One turned away like this, one wheeled round like this. Then one...."

The Lady Dowager burst out laughing. "Tell us properly!" she scolded. "You've named no names yet, but already you have us in stitches."

"Yes, just tell us straight out," urged Aunt Xue. "No need to act it."

Then Xifeng expatiated, "Just now I went to Cousin Bao's place and heard laughter in his room. I wondered who was there and peeped through the window. Cousin Baochai was sitting on the edge of the *kang*, with Cousin Bao standing in front of her. He pulled her sleeve and pleaded, 'Do talk to me, cousin! One word from you would cure me completely — I swear it!' But Baochai turned her head away, refusing to meet his eyes. He bowed to her then and tugged at her jacket. When she wrenched away, of course his legs were so weak after his illness that he toppled over and fell on top of her. Then blushing scarlet she scolded, 'You're getting more and more undignified!'"

The old lady and Aunt Xue laughed.

"Baoyu got up then," Xifeng went on. "He said with a grin, 'It's lucky I toppled over — that loosened your lips.'"

"How strange of Baochai," remarked Aunt Xue. "What's wrong with having a bit of fun now that they're married? Hasn't she seen how you and Lian carry on?"

"What way is that to talk?" protested Xifeng, flushing. "I was telling



么？既作了两口儿，说说笑笑的怕什么？他没见他琏二哥和你。”凤姐儿红了脸笑道：“这是怎么说？我饶说笑话儿给姑妈解闷儿，姑妈反倒拿我打起卦来了。”贾母也笑道：“要这么着才好。夫妻固然要和气，也得有个分寸儿。我爱宝丫头就在这尊重上头。只是我愁宝玉还是那么傻头傻脑的，这么说起来，比头里竟明白多了。你再说说，还有什么笑话儿没有？”凤姐道：“明儿宝玉圆了房儿，亲家太太抱了外孙子，那时候儿不更是笑话儿了么？”贾母笑道：“猴儿！我在这里和姨太太想你林妹妹，你来恁个笑儿还罢了，怎么臊起皮来了！你不叫我们想你林妹妹？你不用太高兴了，你林妹妹恨你，将来你别独自一个儿到园里去，提防他拉着你不依。”凤姐笑道：“他倒不怨我，他临死咬牙切齿，倒恨宝玉呢。”贾母薛姨妈听着还道是玩话儿，也不理会，便道：“你别胡扯拉了。你去叫外头挑个很好的日子给你宝兄弟圆了房儿罢。”凤姐答应着，又说了一回话儿，便出去叫人择了吉日，重新摆酒，唱戏，请人，不在话下。

却说宝玉虽然病好，宝钗有时高兴，翻书观看，谈论起来，宝玉所有常见的，尚可记忆，若论灵机儿，大不似先，连他自己也不解。宝钗明知是“通灵”失去，所以如此。倒是袭人时常说他：“你为什么把从前的灵机儿都没有了？倒是忘了旧毛病也好，怎么脾气还照旧，独道理上更糊涂了呢？”宝玉听了，并不生气，反是嘻嘻的笑。有时宝玉顺性胡闹，亏宝钗劝着，略觉收敛些。袭人倒可少费些唇舌，惟知悉心伏侍。别的丫头素仰宝钗贞静和平，各人心服，无不安静。



you a joke to cheer you up, aunt, but you make fun of me instead.”

The old lady chortled, “Quite right and proper too. Of course a husband and wife are fond of each other; still, they ought to keep within bounds. What I like about Baochai is her sense of dignity. I only worry because Baoyu is still such a simpleton; but judging by what you say, his mind is much clearer now. What other jokes can you tell us?”

“Soon Baoyu will have consummated his marriage, and then Aunt Xue will have a grandson to dandle — won’t that be a still better joke?”

“You monkey!” laughed the old lady. “It was all very well for you to cheer us up when we were grieving over your Cousin Lin, but now you’re getting cheeky. Do you want us to forget your Cousin Lin? You’ve no call to gloat, because she hated you; so don’t go to the Garden all alone or her ghost may pounce on you to have her revenge!”

“She bore *me* no grudge,” replied Xifeng. “It was Baoyu who made her grind her teeth with rage just before she died.”

Thinking she was still joking they paid no attention to this.

“Stop talking nonsense,” the old lady said. “Go and get people outside to choose the most auspicious day for Baoyu to round off his marriage.”

Xifeng assented and after a little more chat went off on this errand. Then invitations were sent out to a feast with operas; but no more of this.

Now although Baoyu had recovered, when Baochai happened to discuss with him some books she had been reading, he remembered those with which he was most familiar but had quite lost his former intelligence, and he himself could not account for this. Baochai attributed it to the loss of his jade of “spiritual understanding.” Xiren, however, frequently reproached him.

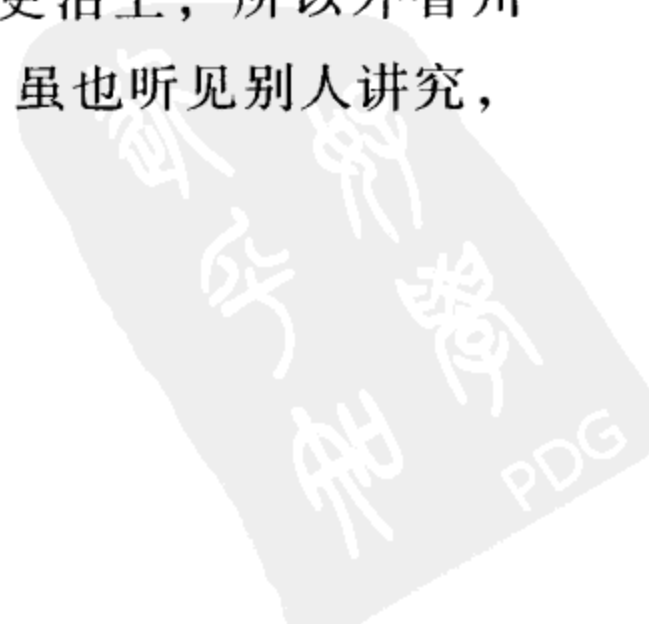
“How come you’ve lost that ready wit you used to have?” she would ask. “If you’d forgotten your foolish ways that would be fine; but you’re just as bad as before — the only change is that you’ve grown more dim-witted.”

Baoyu never flared up at these strictures, simply grinned. If he carried on wilfully, Baochai reasoned with him and managed to restrain him to some extent. Thus Xiren did not have to scold him so often and could devote herself to serving him well. The other maids also admired Baochai for her goodness and gentleness, and out of respect for her they all be-



只有宝玉到底是爱动不爱静的，时常要到园里去逛。贾母等一则怕他招受寒暑，二则恐他睹景伤情，虽黛玉之柩已寄放城外庵中，然而潇湘馆依然人亡屋在，不免勾起旧病来，所以也不使他去。况且亲戚姊妹们，薛宝琴已回到薛姨妈那边去了；史湘云因史侯回京，也接了家去了，又有了出嫁的日子，所以不大常来，只有宝玉娶亲那一日，与吃喜酒这天，来过两次，也只在贾母那边住下，为着宝玉已经娶过亲的人，又想自己就要出嫁的，也不肯如从前的诙谐谈笑，就是有时过来，也只和宝钗说话，见了宝玉，不过问好而已；那邢岫烟却是因迎春出嫁之后，便随着邢夫人过去；李家姊妹也另住在外，即同着李婶娘过来，亦不过到太太们和姐妹们处请安问好，即回到李纨那里略住一两天就去了：所以园内的只有李纨、探春、惜春了。贾母还要将李纨等挪进来，为着元妃薨后，家中事情接二连三，也无暇及此。现今天气一天热似一天，园里尚可住得，等到秋天再挪。此是后话，暂且不提。

且说贾政带了几个在京请的幕友，晓行夜宿，一日，到了本省，见过上司，即到任拜印受事，便查盘各属州县米粮仓库。贾政向来作京官，只晓得郎中事务都是一景儿的事情；就是外任，原是学差，也无关于吏治上，所以外省州县，折收粮米，勒索乡愚，这些弊端，虽也听见别人讲究，





haved well.

Baoyu, by nature restless, hankered after a stroll in the Garden. However, his grandmother was afraid that he might get over-heated there or catch cold, and that the place might upset him; for though Daiyu's coffin had been deposited in a nunnery outside town, the sight of Bamboo Lodge might bring back his earlier grief for its dead mistress. So they would not allow him to go. Besides, most of his girl cousins had left the place. Xue Baoqin had gone back to live with Aunt Xue. Shi Xiangyun had been fetched home after Marquis Shi's return to the capital, and as a date for her marriage had been fixed she seldom paid them visits, coming only for Baoyu's wedding and the later celebration, on both of which occasions she stayed with the old lady. And as Baoyu was now a married man and she would soon be married herself, she could not joke and laugh with him as before; so sometimes she just talked with Baochai, merely greeting Baoyu if they happened to meet. After Yingchun's marriage, Xing Xiuyan had gone to live with Lady Xing. The Li sisters were also living outside at present, and when they came with their mother they simply called on Their Ladyships and their girl cousins, then stayed for a couple of days with Li Wan. Thus the only inmates of the Garden now were Li Wan, Tanchun and Xichun. The old lady had meant to move them out, but after Yuanchun's death a succession of domestic troubles had left her no time to attend to this. Moreover, now that it was growing warmer, it was pleasant in the Garden and they decided not to move till autumn. We will return to this later.

Now Jia Zheng had set off from the capital with several secretaries. Travelling by day and resting at night, he finally reached his provincial post and presented himself to his superior. He then went to his office, and when the official seal had been ceremoniously made over to him he started checking up on the granaries in the districts and counties under his jurisdiction. Most of his previous posts had been in the capital, and he thought all official tasks the same, for even when appointed as examiner outside he had had no dealings with the local administration. And therefore, although he had heard of such abuses as appropriating a percentage of the grain collected and squeezing money out of the local people, he had no



却未尝身亲其事，只有一心做好官。便与幕宾商议，出示严禁，并谕以一经查出，必定详参揭报。初到之时，果然胥吏畏惧，便百计钻营；偏遇贾政这般古执。那些家人，跟了这位老爷，在都中一无出息，好容易盼到主人放了外任，便在京指着在外发财的名儿向人借贷做衣裳，装体面，心里想着到了任，银钱是容易的了。不想这位老爷呆性发作，认真要查办起来，州县馈送，一概不受。门房、签押等人，心里盘算道：“我们再挨半个月，衣裳也要当完了，账又逼起来，那可怎么样好呢？眼见得白花花的银子，只是不能到手。”那些长随也道：“你们爷们到底还没花什么本钱来的。我们才冤：花了若干的银子，打了个门子，来了一个多月，连半个钱也没见过！想来跟这个主儿是不能捞本儿的了。明儿我们齐打伙儿告假去。”次日，果然聚齐，都来告假。贾政不知就里，便说：“要来也是你们，要去也是你们。既嫌这里不好，就都请便。”

那些长随怨声载道而去，只剩下些家人，又商议道：“他们可去的去了，我们去不了的，到底想个法儿才好。”内中有一个管门的叫李十儿，便说：“你们这些没能耐的东西，着什么急呢！我见这‘长’字号儿的在这里，不犯给他出头。如今都饿跑了，瞧瞧十太爷的本领，少不得本主儿依我！只是要你们齐心，打伙儿弄几个钱，回家受用；若不随我，我



direct experience of such matters and was determined to be a good official. So in discussions with his secretaries he issued stern prohibitions, threatening to report in detail any instances of corruption that were discovered.

At the start, his subordinates were apprehensive and tried in all manner of ways to ingratiate themselves with him. However, Jia Zheng was inflexible. There had been no perquisites for his servants in the capital working for such a master, and when he was posted here they had borrowed money and made new clothes to put up a better appearance, sure that once in the provinces they would make their fortunes — the money would just roll in. But this master of theirs was so stubborn that he carried out serious investigations and refused all gifts sent by the local officials.

The yamen secretaries and scribes made a mental calculation. “Another fortnight like this,” they said, “and we’ll have to pawn all our clothes. And when our creditors dun us, what shall we do? There’s all this glittering silver under our noses, but we can’t lay hands on it.”

The attendants and runners also complained, “You gentlemen at least didn’t sink any capital into landing your posts. We’re the ones who’ve been sold out: we spent pots of silver to get these jobs, but after more than a month here we haven’t made a single cent! If we stick to this master, we shall probably never recoup our capital. Tomorrow we’re going in a group to resign.”

The following day they did this. And Jia Zheng not knowing the reason said, “You wanted to work here; now you want to leave. Since you dislike these posts, do as you please.”

The runners went off then, complaining loudly, leaving only some family stewards who talked the matter over.

“Those able to leave have gone,” they said. “But as we can’t, we must think of some way out.”

One of them, a gateman called Li Shier, scoffed, “What a useless lot you are, getting so het-up! While those runners were around, I couldn’t be bothered to give them a tip-off. Now that they’ve been starved out, I’ll show you what I can do. Our master will have to listen to me! If we just work together to make some money, we can enjoy ourselves when we get home. If you won’t do as I say, I shall wash my hands of you





也不管了，横竖拼得过你们。”众人都说：“好十爷！你还主儿信得过。若你不管，我们实在是死症了。”李十儿道：“别等我出了头，得了银钱，又说我得了大分儿了，窝儿里反起来，大家没意思。”众人道：“你万安，没有的事。就没有多少，也强似我们腰里掏钱。”

正说着，只见粮房书办走来找周二爷。李十儿坐在椅子上，跷着一只腿，挺着腰，说道：“找他做什么？”书办便垂手陪着笑，说道：“本官到了一个多月的任，这些州县太爷见得本官的告示利害，知道不好说话，到了这时候，都没有开仓。若是过了漕，你们太爷们来做什么的？”李十儿说：“你别混说，老爷是有根蒂的，说到那里是要办到那里。这两天原要行文催兑，因我说了缓几天，才歇的。你到底找我们周二爷做什么？”书办道：“原为打听催文的事，没有别的。”李十儿道：“越发胡说！方才我说催文，你就信嘴胡诌。可别鬼鬼祟祟来讲什么账，我叫本官打了你，退你！”书办道：“我在这衙门内已经三代了，外头也有些体面，家里还过得，就规规矩矩伺候本官升了还能够，不像那些等米下锅的。”说着，回了一声：“二太爷，我走了。”李十儿便站起，堆着笑说：“这么不禁玩！几句话就脸急了？”书办道：“不是我脸急，若再说什么，岂不带累了二太爷的清名呢？”李十儿过来拉着书办的手，说：“你贵姓啊？”书办道：“不敢，我姓詹，单



— I can get the better of you any day.”

“The master trusts you, Mr. Li,” said the others. “If you won’t help, we’re done for.”

“Well, after I’ve shown the way and we’ve got money, don’t complain that I’ve taken the lion’s share; because if we fall out among ourselves it will go hard with us all.”

“Don’t worry,” the rest replied. “We’d never do that. However little we get, it will be better than dipping into our own pockets.”

Just then a clerk from the granary office arrived, asking for Zhou Rui. Li Shier sat down crossing his legs, his chest thrown out, and demanded:

“What do you want him for?”

Standing at respectful attention the clerk answered. “The Grain Commissioner has been here for over a month, and in view of his strict orders the local magistrates know they can’t ask for favours, so none of them has opened the granaries yet. But once the time is up for grain to be shipped out, what will you gentlemen have come here for?”

“Don’t talk nonsense,” retorted Li. “Our master is most systematic and always keeps his word. These last two days he has been meaning to expedite the delivery. He only put it off because I asked for a few days’ delay. What do you want Mr. Zhou for anyway?”

“Just to ask about the order to expedite the delivery — that’s all.”

“Stop talking rot! You made that up because of what I just said. Don’t try any hanky-panky, or I’ll get the commissioner to have you beaten and dismissed!”

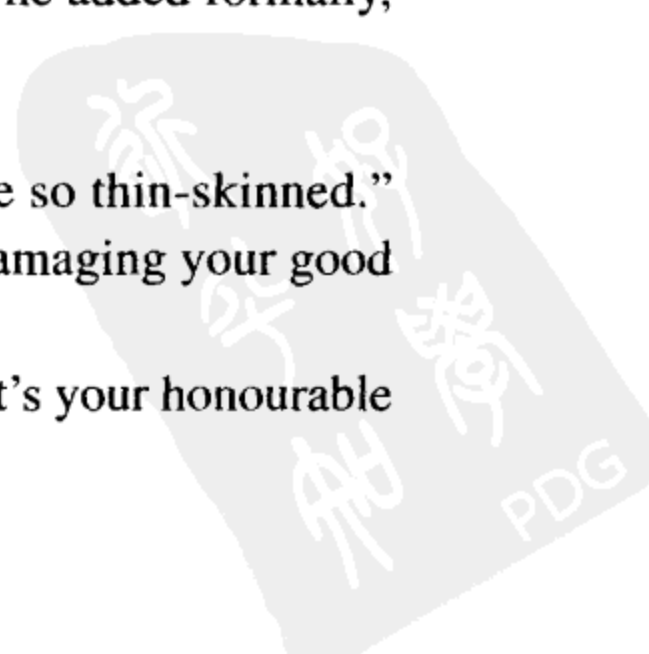
“My family has worked in this yamen for three generations,” said the clerk. “We’re respected hereabouts and not badly off; so we can afford to serve this commissioner on the level until his promotion. We’re not like those waiting for rice to put in their pan.” This said, he added formally, “I’ll take my leave of you now, sir.”

Li Shier stood up then, smiling.

“Can’t you take a joke?” he chuckled. “Don’t be so thin-skinned.”

“It’s not that. But if I say any more, won’t I be damaging your good reputation?”

Li stepped over to take his hand and asked, “What’s your honourable name?”





名是个会字。从小儿也在京里混了几年。”李十儿道：“詹先生！我是久闻你的名的。我们弟兄们是一样的。有什么话，晚上到这里，咱们说一说。”书办也说：“谁不知道李十太爷是能事的！把我一诈，就吓毛了。”大家笑着走开。那晚便与书办咕唧了半夜。

第二天，拿话去探贾政，被贾政痛骂了一顿。隔一天拜客，里头吩咐伺候，外头答应了。停了一会子，打点已经三下了，大堂上没有人接鼓，好容易叫个人来打了鼓。贾政踱出暖阁，站班喝道的衙役只有一个。贾政也不查问，在墀下上了轿，等轿夫，又等了好一回，来齐了，抬出衙门，那个炮只响得一声。吹鼓亭的鼓手，只有一个打鼓，一个吹号筒。贾政便也生气，说：“往常还好，怎么今儿不齐集至此？”抬头看那执事，却是搀前落后。勉强拜客回来，便传误班的要打。有的说因没有帽子误的；有的说是号衣当了误的；又有说是三天没吃饭抬不动的。贾政生气，打了一两个，也就罢了。

隔一天，管厨房的上来要钱，贾政将带来银两付了。以后便觉样样不如意，比在京的时候倒不便了好些，无奈，便唤李十儿问道：“跟我来这些人，怎么都变了？你也管管。现





“Zhan Hui, sir. In my young days I worked in the capital for a few years.”

“Mr. Zhan! I’ve long heard of you. We brothers here are in accord. If you have some proposal, come over this evening and we can talk it over.”

“We all know how sharp you are, Mr. Li. You had me scared stiff just now!”

They all laughed then and dispersed. But that evening Li had a long talk with the clerk.

The next morning Li Shier made some suggestions to sound out Jia Zheng, who reprimanded him sternly.

The day after, Jia Zheng gave orders for attendants to escort him out to pay calls, and the servants outside assented. Some time went by during which the gong sounded three times, but they had trouble finding a man to beat the drum in the hall, and when Jia Zheng stepped out of the vestibule, there was only one runner on duty to clear the way. Letting this pass, he mounted his sedan-chair in the porch; but again he had to wait quite a while for the bearers to assemble; and when they carried him out of the yamen gate the gun fired only one salute, moreover on the bandstand there were only one drummer and one trumpeter. At this Jia Zheng lost his temper.

“Things used to be orderly enough,” he exclaimed. “Why are there so many absentees today?”

He took a look at his retinue — the men were slouching and straggling. None the less he went through with his round of calls, on his return ordering the absentees to be summoned and given a beating. Some pleaded that they had mislaid their hats, pawned their uniforms, or were too weak to carry his chair because they had eaten nothing for three days. In anger he had one or two of them flogged, then let the matter drop.

A day later, when the steward in charge of the kitchen came with a request for money, Jia Zheng had to pay him out of his own pocket. But after that things went from bad to worse — compared with this, it had been plain sailing in the capital. In desperation he summoned Li Shier.

“What’s come over those servants who accompanied me here?” he asked. “It’s your job to discipline them. The silver we brought was spent



在带来银两，早使没有了。藩库俸银尚早，该打发京里取去。”李十儿禀道：“奴才那一天不说他们？不知道怎么样，这些人都是没精打彩的，叫奴才也没法儿。老爷说家里取银子，取多少？现在打听节度衙门这几天有生日，别的府道老爷都上千上万的送了，我们到底送多少呢？”贾政道：“为什么不早说？”李十儿说：“老爷最圣明的。我们新来乍到，又不与别位老爷很来往，谁肯送信？巴不得老爷不去，好想老爷的美缺呢。”贾政道：“胡说！我这官是皇上放的，不给节度做生日，便叫我不做不成！”李十儿笑着回道：“老爷说的也不错。京里离这里很远，凡百的事，都是节度奏闻。他说好便好，说不好便吃不住。到得明白，已经迟了。就是老太太、太太们，那个不愿意老爷在外头烈烈轰轰的做官呢？”

贾政听了这话，也自然心里明白，道：“我正要问你，为什么不说起来？”李十儿回说：“奴才本不敢说，老爷既问到这里，若不说，是奴才没良心；若说了，少不得老爷又生气。”贾政道：“只要说得在理。”李十儿说道：“那些书吏衙役，都是花了钱买着粮道的衙门，那个不想发财？俱要养家活口。自从老爷到任，并没见为国家出力，倒先有了口碑载道。”贾政道：“民间有什么话？”李十儿道：“百姓说：‘凡有新到任的老爷，告示出的越利害，越是想钱的法儿。州县害怕了，好多多的送银子。’收粮的时候，衙门里便说，新道爷





days ago, and it's not yet time to draw the allowance from the provincial treasury. We shall have to send to the capital for more."

"Not a day has passed without my pulling them up," replied Li. "But somehow or other they're all so dispirited there's nothing I can do about it, sir. How much money does Your Lordship want us to fetch from home? I've heard that the governor will be celebrating his birthday in a few days, and all the other officials are sending him thousands of taels. How much shall we send?"

"Why didn't you tell me earlier?"

"You know how it is, sir. We're new here and haven't had much to do with those other gentlemen; so why should they send us word? They're only hoping you won't call to congratulate him, sir; so that when you're dismissed they can get your lucrative post."

"Nonsense!" Jia Zheng retorted. "I was appointed by His Majesty. The governor can't dismiss me just because I fail to congratulate him on his birthday."

"You're right, of course, sir," replied Li with a smile. "But the capital is far away, and it's the governor who reports on everything here. If he commends you, you are a good official; if he finds fault you're likely to lose your job. By the time the court learns the truth, it is too late. Our old lady and the other mistresses are all longing for you to have a magnificent success here."

Jia Zheng of course understood his drift.

"Why didn't you tell me earlier?" he repeated.

"I dared not, sir. Now that you ask me, it's my duty to speak; but if I do, most likely you will be angry."

"Not if what you say makes sense."

"Those clerks and runners all bribed their way into this yamen; so of course they all want to feather their nests," Li explained. "They have families to support. Since you came to this post, sir, and before you've achieved anything for the state, there's already been talk."

"What are people saying?"

"The common folk say, 'The stricter the orders a new official gives, the more grasping he will be. The more frightened the county officials, the bigger the bribes they'll send in.'"

的法令；明是不敢要钱，这一留难切蹉，那些乡民心里愿意花几个钱，早早了事。所以那些人不说老爷好，反说不谙民情。便是本家大人，是老爷最相好的，他不多几年，已巴到极顶的分儿，也只为识时达务，能够上和下睦罢了。”贾政听到这话，道：“胡说！我就不识时务吗？若是上和下睦，叫我与他们‘猫鼠同眠’吗？”李十儿回说道：“奴才为着这点心儿不敢掩住，才这么说。若是老爷就是这样做去，到了功不成、名不就的时候，老爷说奴才没良心，有什么话，不告诉老爷。”

贾政道：“依你怎么做才好？”李十儿道：“也没有别的，趁着老爷的精神年纪，里头的照应，老太太的硬朗，为顾着自己就是了。不然，到不了一年，老爷家里的钱也都贴补完了，还落了自上至下的人抱怨，都说老爷是做外任的，自然弄了钱藏着受用。倘遇着一两件为难的事，谁肯帮着老爷？那时办也办不清，悔也悔不及！”贾政道：“据你一说，是叫我做贪官吗？送了命还不要紧，必定将祖父的功勋抹了才是？”李十儿回禀道：“老爷极圣明的人，没看见旧年犯事的几位老爷吗？这几位都与老爷相好，老爷常说是个做清官的，如今名在那里？现在几位亲戚，老爷向来说他们不好的，如今升的升，迁的迁。只在要做的好就是了。老爷要知道：民也要顾，官也要顾。若是依着老爷，不准州县得一个大钱，外头这些差使谁办？只要老爷外面还是这样清名声原好；里头的委屈，只有奴才办去，关碍不着老爷的。奴才跟



“When the time comes to levy grain, your yamen officials say they have orders from the new commissioner not to accept any money, and this makes it difficult for those country people who’d rather grease their palms and be done with it. So instead of praising you, sir, they complain that you don’t understand the situation. But your close friend and kinsman has climbed to the top in just a few years, simply because he has the good sense to please both his superiors and his inferiors”

“Rubbish,” protested Jia Zheng. “Are you implying that I lack sense? As for pleasing both superiors and inferiors, do you want me to connive with rogues — to be ‘a cat sleeping with rats’?”

“I spoke frankly, sir, out of concern for you, not wanting to keep anything back,” Li answered. “If you were to go on like this till you had no achievements to your credit and your reputation was damaged, you could accuse me of disloyalty for not putting the facts before you.”

“What would you do in my place?”

“Just this, sir. While you’re in your prime, with friends at court and the old lady in good health, look after your own interests. Otherwise, in less than a year you’ll have spent all your family’s money and made those above and below resent you too. They’ll all assume that in this provincial post Your Lordship must be salting money away. So if some trouble crops up, who’s going to help you? By then it will be hard to clear yourself’ and too late to regret!”

“Are you advising me to become a corrupt official? Forfeiting my life would be of less consequence, but would you have my ancestors deprived of their noble titles?”

“A gentleman of your discernment, sir, must surely have noticed which officials have landed in trouble in recent years. All old friends of Your Lordship’s they were, and you often remarked on their probity; but now what has become of their good name? On the other hand, some relatives whom you have always run down have been promoted. It all depends on how well one handles things. You must understand the need, sir, to care for the local officials as well as for the people. Why, if you had your way, sir, and wouldn’t let the local magistrates make a cent, who would handle all the work in the provinces? All you need to do is keep up appearances, living up to your good name as an honest official, while in private we





主儿一场，到底也要掏出良心来。”贾政被李十儿一番言语，说得心无主见，道：“我要是保性命的！你们闹出来不与我相干！”说着，便踱了进去。

李十儿便自己做起威福，钩连内外一气的哄着贾政办事，反觉得事事周到，件件随心，所以贾政不但不疑，反都相信。便有几处揭报，上司见贾政古朴忠厚，也不查察。惟是幕友们耳目最长，见得如此，得使用言规谏，无奈贾政不信，也有辞去的，也有与贾政相好在内维持的。于是，漕务事毕，尚无限越。

一日，贾政无事；在书房中看书，签押上呈进一封书子，外面官封，上开着“镇守海门等处总制公文一角，飞递江西粮道衙门”。贾政拆封看时，只见上写道：

金陵契好，桑梓情深。昨岁供职来都，窃喜常依座右；仰蒙雅爱，许结“朱陈”，至今佩德勿援。只因调任海疆，未敢造次奉求，衷怀歉仄，自叹无缘。今幸荣戟遥临，快慰平生之愿；正申燕贺，先蒙翰教，边帐光生，武夫额手；虽隔重洋，尚叨樾荫。想蒙不弃卑寒，希望莛萝之附；小儿已承青盼，淑媛素仰芳仪。如蒙践诺，即遣冰人。途路虽遥，一水可通；不敢云百辆之迎，敬备仙舟以俟。兹修寸幅，恭贺升祺，并求金允。临颖不胜待命之至！

世弟周琼顿首。



underlings get the job done and take whatever blame there may be without involving Your Lordship. We have been so long in your service, sir, you can surely rest assured of our loyalty.”

Jia Zheng did not know what rejoinder to make to this.

“I can’t risk my life!” he exclaimed. “If you get into trouble, I won’t be responsible.” He then retired to his room.

After that Li Shier assumed great airs, conniving with others inside and outside the yamen to handle affairs unbeknown to Jia Zheng, who felt so satisfied that all was going smoothly that, far from suspecting Li, he trusted him completely. Certain accusations were brought against his office, but in view of Jia Zheng’s austerity and honesty his superiors made no investigations. Only some of his secretaries who were well informed warned him what was happening; and when he did not believe them some resigned while those on good terms with him remained to help out. So the government grain was collected and shipped off without any scandal.

One day Jia Zheng was reading at leisure in his study when a clerk brought in a missive. It bore an official seal and the inscription: Urgent Despatch from the Garrison Command of Haimen to the Yamen of the Grain Commissioner of Jiangxi. Jia Zheng opened it and read:

Your old friend and fellow-provincial from Jinling, I was posted to the capital last year, delighted to be near you; and you did me the honour, for which I shall ever be grateful, to agree to link our families by marriage. But after my transfer to this coastal district I did not venture to pursue the matter, and with deep regret lamented my misfortune. Now that you have luckily travelled all this distance, my lifelong wish is fulfilled. I was about to send my congratulations when your gracious letter arrived, shedding lustre on our camp and on me, a mere soldier; for though we are separated by the ocean I am still favoured by your protection. Trusting that you will not spurn my low position, I aspire to connect myself with your family; as you have looked upon my son with favour and we have always admired your refined daughter. If you condescend to honour your earlier promise, I shall send the go-between immediately. Though the journey is far, it can be made by boat; and though we cannot welcome the bride with a hundred chariots, we have a barque ready for the fairy maid. So I write this short letter to wish you further promotion and beg for your gracious

贾政看了，心想：“儿女姻缘，果然有一定的。旧年因见他就了京职，又是同乡的人，素来相好，又见那孩子长得好，在席间原提起这件事。因未说定，也没有与他们说起。后来他调了海疆，大家也不说了。不料我今升任至此，他写书来问。我看起门户，却也相当，与探春到也相配。但是我并未带家眷，只可写字与他商议。”正在踌躇，只见门上传进一角文书，是议取到省会议事件，贾政只得收拾上省，候节度派委。

一日，在公馆闲坐，见桌上堆着许多邸报。贾政一一看去，见刑部一本：“为报明事，会看得金陵籍行商薛蟠……”贾政便吃惊道：“了不得！已经提本了！”随用心看下去，是薛蟠毆伤张三身死，串嘱尸证，捏供误杀一案。贾政一拍桌道：“完了！”只得又看底下，是：

据京营节度使咨称：“缘薛蟠籍隶金陵，行过太平县，在李家店歇宿，与店内当槽之张三素不相认。于某年月日，薛蟠令店主备酒邀请太平县民吴良同饮，令当槽张三取酒。因酒不甘，薛蟠令换好酒。张三因称酒已沽定，难换。薛蟠因伊倔强，将酒照脸泼去，不期去势甚猛，恰值张三低头拾箸，一时失手，将酒碗掷在张三凶门，皮破血出，逾时殒命。李店主趋救不及，随向张三之母告知。伊母张王氏往看，见已身死，随喊禀地保，赴县呈报。前署县诣验，作作将骨破一寸三分及腰眼一伤，漏报填格，详府审转。看得薛蟠实系泼酒失手，掷碗误伤张三身死，将薛蟠照过失杀人，准斗杀罪收





consent. Eagerly awaiting your reply!

Your younger brother Zhou Qiong.

Having read this, Jia Zheng reflected, "One's children's marriages do seem to be fated. I met him last year when he took up a metropolitan post, and as he took up a metropolitan post, and as he was a fellow-provincial and an old friend and I was struck by his son's handsome appearance I proposed this match at a feast, but said nothing about it to the family as it was not finally settled. When he was transferred to the coast we let the matter drop. Now I have been assigned here and he has sent this request. I consider our families well matched and think this should be a good marriage for Tanchun. However, since the family is not here I must write back to consult them."

As he was mulling this over, then gatekeeper brought him a summons to the provincial capital to discuss some business with the governor. He had to make ready at once and proceed to the city to await the governor's orders.

Resting in his hostel one day, Jia Zheng started reading through a pile of *Court Gazettes* on his desk and found a report from the Board of Punishments which dealt with "the merchant Xue Pan of Jinling."

"This is disastrous!" he exclaimed. "They've referred the matter up!"

He read carefully through the account of how Xue Pan had killed Zhang San in a brawl, then bribed the witnesses to make it out a case of manslaughter.

"He's done for!" he cried, pounding the desk with his fist.

He then read on as follows:

The Garrison Commander of the capital reported: "Xue Pan, a native of Jinling, while travelling through Taiping County put up in Li Family Hostel. He had no previous acquaintance with the waiter Zhang San. On the day in question, Xue Pan ordered the inn-keeper to prepare wine and invited Wu Liang of Taiping County to drink with him. He sent Zhang San for the wine, but it was sour and he called for something better. Zhang San said that once he had bought it they could not change it and, annoyed by his insolence, Xue Pan dashed the wine in the waiter's face so fiercely that his hand slipped and the bowl hit Zhang San's temple just



赎。”等因前来。臣等细阅各犯证尸亲前后供词不符，且查斗杀律注云：相争为斗，相打为殴。必实无争斗情形，邂逅身死，方可以过失杀定拟。应令该节度审明实情，妥拟具题。今据该节度疏称薛蟠因张三不肯换酒，醉后拉着张三右手，先殴腰眼一拳，张三被殴回骂，薛蟠将碗掷出，致伤凶门深重，骨碎脑破，立时殒命。是张三之死实由薛蟠以酒碗砸伤深重致死，自应以薛蟠拟抵，将薛蟠依斗杀律拟绞监候。吴良拟以杖徒。承审不实之府州县，应请……

以下注着“此稿未完”。

贾政因薛姨妈之托，曾托过知县；若请旨革审起来，牵连着自己，好不放心。即将下一本开看，偏又不是，只好翻来复去，将报看完，终没有接这一本的，心中狐疑不定，更加害怕起来。正在纳闷，只见李十儿进来：“请老爷到官厅伺





as he was stooping to pick up some chopsticks. The skin was broken, blood spurted out, and very soon he died. When the innkeeper could not revive him, he informed Zhang San's mother, who finding her son dead called in the local bailiff and reported the matter to the county yamen. The report of the post-mortem which they sent to the prefecture omitted to mention that the blow on the temple cracked the skull, making a gash one-third of an inch deep, and that there was another bruise in the small of his back. Apparently Xue Pan's hand did slip when he threw the wine, and the blow from the bowl accidentally killed Zhang San. So Xue Pan was convicted of manslaughter during a quarrel, and kept in custody until the payment of an indemnity."

A careful study of all the statements made by the culprits, Witnesses and dead man's relatives reveals that they are full of discrepancies. Furthermore, there is this proviso to the ruling on death through brawls: When two men grapple together it is a brawl; only when there is no brawl and the one killed is a stranger to his slayer can it be considered as manslaughter. So we ordered the Garrison Commander to ascertain the true facts and report back.

Now we hear from the Garrison Commander that it was because Zhang San refused to change the wine that Xue Pan, who was tipsy, seized his right hand and struck him first in the small of the back. When Zhang San cursed him for this, Xue Pan threw the bowl at him, gashing his temple and cracking his skull so that his brains spilled not and he died on the spot. This means that Xue Pan killed Zhang San by striking him with the wine bowl and he should pay with his life. For this crime, the law decrees death by strangulation, pending Imperial review. Wu Liang should be flogged and sentenced to hard labour. The prefectual and county magistrates who sent in false reports....

Below this was appended: To be continued.

Since Aunt Xue had enlisted Jia Zheng's help and he had appealed to the magistrate, if the court was asked to punish these officials he might find himself involved. He was very worried. He picked up the next issue of the gazette, but it was not the right one; and although he looked through the whole pile he could not find the sequel to this report. His heart misgave him. He was brooding over this with growing apprehension when Li Shier entered.

"Will Your Lordship please go to the government office," he said.



候去，大人衙门已经打了二鼓了。”贾政只是发怔，没有听见。李十儿又请一遍。贾政道：“这便怎么处？”李十儿道：“老爷有什么心事？”贾政将看报之事说了一遍。李十儿道：“老爷放心。若是部里这么办了，还算便宜薛大爷呢！奴才在京的时候，听见薛大爷在店里叫了好些媳妇儿，都喝醉了生事，直把个当槽儿的活活儿打死了。奴才听见不但是托了知县，还求璉二爷去花了好些钱，各衙门打通了，才提的，不知道怎么部里没有弄明白。如今就是闹破了，也是官官相护的，不过认个承审不实，革职处分罢咧，那里还肯认得银子听情的话呢？老爷不用想，等奴才再打听罢，倒别误了上司的事。”贾政道：“你们那里知道？只可惜那知县听了一个情，把这个官都丢了，还不知道有罪没有罪！”李十儿道：“如今想他也无益，外头伺候着好半天了，请老爷就去罢。”贾政不知节度传办何事，且听下回分解。





“The drum has sounded twice in the governor’s yamen.”

As Jia Zheng was too lost in thought to hear him, Li had to repeat his message.

“What am I to do?” muttered Jia Zheng.

“Have you something on your mind, sir?”

Jia Zheng told him what he had read in the gazette.

“Don’t worry, sir,” Li rejoined. “If this is how the Board’s handled it, Master Xue has got off lightly! Back in the capital, I heard that Master Xue fetched a lot of women to the inn, all drunk and disorderly, and he beat the waiter to death. Not only was the magistrate bribed, they told me, but Master Lian had to spend a lot of money squaring the different yamens before the case was sent up. I can’t think why the Board didn’t get it straight.

“But even if it’s come out now, officials protect each other. At most they’ll admit that they didn’t get the facts right, for which they will simply be dismissed or penalized. They’ll never own up to having taken bribes. Don’t let it weigh on your mind, sir. I’ll find out more for you presently, but don’t keep the governor waiting.”

“You don’t understand,” said Jia Zheng. “It’ll be too bad if the magistrate loses his post, and may even be otherwise penalized too, just for doing us a favour.”

“Well, worrying won’t help. They’ve been waiting outside for a long time; please go now, sir.”

To know what the governor wanted with Jia Zheng, you must read the following chapter.





## 第一百回

破好事香菱结深恨 悲远嫁宝玉感离情

话说贾政去见节度，进去了半日，不见出来，外头议论不一。李十儿在外也打听不出什么事来，便想到报上的饥荒，实在也着急。好容易听见贾政出来了，便迎上来跟着，等不得回去，在无人处，便问：“老爷进去这半天，有什么要紧的事？”贾政笑道：“并没有事。只为镇海总制是这位大人的亲戚，有书来嘱托照应我，所以说了些好话。又说：‘我们如今也是亲戚了。’”李十儿听得，心内喜欢，不免又壮了些胆子，便竭力怂恿贾政许这亲事。

贾政心想，薛蟠的事到底有什么挂碍，在外头信息不通难以打点，故回到本任来便打发家人进京打听；顺便将总制求亲之事回明贾母，如若愿意，即将三姑娘接到任所。家人奉命，赶到京中回明了王夫人，便在吏部打听得贾政并无处分，惟将署太平县的这位老爷革职。即写了禀帖，安慰了贾政，然后住着等信。

且说薛姨妈为着薛蟠这件人命官司，各衙门内不知花了多少银钱，才定了误杀具题。原打量将当铺折变给人，备银赎罪，不想刑部驳审，又托人花了好些钱，总不中用，依旧



## Chapter 100

### By Frustrating Jingui Xiangling Makes a Worse Enemy of Her Baoyu Grieves Over Tanchun's Departure to Marry Far from Home

Jia Zheng remained so long with the governor that the attendants outside started speculating what the reason could be; and when Li Shier could get hold of no information, he remembered the ominous report in the *Court Gazette* and began to be really worried. At last Jia Zheng emerged, and Li escorted him back. On the way, when no one else was near, he asked:

"Was it urgent business that kept you there so long, sir?"

"Nothing of consequence," replied Jia Zheng with a smile. "The garrison commander of Haimen is related to the governor and has written recommending me to him. For this reason, the governor paid me some compliments and said, 'Now we are relatives too.'"

Pleased and emboldened by this, Li urged him to agree to the garrison commander's proposal. However, Jia Zheng was still afraid that he might be implicated in Xue Pan's case. Being so far away, cut off from news and in no position to cope with emergencies, on his return to his office he lost no time in sending a servant to the capital to find out the situation and tell the Lady Dowager about the garrison commander's proposal. If she agreed to it, Tanchun could be sent to him.

The servant travelled post-haste to the capital. Having made his report to Lady Wang, he found out from the Ministry of Civil Affairs that Jia Zheng was in no trouble — only the magistrate of Taiping County had been dismissed from his post. He sent word of this to Jia Zheng to relieve his mind, then stayed on to await further developments.

Now Aunt Xue had spent huge sums bribing the yamens dealing with Xue Pan's case to bring in a verdict of manslaughter, not murder. She had planned to sell a pawnshop to raise the ransom for him; but now that

定了个死罪，监着守候秋天大审。薛姨妈又气又疼，日夜啼哭。宝钗虽时常过来劝解，说是：“哥哥本来没造化！承受了祖父这些家业，就该安安顿顿的守着过日子。在南边已经闹的不像样，便是香菱那件事情，就了不得。因为仗着亲戚们的势力，花了些银钱，这算白打死了一个公子。哥哥就该改过，做起正经人来，也该奉养母亲才是，不想进了京仍是这样。妈妈为他，不知受了多少气，哭掉了多少眼泪。给他娶了亲，原想大家安安逸逸的过日子，不想命该如此，偏偏娶的嫂子又是一个不安静的，所以哥哥躲出门去。真正俗语说的，‘冤家路儿狭’，不多几天就闹出人命来了！妈妈和二哥哥也算不得不尽心的了：花了银钱不算，自己还求三拜四的谋干。无奈命里应该，也算自作自受。大凡养儿女是为着老来有靠，便是小户人家，还要挣一碗饭养活母亲；那里有将现成的闹光了，反害的老人家哭的死去活来的？不是我说，哥哥的这样行为，不是儿子，竟是个冤家对头。妈妈再不明白，明哭到夜，夜哭到明，又受嫂子的气。我呢，又不能常在这里劝解。我看见妈妈这样，那里放得下心！他虽说是傻，也不肯叫我回去。前儿老爷打发人回来说，看见京报，唬的了不得，所以才叫人来打点的。我想哥哥闹了事，担心的人也不少。幸亏我还是在跟前的一样；若是离乡调远，听见了这个信，只怕我想妈妈也就想杀了！我求妈妈暂且养养神，趁哥哥的活口现在，问问各处的账目。人家该咱们的，咱们该人家的，亦该请个旧伙计来算一算，看看还有几个钱

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the Board of Punishments had unexpectedly reversed the verdict, she had to spend still more on bribes, all in vain — Xue Pan remained sentenced to death and immured in prison pending the Major Sessions in the autumn. Aunt Xue wept day and night for rage and grief.

“Brother was born ill-fated,” Baochai kept telling her to comfort her. “Inheriting so much property, he should have lived quietly, minding his own business. Instead he carried on scandalously down south, behaving so disgracefully over Xiangling. It was only because of his powerful connections and money that he got away with killing that young gentleman. He should have turned over a new leaf then, and taken good care of you; but here in the capital he carried on just as before. Goodness knows how often he’s provoked you, mother, how many tears he’s made you shed.

“Then you got him a wife, and we thought we could all live in peace; but it was his fate to marry such a shrew that he left home to avoid her. As the proverb says, ‘Foes are fated to meet’ — before very long he killed a man again!

“You and Cousin Ke have done all you could for him: spending money and begging this one and that one to help. But there’s no escaping fate, and he brought this on himself. People bring up children as props for their old age, and even the son of a poor family will work to support his mother. What good is one who squanders his whole inheritance and breaks his old mother’s heart?

“Maybe I shouldn’t say this, but the way brother behaves he isn’t your son but your enemy. If you don’t wake up to this, you’ll keep crying from dawn till dusk, from dusk till dawn, and have more to put up with from sister-in-law as well. As for me, I can’t always be here to smooth things over, for though Baoyu’s a simpleton he won’t let me stay here. But it makes me so worried seeing you like this!

“The other day the master sent to tell us how alarmed he was after reading the *Court Gazette*: that’s why he sent a servant to see to things. I’m sure lots of people are anxious over this trouble brother’s made. I’m lucky to be so close to you still. If I heard this news far away, I’d worry myself to death thinking about you! So do calm down, mother, and while brother’s still alive check up on the various accounts. Get the old accountant to reckon up how much is owed to us and how much we owe,



没有。”薛姨妈哭着说道：“这几天为闹你哥哥的事，你来了，不是你劝我，就是我告诉你衙门的事。你还不知道：京里官商的名字已经退了，两个当铺已经给了人家，银子早拿来使完了。还有一个当铺，管事的逃了，亏空了好几千两银子，也夹在里头打官司。你二哥哥天天在外头要账，料着京里的账已经去了几万银子，只好拿南边公分里银子和住房折变才够。前两天还听见一个荒信，说是南边的公分当铺也因为折了本儿收了。要是这么着，你娘的命可就活不成了！”说着，又大哭起来。

宝钗也哭着劝道：“银钱的事，妈妈操心也不中用，还有二哥哥给我们料理。单可恨这些伙计们，见咱们的势头儿败了，各自奔各自的去也罢了，我还听见说帮着人家来挤我们的讹头。可见我哥哥活了这么大，交的人总不过是些个酒肉弟兄，急难中是一个没有的。妈妈要是疼我，听我的话：有年纪的人自己保重些；妈妈这一辈子想来还不至挨冻受饿。家里这点子衣裳家伙，只好任凭嫂子去，那是没法儿的了。所有的家人老婆们，瞧他们也没心在这里了，该去的叫他们去。只可怜香菱苦了一辈子，只好跟着妈妈。实在短什么，我要是有的，还可以拿些个来；料我们那个也没有不依的。就是袭姑娘也是心术正道的，他听见咱们家的事，他倒提起妈妈来就哭。我们那一个还打量没事的，所以不大着急；要听见了，也是要唬个半死儿的。”薛姨妈不等说完，便说：“好姑娘！你可别告诉他！他为一个林姑娘，几乎没要了命，如今才好些。要是他急出个原故来，不但你添一层烦恼，



so as to see how much money there is left.

“These days we’ve been so upset about your brother,” said Aunt Xue tearfully, “whenever you came, if you weren’t consoling me I was telling you what had happened in the yamen; so I didn’t let you know. We’ve already lost the title of Court Purveyor in the capital, and we’ve sold two of our pawnshops — the proceeds went long ago. We still have one pawnshop left, but its manager has absconded with several thousand taels, for which we’re suing him. Your Cousin Ke outside asks every day for more money, and we must have spent tens of thousands from our funds in the capital. We can only make up the deficit by drawing silver from our clan funds down south and by selling our houses there. But only the other day we heard a rumour that our clan pawnshop in Jinling has been confiscated too, because it went bankrupt. If this is true, what’s your poor mother to live on?” She broke down and sobbed.

“It’s no use worrying about money matters, mother,” said Baochai, in tears herself. “Cousin Ke will see to them for us. But how hateful of those assistants! When they see us come down in the world they strike out on their own; and some of them, so I’ve heard, help other people to squeeze us. This shows that all these years the only friends brother had made are wine-and-meat ones, not one of whom stands by him in time of trouble.

“If you’re fond of me, mother, take my advice and now that you’re old take better care of your health. I can’t believe you’ll ever go cold or hungry. What little clothing and furniture there is here, you’ll simply have to let sister-in-law do as she likes with. I don’t suppose the servants want to stay on, so if they ask to leave just let them go. Poor Xiangling has had a hard life; you’ll have to keep her with you. If you’re short of anything. I’ll provide it if I can — I don’t imagine Baoyu will object. Xiren is a good sort too. When she heard of our family trouble she spoke of you with tears. He’s not upset, not knowing that anything’s amiss. If he knew, he would be frantic....”

“Don’t tell him, there’s a good child,” Aunt Xue cut in. “He nearly died because of Daiyu, and he’s only just recovering. If he’s upset and anything happens to him, you’ll have more to worry about and I shall have fewer people to whom to turn.”



我越发没了依靠了！”宝钗道：“我也是这么想，所以总没告诉他。”

正说着，只听见金桂跑来外间屋里哭喊道：“我的命是不要的了！男人呢，已经是没有活的分儿了！咱们如今索性闹一闹，大伙儿到法场上去拼一拼！”说着，便将头往隔断板上乱撞，撞的披头散发。气的薛姨妈白瞪着两只眼，一句话也说不出。还亏了宝钗“嫂子”长、“嫂子”短、好一句、歹一句的劝他。金桂道：“姑奶奶！如今你是比不得头里的了。你两口儿好好的过日子，我是个单身人儿，要脸做什么！”说着，就要跑到街上回娘家去。亏了人还多，拉住了，又劝了半天方住。把个宝琴唬的再不敢见他。若是薛蝌在家，他便抹粉施脂，描眉画鬓，奇情异致的打扮收拾起来。不时打从薛蝌住房前过，或故意咳嗽一声，明知薛蝌在屋里，特问房里是谁；有时遇见薛蝌，他便妖妖调调、娇娇痴痴的问寒问暖，忽喜忽嗔。丫头们看见，都连忙躲开。他自己也不觉得，只是一心一意要弄的薛蝌感情时，好行宝蟾之计。那薛蝌却只躲着，有时遇见也不敢不周旋他，倒是怕他撒泼放刁的意思。更加金桂一则为色迷心，越瞧越爱，越想越幻，那里还看的出薛蝌的真假来？只有一宗，他见薛蝌有什么东西都是托香菱收着；衣服缝洗，也是香菱；两个人偶然说话，他来了，急忙散开：一发动了一个“醋”字。欲待发作薛蝌，却是舍不得，只得将一腔隐恨都搁在香菱身上。却又恐怕闹了香菱得罪了薛蝌，倒弄的隐忍不发。

一日，宝蟾走来，笑嘻嘻的向金桂道：“奶奶，看见了二



"That's what I think," answered Baochai. "That's why I never told him."

Just then they heard Jingui storm into the outer room.

"I want to die and be done with it!" she shrieked. "My man's as good as dead! We may as well make a scene, all going to the execution ground for a show-down!"

She banged her head on the partition until her hair was all tousled. Aunt Xue could only glare in rage, unable to get a word out. It was Baochai who begged Jingui to be reasonable.

"Dear sister-in-law!" sneered Jingui. "You're no longer part of this household. You're living in comfort with that husband of yours, but I'm all on my own — I needn't care about appearances!"

She threatened to rush out, back to her mother's home. Fortunately there were enough of them there to restrain her and talk her round so that, eventually, she left off storming. But Baoqin was so terrified that she kept out of her way.

Whenever Xue Ke was at home, Jingui would rouge and powder her face, paint her eyebrows, deck her hair and dress up like a vamp. She kept passing his room, coughing deliberately; and though well aware that he was inside, she would make a point of asking who was there. When they met, she would ogle him and ask coyly after his health, simpering and pouting by turns. The maids who saw her hastily scurried away. But disregarding appearances, she set her whole heart on enticing Xue Ke, to carry out Baochan's plan.

Xue Ke did his best to avoid her, but when they happened to meet he made a show of cordiality for fear that otherwise she might make a scene. And Jingui, besotted by her infatuation, indulged in the wildest fantasies which blinded her to his real attitude to her. She noticed, though, that Xue Ke left his things in Xiangling's keeping and that she was the one who washed and made clothes for him; while if Jingui chanced to find them talking together, they hastily parted company. This made her jealous. Not liking to vent her anger on Xue Ke she focused it on Xiangling. But afraid to offend him by quarrelling openly with her, she hid her resentment.

One day Baochan came to her, smiling all over her face.

"Have you seen Master Ke, madam?" she asked.





爷没有？”金桂道：“没有。”宝蟾笑道：“我说二爷的那种假正经是信不得的。咱们前儿送了酒去，他说不会喝，刚才我见他到太太那屋里去，脸上红扑扑儿的一脸酒气。奶奶不信，回来只在咱们院子门口儿等他。他打那边过来，奶奶叫住他问问，看他说什么。”金桂听了，一心的恼意，便道：“他那里就出来了呢？他既无情义，问他作什么？”宝蟾道：“奶奶又迂了。他好说，咱们也好说；他不好说，咱们再另打主意。”金桂听着有理，因叫宝蟾：“瞧着他，看他出去了。”宝蟾答应着出来，金桂却去打开镜奁，又照了一照，把嘴唇儿又抹了一抹，然后拿一条洒花绢子，才要出来，又像忘了什么的，心里倒不知怎么是好了。只听宝蟾外面说道：“二爷，今日高兴啊！那里喝了酒来了？”金桂听了，明知是叫他出来的意思，连忙掀起帘子出来。只见薛蝌和宝蟾说道：“今日是张大爷的好日子，所以被他们强不过，吃了半钟。到这时候脸还发烧呢。”一句话没说完，金桂早接口道：“自然人家外人的酒比咱们自己家里的酒是有趣儿的！”薛蝌被他拿话一激，脸越红了，连忙走过来陪笑道：“嫂子说那里的话？”宝蟾见他二人交谈，便躲到屋里去了。这金桂初时原要假意发作薛蝌两句，无奈一见他两颊微红，双眸带涩，别有一种谨愿可怜之意，早把自己那骄悍之气，感化到爪哇国去了，因笑说道：“这么说，你的酒是硬强着才肯喝的呢！”薛蝌道：“我那里喝得来？”金桂道：“不喝也好，强如像你哥哥喝出乱子来，明儿娶了你们奶奶儿，象我这样守活寡受孤单呢！”说到这里，两个眼已经乜斜了，两腮上也觉红晕了。薛蝌见这话越发邪僻了，打算着要走。金桂也看出来，那里容



“No,” said Jingui.

“I told you not to believe that strait-laced pose of his,” chuckled Baochan. “That time we sent him wine, he said he couldn’t drink; but just now I saw him going to see the mistress, red in the face and tipsy. If you don’t believe me, wait at our courtyard gate for him to come out. You can intercept him then and challenge him to see what he has to say.”

Provoked by this Jingui answered, “He won’t be coming out yet a while; and he’s such a cold fish, why should I challenge him?”

“That’s no way to look at it, madam. If he’s well-disposed, we’ll know what to do. If not, we’ll make other plans.”

Convinced by this, Jingui sent her off to keep watch till he came out, then opened her dressing-case and eyed herself in the mirror. Having rouged her lips and selected a flowered silk handkerchief she left her room, rather flustered, as if she had overlooked something.

She heard Baochan outside saying, “You’re in high spirits, Master Ke, today. Where have you been drinking?”

Taking her cue, Jingui lifted the portiere and stepped out.

“Today is Mr. Zhang’s birthday,” Xue Ke was telling Baochan. “They forced me to drink half a goblet. Even now my face is still burning....”

Jingui interposed, “Of course other people’s wine tastes better than ours at home!”

At this taunt, Xue Ke blushed even redder. Stepping over quickly he countered with a smile, “How can you say such a thing, sister-in-law!”

Seeing them talking together, Baochan slipped inside.

Jingui had meant to make a show of annoyance, but now his flushed cheeks, sparkling eyes and appealing expression had melted her anger away.

“You mean you were forced to drink?” she asked with a smile.

“Of course. I can’t drink,” he said.

“It’s best not to drink — much better than landing in trouble through drinking like your cousin, so that when you take a wife she becomes a lonely grass widow like me, poor thing!” She shot him a sidelong glance, blushing as she spoke.

Shocked by these improper advances, Xue Ke decided to leave her; but she forestalled him by seizing hold of him.



得，早已走过来一把拉住。薛蝌急了道：“嫂子！放尊重些！”说着，浑身乱颤。金桂索性老着脸道：“你只管进来，我和你说一句要紧的话。”

正闹着，忽听背后一个人叫道：“奶奶！香菱来了。”把金桂唬了一跳。回头瞧时，却是宝蟾掀起帘子看他二人的光景，一抬头见香菱从那边来了，赶忙知会金桂。金桂这一惊不小，手已松了。薛蝌得便脱身跑了。那香菱正走着，原不理睬，忽听宝蟾一嚷，才瞧见金桂在那里拉住薛蝌，往里死拽。香菱却唬的心头乱跳，自己连忙转身回去。这里金桂早已连吓带气，呆呆的瞅着薛蝌去了，怔了半天，恨了一声，自己扫兴归房。从此把香菱恨入骨髓。那香菱本是要到宝琴那里，刚走出腰门，看见这般，吓回去了。

是日，宝钗在贾母屋里，听得王夫人告诉老太太要聘探春一事。贾母说道：“既是同乡的人，很好。只是听见说那孩子到过我们家里，怎么你老爷没有提起？”王夫人道：“连我们也不知道。”贾母道：“好是好，但只道儿太远。虽然老爷在那里，倘或将来老爷调任，可不是我们孩子太单了吗？”王夫人道：“两家都是做官的，也是拿不定。或者那边还调进来；即不然，终有个叶落归根。况且老爷既在那里做官，上司已经说了，好意思不给么？想来老爷的主意定了，只是不敢做主，故遣人来回老太太的。”贾母道：“你们愿意更好，





“Sister-in-law!” he spluttered, trembling from head to foot. “Remember who you are!”

“Just come on in,” she answered brazenly. “I’ve something important to tell you.”

This clash was cut short by the announcement behind them: “Madam! Xiangling is here.”

With a start Jingui turned to see Baochan watching them from under the raised portière. She had called out this warning at sight of Xiangling. The shock made Jingui let go of Xue Ke, who took this chance to escape.

Xiangling had not noticed them until Baochan called out. Horrified by the sight of Jingui trying desperately to tug Xue Ke into her room, her heart went pit-a-pat and she wheeled away, leaving Jingui rooted to the spot in furious consternation as she stared after Xue Ke’s retreating figure. With a curse she went back to her room then in frustration, and from that day on she hated Xiangling to the marrow of her bones. Xiangling had just passed the inner gate on her way to call on Baoqin when this sight frightened her away.

That same day Baochai, in the Lady Dowager’s room, heard Lady Wang tell of Tanchun’s marriage proposal.

“It’s good that his family comes from our district,” the old lady commented. “But you say that boy visited our house — why didn’t your husband mention this before?”

“We didn’t know it ourselves at the time,” said Lady Wang.

“It’s a good match but too far away. Though the master is in the south now, if he gets transferred in future won’t the child be lonely there all by herself?”

“We’re both official families, with no knowing where the next post will be. Their family may be transferred to the capital. Anyway, ‘Leaves that fall return to their root in the end.’ As the master’s been posted there, and this was proposed by his superior, how can he refuse? I think he must approve, but not presuming to make the decision himself he sent the servant to ask your consent, madam.”

“It’s all right if you’re both willing. But once Tanchun’s gone who knows how long it’ll be before she can come home. Any later than two



但是三丫头这一去了，不知三年两年那边可能回家？若再迟了，恐怕我赶不上再见他一面了！”说着，掉下泪来。王夫人道：“孩子们大了，少不得总要给人家的。就是本乡本土的人，除非不做官还使得；要是做官的，谁保的住总在一处？只要孩子们有造化就好。譬如迎姑娘倒配的近呢，偏时常听见他和女婿打闹，甚至于不给饭吃。就是我们送了东西去，他也摸不着。近来听见益发不好了，也不放他回来。两口子拌起来，就说咱们使了他家的银钱。可怜这孩子总不得个出头的日子！前儿我惦记他，打发人去瞧他，迎丫头藏在耳房里，不肯出来。老婆们必要进去；看见我们姑娘这样冷天还穿着几件旧衣裳。他一包眼泪的告诉老婆们说：‘回去别说我这么苦，这也是我命里所招！也不用送什么衣裳东西来，不但摸不着，反要添一顿打，说是我告诉的！’老太太想想，这倒是近处眼见的，若不好，更难受。到亏了大太太也不理会他，大老爷也不出个头。如今迎姑娘实在比我们三等使唤的丫头还不及。我想探丫头虽不是我养的，老爷既看见过女婿，定然是好才许的。只请老太太示下；择个好日子，多派几个人，送到他老爷任上。该怎么着，老爷也不肯将就。”贾母道：“有他老子作主，你就料理妥当，拣个长行的日子送去，也就定了一件事。”王夫人答应着“是”。宝钗听的明白，也不敢则声，只是心里叫苦：“我们家的姑娘们就算他是个尖儿，如今又要远嫁，眼看着这里的人一天少似一天了。”见王夫人起身告辞出去，他也送出来了，一径回到自



or three years and I may never see her again!" She shed tears.

"When our girls grow up we have to marry them off," replied Lady Wang. "Even if the other family's from our own district, we can't be sure of always being together — unless they're not officials. All we can hope for is that the girls will be happy. Take Yingchun: she's married into a family near by, yet we keep hearing how her husband ill-treats her—sometimes they even give her nothing to eat. And anything we send never reaches her. Recently, they say, it's gone from bad to worse and her in-laws won't let her come home. When she and her husband have words, he jeers that we're in debt to his family. Poor child, never able to hold up her head!

"The other day I was so worried about her, I sent some maids to see her. Yingchun hid herself in a side-room and wouldn't come out. When they insisted on going in they saw that, cold as it was, she was still wearing thin, shabby clothes. With tears in her eyes she pleaded, 'When you go back, don't tell them what a wretched time I'm having; this is my fate. And don't send me clothes or things. I wouldn't get them. Instead, they'd accuse me of complaining and give me another beating.' Just think, madam, because she's close enough for us to know what's going on, when she has a bad time we feel even worse. Not that her mother pays any attention, and her father does nothing either, so poor Yingchun's worse off now than one of our third-grade maids.

"Though Tanchun's not my child, since the master's agreed to this match after seeing the boy, I feel sure it must be all right. So please give your consent, madam, then we'll choose a good day to send her off, well escorted, to join her father. He'll see that everything is done in style."

"Very well, as her father approves, get everything ready and choose a day for setting off on this long journey," said the old lady. "That will be another business settled."

"Very good, madam."

Baochai who had heard all this did not say a word, although inwardly she was lamenting. "Of all the girls in our family she's the best, yet now she's going so far away to get married — there are fewer and fewer of us here every day."

When Lady Wang rose to leave, she went out with her. Back in her



己房中，并不与宝玉说知。见袭人独自一个做活，便将听见的话说了。袭人也很不受用。

却说赵姨娘听见探春这事，反喜欢起来，心里说道：“我这个丫头，在家忒瞧不起我，我何从还是个娘？比他的丫头还不济！况且淤上水，护着别人。他挡在头里，连环儿也不得出头。如今老爷接了去，我倒干净！想要他孝敬我，不能够了。只愿意他像迎丫头似的，我也称称愿。”一面想着，一面跑到探春那边与他道喜，说：“姑娘，你是要高飞的人了。到了姑爷那边，自然比家里还好，想来你也是愿意的。就是养了你一场，并没有借你的光儿。就是我有七分不好，也有三分的好，也别说一去了把我搁在脑杓子后头。”探春听着毫无道理，只低头作活，一句也不言语。赵姨娘见他不理，气忿忿的自己去了。

这里探春又气，又笑，又伤心，也不过自己掉泪而已。坐了一回，闷闷的走到宝玉这边来。宝玉因问道：“三妹妹，我听见林妹妹死的时候，你在那里来着。我还听见说：林妹妹死的时候，远远的有音乐之声。或者他是有来历的，也未可知。”探春笑道：“那是你心里想着罢了。但那夜却怪，不像人家鼓乐的声儿，你的话或者也是。”宝玉听了，更以为实。又想前日自己神魂飘荡之时，曾见一人，说是黛玉生不同人，死不同鬼，必是那里的仙子临凡。又想起那年唱戏做的嫦娥，飘飘艳艳，何等风致！过了一回，探春去了，因



room, she did not tell Baoyu this news; but finding Xiren sewing alone she confided it to her, distressing her too.

But when word reached Concubine Zhao she started gloating. "This daughter of mine has never shown me any respect in this household. She treats me not like her mother but worse than her maids! She sucks up to those who have influence and sides with others against me. With her taking first place, Huan doesn't stand a chance. Now that the master's fetching her away, I'll have a freer hand. I can't expect her to look after me, but only hope she ends up like Yingchun — yes, that would please me."

With these thoughts in mind, she went over as fast as she could to congratulate Tanchun.

"You're going up in the world, miss," she said. "You'll be better off in your husband's home than here; so I've no doubt you're agreeable to this marriage. Though I brought you up, you've not done me any favours. But even if I'm seven-tenths bad, I'm still three-tenths good; so don't forget all about me once you get there."

Tanchun went on sewing with lowered head throughout this rigma-  
role, not saying a word. Finding herself ignored, Concubine Zhao left in  
dudgeon.

Mixed anger, amusement and grief made Tanchun shed tears when she was alone again. After a while she went off in low spirits to call on Baoyu.

"Third Sister," he said, "I heard that you were there when Cousin Lin died and that, far off in the distance, there was the sound of music. For all we know, she may have been an immortal."

"You're imagining things!" laughed Tanchun. "But there *was* something strange about that evening, and it didn't sound like any mortal music. Perhaps you're right."

This confirmed Baoyu's belief. He recalled how, when he was out of his mind, an apparition had told him that Daiyu in life was no ordinary mortal, and after death no ordinary spirit. She must have been a goddess come down to earth. This reminded him of the Moon Goddess in an opera he had seen, so lovely, ethereal and charming!

After Tanchun had left, he insisted on having Zijuan to work for them

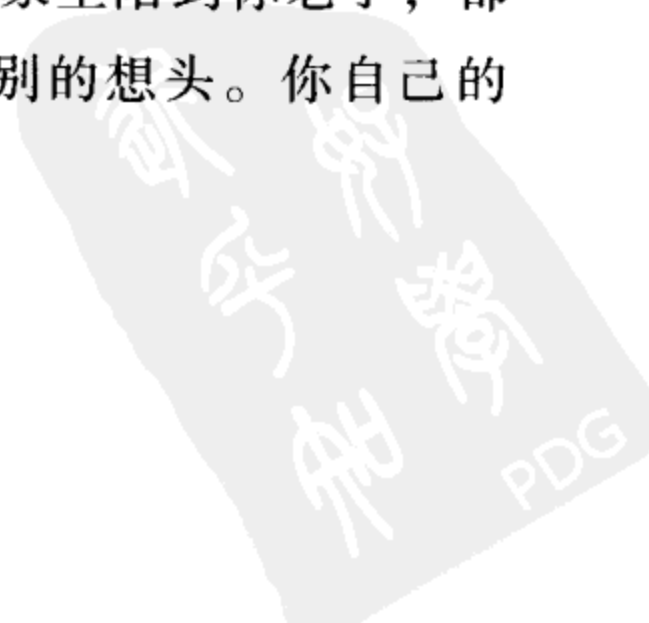




必要紫鹃过来，立刻回了贾母去叫他。

无奈紫鹃心里不愿意，虽经贾母王夫人派了过来，自己没法，却是在宝玉跟前，不是暖声，就是叹气的。宝玉背地里拉着他，低声下气，要问黛玉的话，紫鹃从没好话回答。宝钗倒背地里夸他有忠心，并不嗔怪他。那雪雁虽是宝玉娶亲这夜出过力的，宝玉见他心地不甚明白，便回了贾母王夫人，将他配了一个小厮，各自过活去了。王奶妈，养着他将来好送黛玉的灵柩回南。鹦哥等小丫头，仍旧伏侍老太太。

宝玉本想念黛玉，因此及彼，又想跟黛玉的人已经云散，更加纳闷。闷到无可如何，忽又想黛玉死的这样清楚，必是离凡返仙去了，反又欢喜。忽然听见袭人和宝钗那里讲究探春出嫁之事，宝玉听了，“啊呀”的一声，哭倒在炕上。唬得宝钗袭人都来扶起，说：“怎么了？”宝玉早哭的说不出来，定了一回子神，说道：“这日子过不得了！我姊妹们都一个一个的散了！林妹妹是成了仙去了。大姐姐呢，已经死了，——这也罢了，没天天在一块儿。二姐姐碰着了一个混账不堪的东西。三妹妹又要远嫁，总不得见的了！史妹妹又不知要到那里去？薛妹妹是有了人家儿的。这些姐姐妹妹，难道一个都不留在家里，单留我做什么？”袭人忙又拿话解劝。宝钗摆着手说：“你不用劝他，等我问他。”因问着宝玉道：“据你的心里，要这些姐妹都在家里陪到你老了，都不为终身的事吗？要说别人，或者还有别的想头。你自己的





and at once despatched a maid to ask the old lady to send her.

Zijuan was unwilling to come, but she could only comply with Their Ladyships' orders. In Baoyu's presence, however, she did nothing but exclaim in dismay and sigh. When he quietly took her hand and softly questioned her about Daiyu, she gave him offhand answers. But Baochai did not blame her for this, secretly approving her loyalty to her young mistress.

As for Daiyu's other maids, though Xueyan had helped out at Baoyu's wedding that night, thinking her rather stupid he had asked Their Ladyships to send her away, and she had been married off to one of the servants. Nanny Wang had been kept on to escort Daiyu's coffin back south later on, while Yingge and the other young maids had gone back to work for the Lady Dowager.

Baoyu's grief for Daiyu deepened as it led him to reflect on the dispersal of all her attendants. He brooded helplessly till the sudden recollection that she had died fully conscious convinced him that she had returned to the realm of immortals. His spirits rose again.

Just at that moment, however, he heard Xiren and Baochai discussing Tanchun's marriage. With a cry of dismay he threw himself on the *kang*, sobbing. In alarm they helped him up and asked what was wrong, but he could not speak for tears.

Presently, when he was calmer, he blurted out, "I can't live on like this! All my girl cousins and sisters are leaving one by one. Cousin Lin has become an immortal. First Sister's dead — but I don't miss her so much, as we weren't always together. Second Sister had married a scoundrel. Now Third Sister is going to marry far from home, so we'll never meet again! Where Xiangyun will be going I don't know. And Baoqin is engaged to be married too. Why shouldn't one of them at least stay here? Why leave me all alone?"

Xiren started to reason with him, but Baochai waved her aside.

"It's no use trying to persuade him," she said. "Let me ask him a few questions." Turning to Baoyu she demanded, "Do you expect all these girls to keep you company here to the end of your life, and never to get married? You may have something else in mind for some of them, but how about your own sisters? Never mind whether they leave to marry



姐姐妹妹，不用说没有远嫁的；就是有，老爷作主，你有什么法儿？打量天下就是你一个人爱姐姐妹妹呢？要是都像你，就连我也不能陪着你了。大凡人念书，原为的是明理，怎么你越念越糊涂了呢？这么说起来，我和袭姑娘各自一边儿去，让你把姐姐妹妹们都邀了来守着你。”

宝玉听了，两只手拉住宝钗袭人道：“我也知道。为什么散的这么早呢？等我化了灰的时候再散也不迟！”袭人掩着他的嘴道：“又胡说了！才这两天身上好些，二奶奶才吃些饭。你要是又闹翻了，我也不管了！”宝玉听他两个人说话都有道理，只是心上不知道怎么着才好，只得说道：“我却明白，但只是心里闹得慌。”宝钗也不理他，暗叫袭人快把定心丸给他吃了，慢慢的开导他。袭人便欲告诉探春，说临行不必来辞。宝钗道：“这怕什么？等消停几日，他心里明白了，还要叫他们多说句话儿呢。况且三姑娘是极明白的人，不像那些假惺惺的人，少不得有一番箴谏，他以后就不是这样了。”正说着，贾母那边打发过鸳鸯来说：“知道宝玉旧病又发，叫袭人劝说安慰，叫他不用胡思乱想。”袭人等应了。鸳鸯坐了一会子去了。

那贾母又想起探春远行，虽不全备妆奁，其一应动用之物，俱该预备，便把凤姐叫来，将老爷的主意告诉了一遍，叫他料理去。凤姐答应。不知怎么办理，下回分解。





far away or not; once your father's made the decision, what can you do? Are you the only one in the world who is fond of his cousins and sisters? If everyone were like you, I wouldn't be able to keep you company either. People study to increase their understanding; how is it then that, with you, the more you study the more muddled you get? You talk as if Xiren and I should both go away, so that you can invite all your sisters and cousins here to stay with you."

"I understand," he cried, clutching hold of them both. "But why part so soon? Why not wait till I've turned to ashes?"

Xiren put her hand over his mouth and scolded, "You're talking nonsense again. The last two days you've just taken a turn for the better, and your young lady's eating a bit more too. If you make another rumpus, I'll wash my hands of you."

"I know, I know!" cried Baoyu in desperation, aware that they were right. "But my mind's in a ferment."

Baochai ignored him, secretly telling Xiren to give him a sedative and talk him round little by little. Xiren for her part suggested telling Tanchun not to come to take leave of him.

"Why not?" retorted Baochai. "In a few days when his mind's clearer they should have a good talk. After all, his third sister's very sensible, not one of those who just make a pretence of shrewdness. She's bound to give him good advice, so that he doesn't behave like this again."

At this point Yuanyang arrived, sent by the old lady to say that she had heard of Baoyu's relapse and Xiren must comfort him and talk him round — he must stop having foolish fancies. Xiren agreed to this, and not long after that Yuanyang went back.

Soon Tanchun would be setting off on her long journey and, though they did not have to give her a complete dowry, the old lady felt they should provide her with all necessities. She sent for Xifeng, told her the master's decision, and asked her to see to things. Xifeng accepted this task. But to know how she carried it out, read the next chapter.

紅樓夢  
第 100 回  
PDG

## 第一百一回

### 大观园月夜警幽魂 散花寺神签惊异兆

却说凤姐回至房中，见贾琏尚未回来，便分派那管办探春行李妆奁事的一干人。那天有黄昏以后，因忽然想起探春来，要瞧瞧他去，便叫丰儿与两个丫头跟着，头里一个丫头打着灯笼。走出门来，见月光已上，照耀如水，凤姐使命：“打灯笼的回去罢。”因而走至茶房窗下，听见里面有人嘁嘁喳喳的，又似哭，又似笑，又似议论什么的。凤姐知道不过是家下婆子们，又不知搬什么是非，心内大不受用，使命小红：“进去装做无心的样子，细细打听看，用话套出原委来。”小红答应着去了。

凤姐只带着丰儿来至园门前，门尚未关，只虚虚的掩着。于是主仆二人方推门进去。只见园中月色比外面更觉明朗，满地下重重树影，杳无人声，甚是凄凉寂静。刚欲往秋爽斋这条路来，只听“唿唿”的一声风过，吹的那树枝上落叶，满园中“唰唰唰”的作响，枝梢上“吱娄娄”的发哨，将那些寒鸦宿鸟都惊飞起来。凤姐吃了酒，被风一吹，只觉身上发噤。丰儿后面也把头一缩，说：“好冷！”凤姐也掌不住，便叫丰儿：“快回去把那件银鼠坎肩儿拿来，我在三姑娘那里等着。”丰儿巴不得一声，也要回去穿衣裳，连忙答应





## Chapter 101

### A Ghostly Warning Is Given One Moonlit Night in Grand View Garden A Fearful Omen Is Issued by the Oracle in Scattering Flowers Temple

On Xifeng's return home, because Jia Lian was still out, she assigned servants to prepare Tanchun's dowry and baggage. After dusk, on the spur of the moment, she decided to call on her accompanied by Fenger and two other young maids, one going in front with a lantern. But when they went out, as the moon had already risen and was casting a shimmering, liquid light, she sent the girl with the lantern back again.

As they passed the window of the boiler house, they heard the babble of voices inside and what sounded like a half tearful half laughing discussion. In annoyance, Xifeng told Xiaohong to go in casually but keep her ears open to find out what the women in there were gossiping about. The girl left them to do her bidding.

Then Xifeng went on with Fenger to the Garden. The gate was closed but not yet locked. They opened it and entered. The moonlight here seemed brighter than outside, the ground was covered with the dark shadows of trees and not a voice could be heard in that lonely stillness. As they made for the path to Autumn Freshness Studio, the sighing wind brought leaves rustling down from the trees on every side, while the creaking of their branches startled the chilly crows roosting there so that they winged off in alarm. Xifeng had been drinking, and this wind made her shiver. Fenger behind her hunched her shoulders too.

"My, it's cold!" she exclaimed.

"Run back and fetch me that sleeveless ermine jacket. I can't stand this," ordered Xifeng. "I'll be waiting for you in Miss Tanchun's place."

The maid agreed with alacrity, eager to go back to put on more clothes herself. She set off at a run.

Xifeng was just walking on when a snuffling and sniffing behind her made her hair stand on end. She turned to look. A creature black as coal



一声，回头就跑了。

凤姐刚举步走了不远，只觉身后“哧哧哧哧”，似有闻嗅之声，不觉头发森然直竖起来。由不得回头一看，只见黑油油一个东西在后面伸着鼻子闻他呢；那两只眼睛恰似灯光一般。凤姐吓的魂不附体，不觉失声的“咳”了一声，却是一只大狗。那狗抽头回身，拖着个扫帚尾巴，一气跑上大土山上，方站住了，回身犹向凤姐拱爪儿。

凤姐此时肉跳心惊，急急的向秋爽斋来，将已来至门口，方转过山子，只见迎面有一个人影儿一恍。凤姐心中疑惑，还想着必是那一房的丫头，便问：“是谁？”问了两声，并没有人出来，早已神魂飘荡了，恍恍惚惚的似乎背后有人说道：“婶娘连我也不认得了？”凤姐忙回头一看，只见那人形容俊俏，衣履风流，十分眼熟，只是想不起是那房那屋里的媳妇来。只听那人又说道：“婶娘只管享荣华、受富贵的心盛，把我那年说的‘立万年永远之基’，都付于东洋大海了！”凤姐听说，低头寻思，总想不起。那人冷笑道：“婶娘那时怎样疼我来，如今就忘在九霄云外了？”凤姐听了，此时方想起来是贾蓉的先妻秦氏，便说道：“嗳呀！你是死了的人哪，怎么跑到这里来了呢？”啐了一口，方转回身要走时，不防一块石头绊了一跤，犹如梦醒一般，浑身汗如雨下。虽然毛发悚然，心中却也明白，只见小红丰儿影影绰绰的来了。

凤姐恐怕落人的褒贬，连忙爬起来，说道：“你们做什么呢，去了这半天？快拿来我穿上罢。”一面丰儿走至跟前，伏侍穿上，小红过来搀扶着要往前走，凤姐道：“我才到那里，



was sniffing at her with out-stretched nose, its two eyes shining like lamps. Scared out of her wits, she let out a little scream as she saw that it was a hound. Trailing its bushy tail, the great dog bounded off up a hillock, where it turned and folded its front paws to salute her.

Trembling with fright she hurried on towards Autumn Freshness Studio, and was passing some rocks near its gate when a shadowy figure flitted in front of her. She wondered which apartment this maid belonged to.

“Who’s there?” she called out.

No one answered even when she repeated the question, and she was frightened out of her wits. Then, indistinctly, she heard a voice behind her:

“Aunty, don’t you recognize me?”

She swung round to see a pretty, well-dressed young woman who looked extremely familiar, though she could not identify her.

“Aunty,” the other continued, “you’re so set on enjoying wealth and luxury, you’ve thrown to the winds my advice to you that year to lay a foundation that will last for ever.”

Xifeng lowered her head to think, but could not for the life of her place this young woman.

“Aunty, you used to be so fond of me, how is it that now you’ve forgotten me completely?” the other asked her with a cynical laugh.

Only then did Xifeng realize that this was Jia Rong’s first wife Qin Keqing.

“Mercy!” she exclaimed. “You’re dead — how did you get here?”

She spat at the apparition and turned to run, but tripped over a stone and fell down, drenched with sweat as if awakening from a nightmare. Though convulsed with fear, she was clear enough in her mind to see the blurred figures of Fenger and Xiaohong approaching. Not wanting to be laughed at, she scrambled up.

“What have you been doing that kept you so long?” she asked. “Hurry up and help me into that jacket.”

Fenger came over to do this, after which Xiaohong took Xifeng’s arm to help her forward.

“I’ve just been there and they’re all asleep,” Xifeng prevaricated.



他们都睡了，回去罢。”一面说着，一面带了两个丫头，急急忙忙回到家中。贾璉已回来了，凤姐见他脸上神色更变，不似往常，待要问他，又知他素日性格，不敢突然相问，只得睡了。

至次日五更，贾璉就起来要往总理内庭都检点太监裘世安家来打听事务，因太早了，见桌上有昨日送来的抄报，便拿起来闲看。第一件：“吏部奏请急选郎中，奉旨照例用事。”第二件是：“刑部题奏云南节度使王忠一本：新获私带神枪火药出边事，共十八名人犯，头一名鲍音，系太师镇国公贾化家人。”贾璉想了一想，又往下看。第三件：“苏州刺史李孝一本：参劾纵放家奴，倚势凌辱军民，以致因奸不遂，杀死节妇事。凶犯姓时，名福，自称系世袭三等职衔贾范家人。”贾璉看见这一件，心中不自在起来，待要往下看，又恐迟了不能见裘世安的面，便穿了衣服，也等不得吃东西，恰好平儿端上茶来，喝了两口，便出来骑马走了。平儿收拾了换下的衣服。

此时凤姐尚未起来，平儿因说道：“今儿夜里我听着奶奶没睡什么觉，我替奶奶捶着，好生打个盹儿罢。”凤姐也不言语。平儿料着这意思是了，便爬上炕来，坐在身边，轻轻的捶着。那凤姐刚有要睡之意，只听那边大姐儿哭了，凤姐又将眼睁开。平儿连向那边叫道：“李妈，你到底是怎么着？姐儿哭了，你到底拍着他些。你也忒爱睡了！”那边李妈从梦中惊醒，听得平儿如此说，心中没好气，狠命的拍了几



“Let’s go back.” With that she hurried home with her two maids.

By this time Jia Lian had returned, and she saw from his worried face that he was not his usual self. Though tempted to ask what was wrong, knowing his temper she refrained and simply went to bed.

The next day Jia Lian rose at dawn, meaning to call on the chief eunuch Qiu Shian who was in charge of the Audience Hall, to find out what news there was. As it was too early to leave, he picked up from the desk a copy of the *Court Gazette* delivered the previous day and started to read it.

The first item was a report from Wang Zhong, Governor of Yunnan, that eighteen felons had been apprehended in an attempt to smuggle muskets and gun-powder over the frontier. The ringleader Bao Yin was a servant in the household of Jia Hua, Duke of Zhenguo and Senior Imperial Tutor.

He then read the second item. Li Xiao, Prefect of Suzhou, had impeached a man for condoning the crimes of one of his stewards, who had bullied soldiers as well as civilians, and had killed a chaste wife and two others of the family after failing to rape her. The culprit, Shi Fu, admitted that he served the family of Jia Fan who had a third-rank hereditary title. These two items made Jia Lian uneasy.

He wanted to read on, but feared that might make him too late to see Qiu Shian; so putting on formal clothes and not stopping for breakfast, he took two sips of the tea Pinger had just brought in, then went out, mounted his horse and rode off. Pinger put away the clothes out of which he had changed.

Xifeng was still in bed, and Pinger suggested, “I heard you tossing and turning during the night. Let me massage you now so that you can have a good nap.”

Construing Xifeng’s silence as consent, Pinger sat on the *kang* beside her and pummelled her gently. Xifeng was dozing off when the cries of her small daughter in the next room made her open her eyes again.

Pinger called out, “Nanny Li, what are you doing? If baby cries, you should pat her. What a glutton for sleep you are!”

Nanny Li, waking up with a start, was annoyed by this scolding. She gave Qiaojie several hard spansks.



下，口里嘟嘟囔囔的骂道：“真真的小短命鬼儿！放着尸不挺，三更半夜嚎你娘的丧！”一面说，一面咬牙，便向那孩子身上拧了一把。那孩子“哇”的一声大哭起来。凤姐听见，说：“了不得！你听听，他该挫磨孩子了！你过去把那黑心的养汉老婆下死劲的打他几下子，把姐姐抱过来罢。”平儿笑道：“奶奶别生气，他那里敢挫磨姐儿？只怕是不堤防碰了一下子，也是有的。这会子打他几下子没要紧，明儿叫他们背地里嚼舌根，倒说三更半夜的打人了。”

凤姐听了，半日不言语，长叹一声，说道：“你瞧瞧，这会子不是我十旺八旺的呢！明儿我要是死了，撂下这小孽障，还不知怎么样呢！”平儿笑道：“奶奶，这是怎么说！大五更的，何苦来呢？”凤姐冷笑道：“你那里知道？我是早已明白了，我也不久了！虽然活了二十五岁，人家没见的也见了，没吃的也吃了，衣禄食禄也算全了，所有世上有的也都有了，气也赌尽了，强也算争足了；就是‘寿’字儿上头缺一点儿，也罢了！”平儿听说，由不的眼圈儿红了。凤姐笑道：“你这会子不用假慈悲，我死了，你们只有喜欢的。你们一心一计和和气气的过日子，省的我是你们眼里的刺。只有一件，你们知好歹，只疼我那孩子就是了！”平儿听了，越发掉下泪来。凤姐笑道：“别扯你娘的臊！那里就死了呢？这么早就哭起来！我不死还叫你哭死了呢。”平儿见说，连忙止住哭，道：“奶奶说的这么叫人伤心！”一面说，一面又捶，凤姐才蒙眬的睡着。

平儿方下炕来，只听外面脚步响。谁知贾琏去迟了，那



“Die and be done with it, you little wretch!” she grumbled. “Why don’t you sleep? Is your mother dead that you’re wailing like this in the middle of the night?” Grinding her teeth, she pinched the child so that she burst out howling.

“This is the limit!” cried Xifeng. “Listen to the way she’s taking it out on the child! Go and wham that black-hearted bitch, and bring Qiaojie in here.”

“Don’t be angry, madam,” said Pinger. “She wouldn’t dare. I expect she bumped into her by accident. If I were to give her a few whacks, they’d start accusing us behind our backs of beating people at midnight.”

Xifeng was silent for some time, then she sighed, “Look what happens while I’m still alive and kicking. If I die tomorrow what will become of this imp?”

“What a way to talk, madam!” chuckled Pinger. “First thing in the morning too.”

“You don’t understand.” Xifeng gave a cynical laugh. “I know I shan’t last very long. Though I’ve lived only twenty-five years, I’ve seen and tasted things not given to others to see or taste, and had the best of food and clothing as well as of all the good things in this world. I’ve vented my spite fully too, and done enough others down. So if I’m a bit short on ‘longevity’ what does it matter?”

At this, Pinger’s eyes brimmed with tears.

“Don’t put on that soft-hearted act,” scoffed Xifeng. “Once I’m dead, the two of you will be only too pleased. You can live in peace and harmony, without me as a thorn in your side. All I ask of you, come what may, is to take good care of my child.”

Pinger was weeping now.

“Don’t be such a fool,” jeered Xifeng. “I’m not dying yet a while. Why start mourning so early? Are you trying to hasten my death with your wailing?”

Pinger hastily dried her eyes.

“It’s the way you talk, madam, that upset me,” she said, then went on massaging her until Xifeng dropped off.

Pinger had no sooner got down from the *kang* than she heard footsteps outside. For Jia Lian had left too late to see the chief eunuch, who



裘世安已经上朝去了，不遇而回，心中正没好气，进来就问平儿道：“他们还没起来呢么？”平儿回说：“没有呢。”贾琏一路摔帘子进来，冷笑道：“好啊！这会子还都不起来，安心打擂台打撒手儿！”一叠声又要吃茶。平儿忙倒了一碗茶来。原来那些丫头老婆见贾琏出了门，又复睡了，不打量这会子回来，原不曾预备，平儿便把温过的拿了来。贾琏生气，举起碗来，“哗啷”一声，摔了个粉碎。凤姐惊醒，唬了一身冷汗，“暖哟”一声，睁开眼，只见贾琏气狠狠的坐在旁边，平儿弯着腰拾碗片子呢。凤姐道：“你怎么就回来了？”问了一声，半日不答应，只得又问一声。贾琏嚷道：“你不要我回来，叫我死在外头罢？”凤姐笑道：“这又是何苦来呢？常时我见你不像今儿回来的快，问你一声儿，也没什么生气的。”贾琏又嚷道：“又没遇见，怎么不快回来呢！”凤姐笑道：“没有遇见，少不得耐烦些，明儿再去早些儿，自然遇见了。”贾琏嚷道：“我可不‘吃着自己的饭，替人家赶獐子’呢！我这里一大堆的事，没个动秤儿的；没来由，为人家的事，瞎闹了这些日子，当什么呢？正经那有事的人还在家里受用，死活不知，还听见说要锣鼓喧天的摆酒唱戏做生日呢！我可瞎跑他娘的腿子！”一面说，一面往地下啐了一口，又骂平儿。

凤姐听了，气的干咽，要和他分证，想了一想，又忍住了，勉强陪笑道：“何苦来生这么大气？大清早起，和我叫喊什么？谁叫你应了人家的事？你既应了，只得耐烦些，少不得替人家办办，——也没见这个人自己有为难的事，还有心肠



had gone to court. And so he had come back in a bad temper.

“Are they still not up?” he asked Pinger.

“Not yet,” she said.

He came in, banging the portiere behind him. “Fine!” he swore. “Not up at this hour, just to make things more difficult for me!”

He called for tea, and she promptly poured him a cup. But the maids had gone back to bed after Jia Lian went out, not expecting him home so quickly, and had therefore not prepared tea; so what Pinger brought him was not freshly brewed. In a fury he raised the bowl and — crash! — smashed it to smithereens.

Xifeng, startled from sleep, woke up in a cold sweat. She opened her eyes and gave a cry of dismay at sight of her husband sitting there in a rage while Pinger stooped to pick up the broken pieces.

“Why are you back so soon?” she asked.

She waited in vain for an answer and then repeated the question.

“Don’t you want me back?” he bellowed. “Want me to die outside?”

“Why talk like that?” she said gently. “You don’t usually come back so quickly, that’s why I asked. You’ve no call to lose your temper.”

“Since I didn’t find him, why shouldn’t I come straight back?” he bellowed again.

“If you didn’t find him, you’ll just have to be patient and go earlier tomorrow; then he’ll be in.”

“Why should I run errands for other people?” he roared. “I’ve plenty of work of my own here, with no one lifting a finger to help; yet for no reason at all I’ve had to run right and left for other people. Why the hell should I? The ones in hot water are taking it easy at home, not giving a damn; and I hear they’re laying on feasts and operas to celebrate some birthday with gonging and drumming! Why should I run these pointless errands for them?” He spat in disgust and swore at Pinger again.

Xifeng swallowed her anger and, on second thoughts, refrained from arguing with him.

“Why get so worked up?” she said, forcing a smile. “Why yell at me like that first thing in the morning? Who told you to take on jobs for other people? Since you have, you must just have patience and do as they ask.



唱戏摆酒的闹。”贾璉道：“你可说么！你明儿倒也问问他。”凤姐诧异道：“问谁？”贾璉道：“问谁！问你哥哥！”凤姐道：“是他吗？”贾璉道：“可不是他，还有谁呢？”凤姐忙问道：“他又有什么事，叫你替他跑？”贾璉道：“你还在坛子里呢！”凤姐道：“真真这就奇了！我连一个字儿也不知道。”贾璉道：“你怎么能知道呢！这个事，连太太和姨太太还不知道呢。头一件，怕太太和姨太太不放心；二则你身上又常嚷不好；所以我在外头压住了，不叫里头知道。说起来，真真可人恼！你今儿不问我，我也不便告诉你。你打量你哥哥行事像个人呢！你知道外头的人都叫他什么？”凤姐道：“叫他什么？”贾璉道：“叫他什么！叫他‘忘仁’！”凤姐“扑哧”的一笑：“他可不叫王仁，叫什么呢？”贾璉道：“你打量那个‘王仁’吗？是忘了仁义礼智信的那个‘忘仁’哪！”凤姐道：“这是什么人这么刻薄嘴儿遭塌人！”贾璉道：“不是遭塌他呀！今儿索性告诉你，你也该知道知道你那哥哥的好处，到底知道他给他二叔做生日呵！”凤姐想了一想，道：“嗳哟！可是呵，我还忘了问你：二叔不是冬天的生日吗？我记得年年都是宝玉去。前者老爷升了，二叔那边送过戏来，我还偷偷儿的说：‘二叔为人是最吝啬的，比不得大舅太爷。他们各自家里还乌眼鸡似的。不么，昨儿大舅太爷没了，你瞧他是个兄弟，他还出了个头儿揽了个事儿吗？’所以那一天说赶他的生日，咱们还他一班子戏，省了亲戚跟前落亏欠。如今这么早就做生日，也不知是什么意思。”贾璉道：“你还作梦呢！你



It's news to me that anyone in trouble should feel in the mood for feasts and operas."

"That's what *you* say! Tomorrow you can ask him."

"Ask whom?" she exclaimed in surprise.

"Whom? Your brother!"

"Is he the one you've been talking about?"

"Of course. Who else?"

"What business is it that he wants you to see to for him?" she demanded hastily.

"Are you still in the dark?"

"This is really very strange! I haven't heard a word."

"How could you hear? Even the mistress and Aunt Xue haven't heard. Because I didn't want to worry them, and because you're always complaining of bad health, I hushed the business up outside and didn't let the family know either. The mere mention of this really makes me livid! If you hadn't asked me today, I couldn't very well have told you. You may think that brother of yours a gentleman; but do you know what people outside call him?"

"What do they call him?"

"Wang Ren (忘仁 — forgetting humanity) ."

She burst out laughing. "Of course, that's his name — Wang Ren (王仁)."

"It's not the Wang Ren you think, but the Wang Ren meaning that he's lost all sense of decency and propriety."

"What backbiters have been slandering him like that?"

"It isn't slander. I may as well tell you now, because you ought to know what your fine brother's like. It's your second uncle's birthday he's celebrating — did you know that?"

Xifeng thought for a second, then exclaimed, "Oh! But tell me — isn't his birthday in the winter? I remember it was Baoyu who went every year. When the master was promoted, second uncle sent an opera troupe to perform here, and I told the family in confidence, 'Second uncle's very tight-fisted, not like our elder uncle. The two families keep bickering over money. When our elder uncle died, didn't his younger brother try to grab his property?' That's why I advised them, when his





哥哥一到京，接着舅太爷的首尾就开了一个吊。他怕咱们知道拦他，所以没告诉咱们，弄了好几千银子。后来二舅嗔着他，说他不该一网打尽。他吃不住了，变了个法儿，指着你们二叔的生日撒了个网，想着再弄几个钱，好打点二舅太爷不生气。也不管亲戚朋友冬天夏天的，人家知道不知道，这么丢脸！你知道我起早为什么？如今因海疆的事情，御史参了一本，说是大舅太爷的亏空，本员已故，应着落其弟王子胜、侄儿王仁赔补。爷儿两个急了，找了我给他们托人情。我见他们吓的那个样儿，再者，又关系太太和你，我才应了。想着找找总理内庭都检点老裘替办办，或者前任后任挪移挪移，偏又去晚了，他进里头去了。我白起来跑了一趟，他们家里还那里定戏摆酒呢！你说说叫人生气不生气？”

凤姐听了，才知王仁所行如此，但他素性要强护短，听贾琏如此说，便道：“凭他怎么样，到底是你的亲大舅儿。再者，这件事，死的大爷，活的二叔，都感激你。罢了，没什么说的，我们家的事，少不得我低三儿下四的求你，省了带累别人受气，背地里骂我！”说着，眼泪便下来了，掀开被窝，一面坐起来，一面挽头发，一面披衣裳。贾琏道：“你倒不用这么着，是你哥哥不是人，我并没说你什么。况且我出去了，你身上又不好，我都起来了，他们还睡着，咱们老辈





birthday came round, to pay back the opera so that we wouldn't be beholden to him. But what's the idea, celebrating his birthday in advance this year?"

"You're still in the dark," said Jia Lian. "As soon as your brother came to the capital, he held a requiem for your elder uncle. For fear that we might stop him, he didn't tell us; and he made thousands of taels out of the donations. Later, your second uncle bawled him out for grabbing the whole lot. Then, under pressure, he thought up another trick. He's invited guests on the pretext that it's second uncle's birthday, fishing for more money from them to pacify him. What does he care whether it's summer or winter, or whether relatives and friends know the date of the birthday or not? That's how shameless he is!

"Do you know why I got up so early? The censors have investigated the business by the coast and discovered a deficit during your elder uncle's term of office. As he's dead, his younger brother Wang Zisheng and his nephew Wang Ren have to make it good. In desperation, the two of them come to enlist my help; and because they looked scared stiff, and because they're related to you and our mistress, I agreed. I wanted to get Old Qiu who's in charge of the inner court to fix it up by transferring the deficit to some earlier or later account. Unfortunately I got there too late, after he'd gone to the Palace. So I went to all that trouble for nothing. But your brother's still ordering operas and giving feasts. Isn't that maddening?"

Although Xifeng knew that Wang Ren was in the wrong, it was not her way to admit it.

"Whatever he's like, he's your brother-in-law," she said. "Besides, both the elder uncle who's dead and the second uncle who's alive should be grateful for what you're doing. It goes without saying that as this is our Wang family business, I must beg you humbly to help; otherwise other people will get blamed on my account and curse me behind my back."

In tears, she threw back her bedding and sat up, gathering her hair into a loose knot and slipping on some clothes.

"You don't have to take on like that," said Jia Lian. "It's your brother who's so disgusting. I didn't blame *you*. When I was out and you were



子有这个规矩么？你如今作‘好好先生’，不管事了。我说了  
一句，你就起来；明儿我要嫌这些人，难道你都替了他们  
么？好没意思啊！”凤姐听了这些话，才把泪止住了，说道：  
“天也不早了，我也该起来了。你有这么说的，你替他们家  
在心的办办，那就是你的情分了。再者，也不光为我，就是  
太太听见也喜欢。”贾琏道：“是了，知道了。‘大萝卜还用屎  
浇’？”平儿道：“奶奶这么早起来做什么？那一天奶奶不是起  
来有一定的时候儿呢？爷也不知是那里的邪火，拿着我们出  
气。何苦来呢！奶奶也算替爷挣够了，那一点儿不是奶奶挡  
头阵？不是我说，爷把现成儿的也不知吃了多少，这会子替  
奶奶办了一点子事，况且关会着好几层儿呢，就这么拿糖作  
醋的起来，也不怕人家寒心？况且这也不单是奶奶的事呀！我  
们起迟了，原该爷生气，左右到底是奴才呀；奶奶跟前，尽  
着身子累的成了个病包儿了，这是何苦来呢！”说着，自己  
的眼圈儿也红了。那贾琏本是一肚子闷气，那里见得这一对  
娇妻美妾，又尖利、又柔情的话呢？便笑道：“够了，算了罢！  
他一个人就够使的了，不用你帮着。左右我是外人，多早晚  
我死了，你们就清净了！”凤姐道：“你也别说那个话，谁知  
道谁怎么样呢？你不死，我还死呢！早死一天早心净。”说  
着，又哭起来。平儿只得又劝了一回。

那时天已大亮，日影横窗，贾琏也不便再说，站起来出  
去了。这里凤姐自己起来，正在梳洗，忽见王夫人那边小丫  
头过来道：“太太说了，叫问二奶奶今日过舅太爷那边去不  
去？要去，说叫二奶奶同着宝二奶奶一路去呢。”凤姐因方才



poorly, these maids were still sleeping even after I was up — since when has that been the rule in our family? You let it go, to show how kind-hearted you are. When I say a word against someone, you get up. If I find fault with them tomorrow, will you take all the blame on yourself? This is so pointless!”

“It’s high time for me to get up now,” answered Xifeng, drying her eyes. “If that’s how you feel, I’ll be grateful if you’ll fix things up for them. Not only for my sake either. When the mistress hears about it, she’ll be pleased too.”

“All right. I know. You don’t have to teach me that.”

“Why get up so early, madam?” asked Pinger. “Don’t you have a fixed time for getting up every day? Master Lian’s in a bad temper over something and taking it out on us. That’s just too bad!” She turned to challenge him, “Madam’s done enough for you, hasn’t she, always bearing the brunt for you? It’s not my place to say this, sir, but you’ve taken advantage of her all this time, and it’s not much you’re doing for her now — not just for her sake either — yet you make such a song and dance about it. Don’t you mind hurting her feelings?”

“Besides, you can’t pin this on *her*. If we get up late, you’ve a right to be angry with us — after all, we’re only slaves. But madam’s ruined her health by wearing herself out. Why treat her so unkindly?” She was on the verge of tears.

Jia Lian had been bursting with rage, but he was floored by these sharp yet gentle reproaches from his lovely wife and beautiful concubine.

“All right, all right!” he laughed. “She’s quite enough for me to cope with, without your taking her side. Anyway I’m not wanted here: the sooner I die the better off you’ll be.”

“Don’t talk like that,” Xifeng retorted. “Who knows what will happen? I may die before you. The earlier I do, the sooner I’ll have some peace.” She wept again, and Pinger had to console her.

By now the sun was shining through the window and Jia Lian, having no more to say, rose and left. Xifeng had just got up to make her toilet when a young maid came in with a message from Lady Wang:

“The mistress wants to know whether you’re going to call on your uncle, madam. If you are, she’d like you to take Madam Bao along.”



一段话已经灰心丧意，恨娘家不给争气；又兼昨夜园中受了那一惊，也实在没精神，便说道：“你先回太太去：我还有一两件事没办清，今日不能去；况且他们那又不是什么正经事。宝二奶奶要去，各自去罢。”小丫头答应着回去回复了，不在话下。

且说凤姐梳了头，换了衣服，想了想，虽然自己不去，也该带个信儿；再者，宝钗还是新媳妇出门子，自然要过去照应照应的，于是见过王夫人，支吾了一件事，便过来到宝玉房中。只见宝玉穿着衣服，歪在炕上，两个眼睛呆呆的看宝钗梳头。凤姐站在门口，还是宝钗一回头看见了，连忙起身让坐。宝玉也爬起来，凤姐才笑嘻嘻的坐下。宝钗因说麝月道：“你们瞧着二奶奶进来，也不言语声儿！”麝月笑着道：“二奶奶头里进来就摆手儿不叫言语么。”凤姐因向宝玉道：“你还不走，等什么呢？没见这么大人了，还是这么小孩子气。人家各自梳头，你爬在傍边看什么？成日家一块子在屋里，还看不够吗？也不怕丫头们笑话？”说着，“哧”的一笑，又瞅着他咂嘴儿。宝玉虽也有些不好意思，还不理会。把个宝钗直臊的满脸飞红，又不好听着，又不好说什么。只见袭人端过茶来，只得搭趣着，自己递了一袋烟。凤姐儿笑着站起来接了，道：“二妹妹，你别管我们的事，你快穿衣服罢。”

宝玉一面也搭趣着，找这个，弄那个，凤姐道：“你先去罢，那里有个爷们等着奶奶们一块儿走的理呢？”宝玉道：“我只是嫌我这衣裳不大好，不如前年穿着老太太给的那件‘雀金呢’好。”凤姐因怛他道：“你为什么还不穿？”宝玉道：



Xifeng was depressed after her husband's disclosure and resented the way her family had let her down; on top of which she really felt very limp after her fright the night before in the Garden.

"Tell Her Ladyship I still have one or two things to attend to, so I can't go today," was her answer. "Besides, it isn't an important occasion. If Madam Bao wants to go, she can go by herself."

The girl assented and went back to report this.

After Xifeng had finished her toilet, she reflected that even if she did not go she ought to send some message; besides, Baochai, still a new bride, should be accompanied if she paid a visit. So she went to see Lady Wang, then made some excuse to look in on Baoyu. She found him lying fully dressed on the *kang*, raptly watching Baochai as she combed her hair. Baochai was the first to see Xifeng in the doorway. She hastily rose to offer her a seat, and Baoyu got down from the *kang*. Xifeng seated herself with a smile.

"Why didn't you announce Madam Lian?" Baochai scolded Sheyue.

"As soon as she came in, she signed to us to keep quiet," the maid replied with a smile.

Xifeng asked Baoyu, "Why are you still here? You're grown up now, yet you still behave like a child. Do you have to stick around watching her doing her hair? Together all day long, don't you see enough of each other? Aren't you afraid the maids will make fun of you?" She laughed and smacked her lips.

Baoyu, though rather sheepish, paid no attention. Baochai blushed all over her face, feeling she should not let this pass but not knowing what to say. At this point Xiren brought in tea, and to hide her confusion Baochai passed their guest a tobacco-pipe, which Xifeng stood up to accept with a smile.

"Never mind us, sister," she said. "Hurry up and get dressed."

Baoyu, too, tried to pass off his embarrassment by rummaging around.

"You go on ahead," Xifeng urged him. "Who ever heard of gentlemen waiting to go with the ladies?"

"I just feel these clothes I'm wearing aren't very good, not up to that peacock-feather cape the old lady gave me that year."

"Why don't you wear it then?" she asked mockingly.



“穿着太早些。”凤姐忽然想起，自悔失言。幸亏宝钗也和王家是内亲，只是那些丫头们跟前，已经不好意思了。袭人却接着说道：“二奶奶还不知道呢，就是穿得，他也不穿了。”凤姐儿道：“这是什么原故？”袭人道：“告诉二奶奶，真真的我们这位爷行的事都是天外飞来的。那一年因二舅太爷的生日，老太太给了他这件衣裳，谁知那一天就烧了。我妈病重了，我没在家。那时候还有晴雯妹妹呢，听见说，病着整给他缝了一夜，第二天，老太太才没瞧出来呢。去年那一天，上学天冷，我叫焙茗拿了去给他披披，谁知这位爷见了这件衣裳，想起晴雯来了，说了总不穿了，叫我给他收一辈子呢。”凤姐不等说完，便道：“你提晴雯，可惜了儿的！那孩子模样儿手儿都好，就只嘴头子利害些。偏偏儿的太太不知听了那里的谣言，活活儿的把个小命儿要了。还有一件事：那一天，我瞧见厨房里柳家的女人，他女孩儿叫什么五儿，那丫头长的和晴雯脱了个影儿。我心里要叫他进来，后来我问他妈，他妈说是很愿意。我想着宝二爷屋里的小红跟了我去，我还没还他呢，就把五儿补过来罢。平儿说：‘太太那一天说了，凡象那个样儿的都不叫派到宝二爷屋里呢。’我所以也就搁下了。这如今宝二爷也成了家了，还怕什么呢？不如我就叫他进来。可不知宝二爷愿意不愿意？要想着晴雯，只瞧见这五儿就是了。”宝玉本要走，听见这些话又呆了。袭人道：“为什么不愿意？早就要弄进来的，只是因为太太的话说的结实罢了。”凤姐道：“那么着，明儿我就叫他进来。太太的跟前有我呢。”宝玉听了，喜不自胜，才走到贾母那边去了。这里宝钗穿衣服。



“It’s too early in the season.”

Thus reminded, Xifeng regretted having spoken. Luckily Baochai was related to the Wangs, still she felt rather put out in front of the maids.

But then Xiren interposed, “You don’t realize, madam, that he wouldn’t wear it even if the weather was cold.”

“Why not?” asked Xifeng.

“Because our young master’s behaviour is really fantastic. That year the old lady gave him this cape to wear on your second uncle’s birthday, but that very same day he burnt it. My mother was very ill, so I was away; but Sister Qingwen was still here at the time. Though she was unwell, I heard she sat up all night mending it for him, so that the next day the old lady didn’t notice the burn. One cold day last year when he was going to school, I told Beiming to take that cape for him, but the sight of it reminded him of Qingwen and he said he’d never wear it again. He told me to keep it for him all his life....”

“Speaking of Qingwen,” Xifeng cut in, “it really was a shame! She was a pretty child with clever hands, only rather sharp-tongued. It was too bad that the mistress heard some rumour which cost the girl her life.

“That reminds me: I noticed one day that Wuer, the daughter of Mrs. Liu in the kitchen, was the image of Qingwen, and I decided to take her on. When I asked her mother she was only too willing. Then it occurred to me that since Hongyu had left Baoyu’s service for mine, I ought to give him Wuer in exchange; but Pinger told me the mistress had given orders that no girl looking like Qingwen was to work in Baoyu’s place. So I dropped the idea. However, now that he’s married what does it matter? I’d better tell her to come — that is, if Baoyu would like it. If he misses Qingwen, he can look at this Wuer instead.”

Baoyu who was on his way out stopped when he heard this.

Xiren answered for him, “Of course he would like it. He wanted to get her here long ago, only the mistress was so strongly against it.”

“In that case I’ll send her over tomorrow,” said Xifeng, “I can square it with the mistress.”

Baoyu, delighted by this, went to call on his grandmother while Baochai got dressed.

Baoyu’s obvious affection for Baochai upset Xifeng when she con-





凤姐儿看他两口儿这般恩爱缠绵，想起贾琏方才那种光景，甚实伤心，坐不住，便起身向宝钗笑道：“我和你上太太屋里去罢。”笑着出了房门，一同来见贾母。宝玉正在那里回贾母往舅舅家去。贾母点头说道：“去罢，只是少吃酒，早些回来，你身子才好些。”宝玉答应着出来，刚走到院内，又转身回来，向宝钗耳边说了几句，不知什么。宝钗笑道：“是了，你快去罢。”将宝玉催着去了。这里贾母和凤姐宝钗说了没三句话，只见秋纹进来传说：“二爷打发焙茗回来说，请二奶奶。”宝钗道：“他又忘了什么，又叫他回来？”秋纹道：“我叫小丫头问了焙茗，说是‘二爷忘了一句话，二爷叫我回来告诉二奶奶：若是去呢，快些来罢；若不去呢，别在风地里站着。’”说的贾母凤姐并地下站着的老婆子丫头都笑了。宝钗的脸上飞红，把秋纹啐了一口，说道：“好个糊涂东西！这也值的这么慌慌张张跑了来说？”秋纹也笑着回去叫小丫头去骂焙茗。那焙茗一面跑着，一面回头说道：“二爷把我巴巴儿的叫下马来，叫回来说；我若不说，回来对出来，又骂我了。这会子说了，他们又骂我！”那丫头笑着跑回来说了。贾母向宝钗道：“你去罢，省了他这么不放心。”说的宝钗站不住，又被凤姐恹着玩笑，没好意思，才走了。

只见散花寺的姑子大了来了，给贾母请安，见过了凤





trasted it with Jia Lian's behaviour to her earlier on. Not wanting to stay there, she stood up and suggested to Baochai, "Let's go to see the mistress."

They went off cheerfully together to call on the old lady, and found Baoyu there explaining that he was going out to visit his uncle.

The old lady nodded. "Go along then," she said. "But don't drink too much, and come home early. You're only just over your illness."

Baoyu assented and left, coming back again from the courtyard to whisper a few words in Baochai's ear.

"All right," she replied with a smile. "Off you go now." She urged him to hurry.

The old lady chatted with Xifeng and Baochai until, presently, Qiuwen came in to say, "Master Bao has sent Beiming back with a message for Madam Bao."

"Has he forgotten something again?" Baochai wondered. "Why send his page back?"

"I told one of the girls to ask Beiming," Qiuwen answered. "He said, 'Master Bao forgot to tell Madam Bao this, so he sent me back with the message: If she's going, she'd better go soon; if not, she mustn't stand too long in a draught.'"

The old lady, Xifeng, the serving-women and maids all burst out laughing at this.

Baochai, flushing crimson, spat in disgust at Qiuwen. "You silly creature!" she scolded. "Bursting in so wildly just to tell us this!"

Qiuwen went off, giggling, to tell the girl outside to curse Beiming.

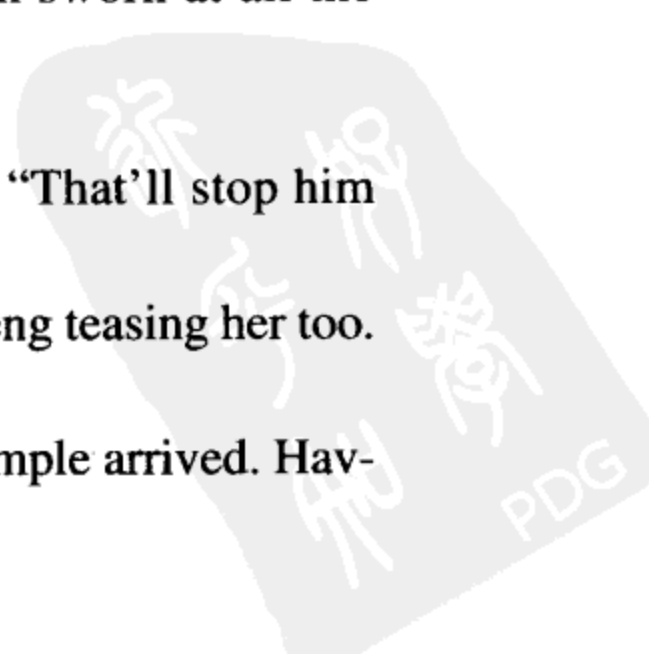
He ran off, calling back over his shoulder, "Master Bao *insisted* that I must dismount and bring back this message. If he found out I hadn't delivered it, he'd have sworn at me. Now I've been sworn at all the same just for doing as I was told!"

The girl laughed and ran back to report this.

"Off you go then," said the old lady to Baochai. "That'll stop him from worrying about you."

Baochai hardly knew which way to look, with Xifeng teasing her too. She left in a fluster.

Just then, Abbess Daliao of Scattering Flowers Temple arrived. Hav-



姐，坐着吃茶。贾母因问他：“这一向怎么不来？”大了道：“因这几日庙中作好事，有几位诰命夫人不时在庙里起坐，所以不得空儿来。今日特来回老祖宗：明儿还有一家作好事，不知老祖宗高兴不高兴？若高兴，也去随喜随喜。”贾母便问：“做什么好事？”大了道：“前月为王夫人府里不干净，见神见鬼的，偏生那太太夜间又看见去世的老爷。因此，昨日在我庙里告诉我，要在散花菩萨跟前许愿烧香，做四十九天的水陆道场，保佑家口安宁，亡者升天，生者获福。所以我不得空儿来请老太太的安。”

却说凤姐素日最是厌恶这些事，自从昨夜见鬼，心中总只是疑疑惑惑的，如今听了大了这些话，不觉把素日的心性改了一半，已有三分信意，便问大了道：“这散花菩萨是谁？他怎么就能避邪除鬼呢？”大了见问，便知他有些信意，说道：“奶奶要问这位菩萨，等我告诉你奶奶知道：这个散花菩萨，根基不浅，道行非常，生在西天大树园中。父母打柴为生。养下菩萨来，头长三角，眼横四目，身長八尺，两手拖地。父母说这是妖精，便弃在冰山背后了。谁知这山上有一个得道的老猢狲出来打食，看见菩萨顶上白气冲天，虎狼远避，知道来历非常，便抱回洞中抚养。谁知菩萨带了来的聪慧，禅也会谈，与猢狲天天谈道参禅，说的天花散漫。到了





ing paid her respects to the Lady Dowager and Xifeng, she sat down and had some tea.

“Why haven’t you been to see us for so long?” the old lady asked her.

“These days we’ve been having sacrifices in our temple,” said the abbess. “We had visits too from several noble ladies, so I didn’t find time before. I’ve come today specially, Old Ancestress, to let you know that tomorrow we are holding another mass. If you’d care to join us, it would be a little outing for you.”

The old lady asked the nature of the mass.

“Last month evil spirits appeared in the Wang mansion, contaminating it,” the abbess explained. “One night Madam Wang saw the ghost of her dead husband; so yesterday she came to our temple saying that she wanted to offer incense to the Flower-Scattering Saint and to have sacrifices made for forty-nine days to ensure the family peace, so that the dead may ascend to Heaven and the living enjoy good fortune. This is what kept me from coming to pay my respects before.”

Xifeng normally had no patience with such proceedings, but since seeing a ghost the night before she had been filled with misgivings. This had changed her attitude, making her inclined to believe what the abbess said.

She asked, “Who is this Flower-Scattering Saint? How can he ward off evil and exorcise devils?”

Seeing that she was open to conviction, the abbess said, “Since you ask, madam, let me tell you. This saint’s extraordinary powers are deep-founded. He was born in the Country of Great Trees in the Western Paradise. His parents were woodcutters. He came into the world with three horns on his head and four eyes, eight feet in height, with arms reaching to the ground. Because his parents thought he was a monster, they abandoned him behind the Icy Mountain. But an old monkey there with magic powers, coming out in search of food, saw a white vapour rising from this saint’s head and noticed that tigers and wolves kept away from him. He knew then that this was no ordinary child, so carried him back to his cave and brought him up. Now this saint had been born so quick of understanding, he was able to discuss the Way and Buddhism

一千年后，便飞升了。至今山上犹见谈经之处，天花散漫，所求必灵，时常显圣，救人苦厄。因此世人才盖了庙，塑了象供奉着。”凤姐道：“这有什么凭据呢？”大了道，“奶奶又来搬驳了。一个佛爷可有什么凭据呢？就是撒谎，也不过哄一两个人罢咧，难道古往今来多少明白人都被他哄了不成？奶奶只想，惟有佛家香火历来不绝，他到底是祝国裕民，有些灵验，人才信服啊。”凤姐听了，大有道理，因道：“既这么着，我明儿去试试。你庙里可有签？我去求一签。我心里的事，签上批的出来，我从此就信了。”大了道：“我们的签最是灵的，明儿奶奶去求一签就知道了。”贾母道：“既这么着，索性等到后日初一，你再去求。”说着，大了吃了茶，到王夫人各房里去请了安，回去不提。

这里凤姐勉强挣扎着，到了初一清早，令人预备了车马，带着平儿并许多奴仆，来至散花寺。大了带了众姑子接了进去，献茶后，便洗手至大殿上焚香。那凤姐儿也无心瞻仰圣像，一秉虔诚，磕了头，举起签筒，默默的将那见鬼之事并身体不安等故，祝告了一回，才摇了三下，只听“唰”的一声，筒中掙出一支签来。于是叩头，拾起一看，只见写着“第三十三签，上上大吉”。大了忙查签簿看时，只见上



with the monkey. They did this every day, until flowers rained down from the skies.

“A thousand years later the saint ascended to Heaven. But even now on the mountain you can see the place where he expounded the canons, scattering flowers. All prayers to him are granted, and he often manifests his divinity by saving those in distress. That is why this temple was built and offerings are made to his image.”

“What proof have you of this?” Xifeng wanted to know.

“You’re cavilling again, madam! What proof is needed? If this were false it could only fool one or two people. How could so many people with good sense have been fooled from old times till now? Just think, madam, the reason why Buddhist sacrifices have been made throughout the centuries is because they have proved efficacious in safeguarding the country and enriching the people — that’s why men believe in them.”

Convinced by this reasoning, Xifeng replied, “In that case, I’ll go tomorrow and try. Do you have divination lots in your temple? I’d like to draw one. If it solves my problem, I shall become a believer!”

“Our lots are infallible,” Daliao assured her. “You’ll know that when you draw one tomorrow, madam.”

“Better wait till the day after that — the first of the month,” said the old lady.

When Daliao had finished her tea, she went to pay her respects to Lady Wang and those in other apartments, after which she returned to the temple.

Xifeng bore up as best she could till the morning of the first; then she ordered a carriage and horses to be made ready and, attended by many servants, went with Pinger to the temple. Daliao came out at the head of all the nuns to welcome her; and after tea had been served, Xifeng washed her hands and entered the main hall to offer incense. In no mood to gaze at the image, she kowtowed devoutly and picked up the bamboo container holding the lots. First she offered up a silent prayer about the apparition and her bad health, then she shook the container three times. A bamboo slip shot out. With another kowtow she picked it up and saw the inscription: “Number 33. Most auspicious.”

Daliao looked up that number in the oracle book and found the entry:

面写着：“王熙凤衣锦还乡。”凤姐一见这几个字，吃一大惊，忙问大了道：“古人也有叫王熙凤的么？”大了笑道：“奶奶最是通今博古的，难道汉朝的王熙凤求官的这一段事也不晓得？”周瑞家的在旁笑道：“前年李先儿还说这一回书来着。我们还告诉他重着奶奶的名字，不许叫呢。”凤姐笑道：“可是呢，我倒忘了。”说着，又瞧底下的，写的是：

去国离乡二十年，于今衣锦返家园。

蜂采百花成蜜后，为谁辛苦为谁甜？

行人至。音信迟。讼宜和。婚再议。

看完也不甚明白。大了道：“奶奶大喜，这一签巧得很。奶奶自幼在这里长大，何曾回南京去过？如今老爷放了外任，或者接家眷来，顺便回家，奶奶可不是‘衣锦还乡’了？”一面说，一面抄了个签经交与丫头。凤姐也半疑半信的。大了摆了斋来，凤姐只动了一动，放下了要走，又给了香银。大了苦留不住，只得让他走了。凤姐回至家中，见了贾母王夫人等，问起签来，命人一解，都欢喜非常：“或者老爷果有此心，咱们走一趟也好！”凤姐儿见人人这么说，也就信了，不在话下。

却说宝玉这一日正睡午觉，醒来不见宝钗，正要问时，



“Wang Xifeng returns home in splendour.”

In amazement Xifeng asked her, “Was there another Wang Xifeng in olden times?”

Daliao answered with a smile, “Why, madam, with your broad knowledge of past and present, haven’t you heard the story of how Wang Xifeng of the Han Dynasty found an official post?”

Zhou Rui’s wife beside them chuckled, “The other year, we wouldn’t let that story-teller, Mrs. Li, tell this story because that was *your* name, madam.”

“That’s right,” agreed Xifeng. “I had forgotten.”

She then read the words below:

The one who for a score of years left home  
Now in fine raiment will return again.  
The honey culled from blossoms by the bee  
Is seized by others — all its toil is vain.  
The traveller arrives.  
Word comes too late.  
Settle the lawsuit.  
Reconsider the match.

Xifeng could not make much of this, but the abbess cried, “Congratulations, madam! What a coincidence! You have been here since childhood, never going back to Nanjing. Now that His Lordship has a provincial post he may send for his family, which will give you a chance to ‘return in splendour’ as the oracle says.” While speaking she had copied out the prediction and handed it to the maid.

Xifeng was still only half convinced. When Daliao served her a meal, she simply toyed with the food then made ready to leave, first donating some silver for incense, and the abbess could not prevail on her to stay longer.

When she reached home, the old lady and Lady Wang asked what the oracle had said. Once it had been explained to them they were delighted.

“The master may really have such a plan!” they exclaimed. “It would make a pleasant trip for us.”

As one and all said this, Xifeng too accepted this interpretation.

When Baoyu woke from his siesta that day, Baochai was not in the





只见宝钗进来。宝玉问道：“那里去了，半日不见？”宝钗笑道：“我给凤姐姐瞧一回答。”宝玉听说，便问是怎么样的。宝钗把签帖念了一回，又道：“家中人人都说好的，据我看，这‘衣锦还乡’四字里头，还有缘故。后来再瞧罢了。”宝玉道：“你又多疑了，妄解圣意。‘衣锦还乡’四字，从古至今都知道是好的，今儿你又偏生看出缘故来了！依你说，这‘衣锦还乡’还有什么别的解说？”宝钗正要解说，只见王夫人那边打发丫头过来请二奶奶，宝钗立刻过去。未知何事，下回分解。



room; but before he could ask her whereabouts she came in.

“Where have you been all this time?” he wanted to know.

“I was explaining an oracle for Cousin Xifeng,” she told him with a smile.

He asked her what it had been and she read it out to him.

“Everyone declares it’s a good omen,” she told him. “But I think ‘returns home in splendour’ may mean something else. Well, time will show.”

“You’re too sceptical, trying to twist the saint’s meaning,” he protested. “Everybody has always known that this is a good omen. Why read some other meaning into it? How else would you explain it anyway?”

Before Baochai could tell him, a maid came from Lady Wang to summon her and she had to go over at once. To know the reason for this summons, read the next chapter.



## 第一百二回

### 宁国府骨肉病灾侵 大观园符水驱妖孽

话说王夫人打发人来唤宝钗，宝钗连忙过来请了安。王夫人道：“你三妹妹如今要出嫁了，你们作嫂子的大家开导开导他，也是你们姊妹之情。况且他也是个明白孩子，我看你们两个也很合的来。只是我听见说，宝玉听见他三妹妹出门子，哭的了不的。你也该劝劝他才是。如今我的身子是十病九痛的，你二嫂子也是三日好两日不好。你还心地明白些，诸事该管的，也别说只管吞着，不肯得罪人。将来这一番家事都是你的担子。”宝钗答应着。王夫人又说道：“还有一件事，你二嫂子昨儿带了柳家媳妇的丫头来，说补在你们屋里。”宝钗道：“今日平儿才带过来，说是太太和二奶奶的主意。”王夫人道：“是哟，你二嫂子和我说，我想也没要紧，不便驳他的回。只是一件，我见那孩子眉眼儿上头也不是个很安顿的。起先为宝玉房里的丫头狐狸似的，我撵了几个，那时候你也自然知道，才搬回家去的。如今有你，固然不比先前了。我告诉你，不过留点神儿就是了。你们屋里，就是袭人那孩子还可以使得。”宝钗答应了，又说了几句话，便过来了。饭后到了探春那边，自有一番殷勤劝慰之言，不必细说。



## Chapter 102

### Powers of Darkness Derange the Inmates of the Ning Mansion Priests Exorcise Evil Spirits in Grand View Garden

Summoned by Lady Wang, Baochai hurried over to pay her respects to her.

“Tanchun is going to be married,” her mother-in-law said. “As her sister-in-law, you should give her some good advice to show your affection. After all, she’s an intelligent child too, and I know how well both of you get on together. But I hear the news of her marriage set Baoyu crying bitterly — you should reason with him as well.

“These days I’m constantly ailing, and Xifeng is unwell three days out of five. As you have good sense you ought to take things in hand, not holding back for fear of giving offence. In future you’ll be responsible for this whole household.”

“Yes, madam.”

“Another thing,” continued Lady Wang. “Your sister-in-law Xifeng brought Mrs. Liu’s daughter here yesterday and said, as you’re one maid short, the girl’s to join your staff.”

“Pinger brought her over just now, saying that both you and Xifeng had agreed to it, madam.”

“Yes, Xifeng proposed it to me and I raised no objection — I could hardly turn her down. Only, judging by the look in that girl’s eyes, she’s not the kind to keep quiet. I dismissed some of Baoyu’s maids before because they were such vixens; but of course *you* know that — that was why you moved out of the Garden. Now with you here things are different. I’m telling you just so that you’ll be on the look-out. The only reliable girl in your place is Xiren.”

Baochai expressed agreement and after a little more chat she took her leave. After her meal, she called on Tanchun and they had a good heart-to-heart talk which we need not record in detail.





次日，探春将要起身，又来辞宝玉。宝玉自然难割难分。探春倒将纲常大体的话说的宝玉始而低头不语，后来转悲作喜，似有醒悟之意。于是探春放心辞别众人，竟上轿登程，水舟陆车而去。

先前众姊妹们都住在大观园中，后来贾妃薨后，也不修葺。到了宝玉娶亲，林黛玉一死，史湘云回去，宝琴在家住着，园中人少，况兼天气寒冷，李纨姊妹、探春、惜春等俱挪回旧所。到了花朝月夕，依旧相约玩耍。如今探春一去，宝玉病后不出屋门，益发没有高兴的人了。所以园中寂寞，只有几家看园的人住着。那日，尤氏过来送探春起身，因天晚省得套车，便从前年在园里开通宁府的那个便门里走过去了，觉得凄凉满目，台榭依然，女墙一带都种作园地一般，心中怅然如有所失。因到家中，便有些身上发热，挣扎一两天，竟躺倒了。日间的发烧犹可，夜里身热异常，便谵语绵绵。贾珍连忙请了大夫看视，说感冒起的，如今缠经入了足阳明胃经，所以谵语不清，如有所见；有了大秽，即可身安。

尤氏服了两剂，并不稍减，更加发起狂来。贾珍着急，便叫贾蓉来：“打听外头有好医生，再请几位来瞧瞧。”贾蓉回道：“前儿这个大夫是最兴时的了，只怕我母亲的病不是药





The next day before setting off on her journey, Tanchun came to say goodbye to Baoyu who was, of course, most reluctant to see her go. She held forth, however, on the moral principles governing human relations and, though at first he hung his head in silence, he gradually brightened up and showed signs of seeing sense. Then, relieved in her mind, she bade farewell to the whole household, mounted her sedan-chair and set off to journey south by boat and by carriage.

Formerly all the girls had stayed in Grand View Garden; but after the Imperial Consort's death the place was not kept up. By the time of Baoyu's marriage and Daiyu's death, as Xiangyun had also left and Baoqin had moved home very few people remained there. Then, when the weather grew colder, Li Wan and her cousins as well as Tanchun and Xichun moved back to their former quarters, only returning sometimes by common consent to enjoy the flowers and moonlight. Now that Tanchun had gone and Baoyu was staying indoors to recuperate, there were even fewer pleasure-seekers left. So the Garden was very quiet, with only a few caretakers in residence.

After Madam You had gone over to see Tanchun off that day, as it was already dark and she did not want to take a carriage, she decided to walk through the side-gate which had been made in the Garden to give access to the Ning Mansion. She found the place desolate, its pavilions and lodges deserted, with vegetables growing in the former flower-beds. The sight filled her with nostalgia.

By the time she reached home she had a slight fever and, after bearing up for a couple of days, she had to take to her bed. During the daytime she was not too feverish, but at night her temperature shot up and she became delirious. The doctor summoned by Jia Zhen to attend her diagnosed a chill which had upset her digestion, making her delirious and subject to delusions. A bowel movement should set her right.

However, two doses of medicine failed to cure her — she raved more wildly than ever. In his anxiety Jia Zhen sent for Jia Rong.

“Find out what other good doctors there are outside and ask some of them here to see her,” he ordered his son.

“This doctor we had is the best-known,” was the answer. “Maybe my mother's illness is one that medicine can't cure.”



治得好的。”贾珍道：“胡说！不吃药，难道由他去罢？”贾蓉道：“不是说不治，为的是前日母亲往西府去，回来是穿着园子里走过来的。一到了家，就身上发烧，别是撞客着了罢。外头有个毛半仙，是南方人，卦起的很灵，不如请他来占算占算。看有信儿呢，就依着他；要是不中用，再请别的好大夫来。”贾珍听了，即刻叫人请来；坐在书房内喝了茶，便说：“府上叫我，不知占什么事？”贾蓉道：“家母有病，请教一卦。”毛半仙道：“既如此，取净水洗手，设下香案，让我起出一课来看就是了。”一时，下人安排定了，他便怀里掏出卦筒来，走到上头，恭恭敬敬的作了一个揖，手内摇着卦筒，口里念道：“伏以太极两仪，絪縕交感，图书出而变化不穷，神圣作而诚求必应。兹有信官贾某，为因母病，虔请伏羲、文王、周公、孔子四大圣人，鉴临在上，诚感则灵，有凶报凶，有吉报吉，先请内象三爻。”说着，将筒内的钱倒在盘内，说：“有灵的，头一爻就是‘交’。拿起来又摇了一摇，倒出来，说是‘单’。第三爻又是‘交’。捡起钱来，嘴里说是：“内爻已示，更请外象三爻，完成一卦。”起出来，





“Nonsense! Stop giving her medicine, just leaving her to get over it herself?”

“That’s not what I meant, sir. But the other day, when she went to the West Mansion, she came back through the Garden and as soon as she got home she had this fever, so something there may have put a jinx on her. There’s a very good diviner here from the south, a man called Mao Banxian. Why not ask him here to consult him? If it seems that’s what happened, we’ll follow his advice. If it doesn’t work, we can look for other good doctors.”

Jia Zhen immediately sent to invite this man. He was offered a seat in his study and served with tea.

“You sent for me, sir,” the diviner said to Jia Rong. “What do you want me to prognosticate?”

“My mother is ill. We’d like you to divine the reason.”

“In that case,” said Mao, “bring me clean water to wash my hands and set incense on the table. I’ll see what I can do.”

When the servants had done as he asked, he took out from his pocket a bamboo tube and, stepping forward, made a reverent bow.

He shook the tube, intoning, “The Yin and Yang of the Primal Order have interacted; sacred symbols have appeared with infinite changes; divine manifestations must answer the prayers of the pious.

“Now here is a devout gentleman named Jia whose mother is ill. We piously beseech the four great sages Fu Xi, King Wen, the Duke of Zhou and Confucius to hear our supplication, that manifestations may appear for the faithful and bad or good fortune be truthfully predicted. First vouchsafe the three inner signs.”

He emptied three coins from the tube on to a plate, then announced, “A true manifestation: the first toss shows three obverses.”

Then he picked up the coins and poured them out again. The second toss was two obverses and one reverse, the third another three obverses.

Picking up these coins he intoned, “Now the inner signs have been revealed; we vouchsafe the three outer signs to make up the answer.”

These came out as two obverses and one reverse for the first toss, two reverses and one obverse for the second, while the third was the same as the first.





是“单拆单”。那毛半仙收了卦筒和铜钱，便坐下问道：“请坐，请坐，让我来细细的看看。这个卦乃是‘未济’之卦。世爻是第三爻，午火兄弟劫财，晦气是一定该有的。如今尊驾为母问病，用神是初爻，真是父母爻动出官鬼来。五爻上又有一层官鬼，我看令堂太夫人的病是不轻的。还好，还好，如今子亥之水休囚，寅木动而生火。世爻上动出一个子孙来，倒是克鬼的。况且日月生身，再隔两日，子水官鬼落空，交到戌日就好了。但是父母爻上变鬼，恐怕令尊大人也有些关碍。就是本身世爻，比劫过重，到了水旺土衰的日子，也不好。”说完了，便撇着胡子坐着。

贾蓉起先听他捣鬼，心里忍不住要笑；听他讲的卦理明白，又说生怕父亲也不好，便说道：“卦是极高明的，但不知我母亲到底是什么病？”毛半仙道：“据这卦上，世爻午火变水相克，必是寒火凝结。若要断得清楚，揲著也不大明白，除非用‘大六壬’才断的准。”贾蓉道：“先生都高明的么？”毛半仙道：“知道些。”贾蓉便要请教，报了一个时辰。毛先生便画了盘子，将神将排定算去，是戌上白虎。“这课叫做‘魄化课’。大凡白虎乃是凶将，乘旺象气受制，便不能为害。如今乘着死神死煞，及时令囚死，则为饿虎，定是伤





Thereupon Mao Banxian put away the tube and the coins and resumed his seat.

“Please sit down while I study this carefully,” he said. “This is an irrelevant diagram. The third sign indicates plundering of brothers and certain misfortune. But since you are asking about your honourable mother’s illness, it is the first sign that counts; and in that parents’ sign there is a hostile ghost. The fifth sign shows another ghost; hence I fear your mother’s illness is quite serious.

“However, there is a compensating factor, namely that the water element is now in the ascendant, and next comes wood which leads in turn to fire. Then there is a progeny sign which subdues ghosts. Besides, in another two days the water will subside and all will be well.

“But I fear from the ghost in the parents’ sign that your father’s health may be affected too. The manifestations also show serious contradictions and destruction, and there will be trouble when water is in the ascendant and earth is weak.” With this he sat down, thrusting forward his goatee.

Jia Rong had at first been laughing up his sleeve at this rigmarole, but now he felt there might be something in it and in this prediction that his father would fall ill too.

“This is brilliantly divined, sir,” he said. “But what caused my mother’s illness?”

“The signs indicate fire counteracted by water, therefore it must be a case of a cold congestion combined with a hot humour. Even divination by milfoil would be unable to determine this more clearly — for that you would need to resort to the method of the Duodecimal Cycle.”

“Are you expert in that too, sir?”

“I know something about it.”

Jia Rong asked him to demonstrate and gave him the two-hour period. Then Mao Banxian drew a board, set the deities in due order and found that it was the hour of the White Tiger.

“This is called the ‘dissolution of animal spirits,’” he said. “White tigers are evil. When controlled by a spirit in the ascendant they cannot run amok; but now that disaster has befallen the house, at a time of misfortune and death, tigers grow ravenous and must prey on people.

人。就如魄神受惊消散，故名‘魄化’。这课象说是人身丧魄，忧患相仍，病多死丧，讼有忧惊。按象有日墓虎临，必定是傍晚得病的。象内说：‘凡占此课，必定旧宅有伏虎作怪，或有形响。’如今尊驾为大人而占，正合着虎在阳忧男，在阴忧女：此课十分凶险呢！”贾蓉没有听完，唬得面上失色道：“先生说的很是，但与那卦又不大相合，到底有妨碍么？”毛半仙道：“你不用慌，待我慢慢的再看。”低着头又咕哝了一会子，便说：“好了，有救星了！算出已上有贵神解救，谓之‘魄化魂归’，先忧后喜，是不妨事的；只要小心些就是了。”

贾蓉奉上卦金，送了出去；回禀贾珍，说是：“母亲的病，是在旧宅傍晚得的，为撞着什么‘伏尸白虎’。”贾珍道：“你说你母亲前日从园里走回来的，可不是那里撞着的！你还记得你二婶娘到园里去，回来就病了？他虽没有见什么，后来那些丫头老婆们，都说是山子上一个毛烘烘的东西，眼睛有灯笼大，还会说话，他把二奶奶赶回来了，唬出一场病来。”贾蓉道：“怎么不记得！我还听见宝二叔家的焙茗说：晴雯做了园里芙蓉花的神了；林姑娘死了，半空里有音乐，必定他也是管什么花儿了。想这许多妖怪在园里，还了得！头里人多阳气重，常来常往不打紧；如今冷落的时候，母亲打那里走，还不知踹了什么花儿呢，不然，就是撞着那





The portent acquired this name because animal spirits dissipate when alarmed.

“This sign indicates the loss of animal spirits attended by deaths, sicknesses and alarms. Since, according to the portent, tigers appear at dusk, she must have been taken ill in the evening. It also says, ‘All who cast this lot must have a tiger spirit lurking in an old house to cause trouble. It may take form and utter sounds.’ You asked to have your parents’ fortunes told, sir. This coincides with the saying that a tiger appearing in the daytime harries men, seen at night it harries women. This is very ominous!”

Before Jia Rong had heard him out he was pale with fright. “No doubt, sir,” he agreed. “But this doesn’t altogether accord with that other prediction. Just how serious is it?”

“Don’t panic. Let me study it carefully again.” He lowered his head and muttered to himself for a while.

“Good!” he cried presently. “There is hope. I have worked out that a noble spirit will come to the rescue. This sign is known as the ‘dissolution of the sentient soul with the return of the spiritual soul.’ Anxiety will be followed by joy. All will be well, but you must take precautions.”

Jia Rong presented him with his fee and saw him out.

He then reported to Jia Zhen, “Mother caught this illness in the old house at dusk, when she met a white tiger spirit.”

“You told me that the other day your mother came back through the Garden; she must have run into it there. Remember how your aunt Xifeng fell ill after going to the Garden? Though she didn’t see anything herself, later on all the maids and nurses with her declared they had seen a furry creature on a rock with eyes as big as lanterns, and able to speak. It drove her back, making her fall ill from fright.”

“Yes, I remember,” replied Jia Rong. “I also heard from Uncle Bao’s page Mingyan that Qingwen had become the Spirit of the Hibiscus in the Garden, and that after Miss Lin died music sounded high above, so she must have been put in charge of some flowers there too. What a dreadful thing — all those monsters in the Garden! Before, with all those people coming and going and the place so full of life, it didn’t matter. But now it’s very lonely, and when my mother went there she may have trodden



一个?那卦也还算是准的。”贾珍道：“到底说有妨碍没有呢?”贾蓉道：“据他说，到了戌日就好了。——只愿早两天好，或除两天才好。”贾珍道：“这又是什么意思?”贾蓉道：“那先生若是这样准，生怕老爷也有些不自在。”

正说着，里头喊道：“奶奶要坐起到那边园里去，丫头们都按捺不住。”贾珍等进去安慰，只闻尤氏嘴里乱说：“穿红的来叫我!穿绿的来赶我!”地下这些人又怕又好笑。贾珍便命人买些纸钱，送到园里烧化。果然那夜出了汗，便安静些。到了戌日，也就渐渐的好起来。

由是，一人传十，十人传百，都说大观园中有了妖怪，唬得那些看园的人也不修花补树、灌溉果蔬。起先晚上不敢行走，以致鸟兽逼人；近来甚至日间也是约伴持械而行。过了些时，果然贾珍也病，竟不请医调治，轻则到园化纸许愿，重则详星拜斗。贾珍方好，贾蓉等相继而病。如此接连数月，闹的两府俱怕。从此风声鹤唳，草木皆妖。园中出息一概全蠲，各房月例重新添起，反弄的荣府中更加拮据。那些看园的没有了想头，个个要离此处，每每造言生事，便将花妖树怪编派起来，各要搬出。将园门封固，再无人敢到园中，以致崇楼高阁，琼馆瑶台，皆为禽兽所栖。





on some flowers or had some jinx put on her. So it seems the divination was correct.”

“Did he say there was any danger?” asked Jia Zhen.

“According to him, in another two days she’ll be better — but I hope it doesn’t all happen as he predicted.”

“What do you mean?”

“If that fortune-teller was right, sir, I’m afraid you’ll be out of sorts too.”

Just then, someone called out from the inner quarters, “The mistress wants to get up and go over to the Garden. Her maids can’t stop her!”

Her husband and son went in to pacify her.

“The one in red’s calling me! The one in green’s hurrying me!” Madam You was raving.

All present were both frightened and amused. Jia Zhen sent to buy paper money to burn in the Garden. And, sure enough, that night she sweated and calmed down, while after another two days she gradually recovered.

This story spread until everyone was talking of the devils in the Garden, and the servants in charge there were too scared to cut flowers, prune tress or water the vegetables. At first, they dared not venture out at night, so that birds and beasts ran wild; then, even in the daytime, they would only go there in groups and armed with weapons.

Later, indeed, Jia Zhen also fell ill, but instead of consulting a doctor or taking medicine he made certain vows and had paper money burnt in the Garden and prayers offered to the stars. No sooner had he recovered than Jia Rong and the others fell ill in turn. This went on for several months, so that both households were appalled — the sough of the wind and the cry of cranes caused panic, while people saw monsters in each tree or tuft of grass. As all income from the Garden stopped, the monthly expenses of different compounds increased and the Rong Mansion was harder pressed for money. The servants in the Garden, eager to leave the place, kept making up stories and stirring up trouble with their tales of flower spirits and tree monsters. So finally the Garden gate was sealed up and no one dared to go there any more. The fine towers, pavilions, lodges and terraces were each and all taken over by birds and beasts.

却说晴雯的表兄吴贵正住在园门口。他媳妇自从晴雯死后，听见说作了花神，每日晚间便不敢出门。这一日，吴贵出门买东西，回来晚了。那媳妇子本有些感冒着了，日间吃错了药，晚上吴贵到家，已死在炕上。外面的人因那媳妇子不大妥当，便说妖怪爬过墙来吸了精去死的。于是老太太着急的了不得，另派了好些人将宝玉的住房围住，巡逻打更。这些小丫头们还说，有看见红脸的，有看见很俊的女人的，吵嚷不休，唬的宝玉天天害怕。亏得宝钗有把持，听见丫头们混说，便吓唬着要打，所以那些谣言略好些。无奈各房的人都是疑人疑鬼的不安静，也添了人坐更，于是更加了好些食用。

独有贾赦不大很信，说：“好好儿的园子，那里有什么鬼怪！”挑了个风清日暖的日子，带了好几个家人，手内持着器械，到园踹看动静。众人劝他不依。到了园中，果然阴气逼人。贾赦还挣扎前走，跟的人都探头缩脑的。内中有个年轻的家人，心内已经害怕，只听“唿”的一声，回过头来，只见五色灿烂的一件东西跳过去了，唬的“嗷哟”一声，腿子发软，就栽倒了。贾赦回身查问，那小子喘嘘嘘的回道：“亲眼看见一个黄脸红胡子绿衣裳一个妖精走到树林子后头山窟窿里去了。”贾赦听了，便也有些胆怯，问道：“你们都看见么？”有几个“推顺水船儿”的回说：“怎么没瞧见？因老爷在头里，不敢惊动罢了。奴才们还掌得住。”说得贾赦害怕，也不敢再走，急急的回来；吩咐小子们不用提及，只说看遍了，没有什么东西；心里实也相信，要到真人府里请法官驱邪。岂知那些家人无事还要生事，今见贾赦怕了，不但



Now Qingwen's cousin Wu Gui lived just outside the Garden gate. Since Qingwen's death and the story that she had turned into a flower spirit, his wife dared not go out at night. One day she had a cold and took the wrong medicine while Wu Gui was out shopping, so that on his return late that evening he found her dead on the *kang*. Outsiders, knowing her bad reputation, claimed that a monster had climbed over the wall to enjoy her until she died of exhaustion.

The old lady, scandalized by this talk, posted guards outside Baoyu's house who sounded the watch as they patrolled in turn. And these young maids alleged that they had seen a redfaced figure as well as a ravishing beauty, raising such a ceaseless commotion that Baoyu went in terror every day. Luckily, Baochai had sense and she managed to curb these rumours to some extent by threatening to beat any maids whom she heard talking wildly. Still, all who lived there were so apprehensive that they hired extra watchmen, adding to the household's expenses.

Jia She alone was sceptical.

"How could there be monsters in such a fine garden?" he scoffed.

Choosing a fine sunny day and ignoring the others' warnings, he led a troop of armed servants to investigate.

Inside the Garden there was indeed a sinister atmosphere. Jia She braced himself to proceed, while his followers flinched with fear. One young servant, already afraid, heard a whizzing noise and looked round to see a gaudy creature fly past. With a cry of terror, his legs gave way and he fell down. Jia She turned to ask what had happened.

"I saw a monster!" gasped the boy. "Yellow in the face with a red beard, dressed in green. It flew into a cave behind the trees."

Shaken by this, Jia She asked, "Did the rest of you see it?"

Some servants seized this chance to chime in, "Yes, we did, sir. But as you were ahead, we didn't like to alarm you. So we kept quiet about it. We slaves can control ourselves."

Afraid to go any further, Jia She beat a hasty retreat, instructing the servants not to mention this but to say that a thorough search of the Garden had revealed nothing amiss. At heart, however, he believed the boy's story and decided to go to the Taoist Patriarch to invite some priests to exorcise evil spirits. And when they saw his fear, those servants who





不瞒着，反添些穿凿，说得人人吐舌。

贾赦没法，只得请道士到园作法，驱邪逐妖。择吉日，先在省亲正殿上铺排起坛场来。供上三清圣象，旁设二十八宿并马、赵、温、周四大将，下排三十六天将图象。香花灯烛设满一堂，钟鼓法器排列两边，插着五方旗号。道纪司派定四十九位道众的执事，净了一天坛。三位法官行香取水毕，然后擂起法鼓。法师们俱戴上七星冠，披上九宫八卦的法衣，踏着登云履，手执牙笏，便拜表请圣。又念了一天的消灾驱邪接福的“洞元经”，以后便出榜召将。榜上大书“太乙、混元、上清三境灵宝符篆演教大法师，行文敕令本境诸神到坛听用”。那日，两府上下爷们仗着法师擒妖，都到园中观看，都说：“好大法令！呼神遣将的闹起来，不管有多少妖怪也唬跑了。”大家都挤到坛前。只见小道士们将旗幡举起，按定五方站住，伺候法师号令。三位法师，一位手提宝剑，拿着法水；一位捧着七星皂旗；一位举着桃木打妖鞭：立在坛前。只听法器一停，上头令牌三下，口中念起咒来，那五方旗便团团散布。法师下坛，叫本家领着到各处楼阁殿亭，房廊屋舍，山崖水畔，洒了法水，将剑指画了一回。回





never let slip a chance to make trouble not only did not hush it up but embroidered on the story, so that all who heard it gaped in consternation.

Jia She felt he had no choice but to call in Taoists to exorcise the spirits haunting the Garden. An auspicious day was selected, and on the altar set up in the Hall of Reunion were placed the images of the Three Taoist Gods with, beside them, the Twenty-eight Constellations, the Four Great Generals Ma, Zhao, Wen and Zhou and, below these, the Thirty-six Heavenly Officers. Incense, flowers, lamps and candles filled the hall, on either side of which were ranged bells, drums and other sacred vessels, as well as five flags denoting north, south, east, west and centre. The Board of Taoist Sacrifices sent forty-nine attendants who spent a whole day purifying the altar. Then three high priests offered incense and sprinkled water, after which the sacred drum was beaten. The priests wore seven-star chaplets, nine-coloured robes with Eight Diagrams designs, and cloud-ascending sandals. Holding ivory wands, they presented a memorial begging the gods to descend.

Then for a whole day they chanted the *Primal Void Canon* to wipe out evil spirits and bring good fortune. This done, they issued the order to summon the heavenly generals. On it was written in large characters, "The Grand Monad, using the holy signs of the Three Sacred Realms, convokes all the deities of these realms to the altar for service."

The masters and the men-servants of both mansions had gone to the Garden that day to watch the priests catch monsters.

"What an impressive order!" they commented. "This commotion to summon heavenly generals here should frighten any number of monsters away."

They crowded round the altar to watch the acolytes raising flags and taking up their positions north, south, east, west and centre to await orders. Next, the three high priests took their places before the altar, the first holding a sword and pitcher of holy water, the second the seven-starred black flag, and the third the peach-wood rod for beating monsters. As soon as the music stopped, the magic tablet was rapped three times and they chanted incantations while the acolytes with their flags circled round them. Then the high priests, leaving the altar, made members of the family lead them to the various pavilions, lodges, rocks and



来，连击令牌，将七星旗祭起，众道士将旗旛一聚接下，打妖鞭望空打了三下。本家众人都道拿住妖怪，争着要看，及到跟前，并不见有什么形响。只见法师叫众道士拿取瓶罐，将妖收下，加上封条，法师朱笔书符收起，令人带回在本观塔下镇住，一面撤坛谢将。贾赦恭敬叩谢了法师。

贾蓉等小弟兄背地都笑个不住，说：“这样的大排场，我打量拿着妖怪给我们瞧瞧，到底是些什么东西，那里知道是这样搜罗！究竟妖怪拿去了没有？”贾珍听见，骂道：“糊涂东西！妖怪原是聚则成形，散则成气，如今多少神将在这里，还敢现形吗？无非把这妖气收了，便不作祟，就是法力了。”众人将信将疑，且等不见响动再说。

那些下人只知妖怪被擒，疑心去了，便不大惊小怪，往后果然没人提起了。贾珍等病愈复原，都道法师神力。独有一个小厮笑说道：“头里那些响动，我也不知道。就是跟着大老爷进园这一日，明明是个大公野鸡飞过去了；拴儿吓离了眼，说的活像！我们都替他圆了个谎，大老爷就认真起来。倒瞧了个很热闹的坛场！”众人虽然听见，那里肯信，究无人敢住。





streams so that they could sprinkle them with holy water and brandish the sword at each. Returning, they rapped the tablet again several times and raised high the seven-starred flag. Next, the priests held the flags together and the rod beat the air three times.

The onlookers, sure that by now the monsters must have been caught, pressed forward to see them; but there was no sign of them. They saw nothing but the high priests sending for a bottle in which to imprison the monsters, and when this had been sealed up they wrote a charm in vermilion on the seal, then put the bottle away with instructions that later it should be taken back and kept securely under their temple pagoda. Finally, the altar having been cleared, they offered up thanks to the heavenly generals.

Jia She expressed respectful gratitude to the priests, but Jia Rong and some other younger men of the family were secretly most amused.

“What a great to-do!” they scoffed. “We expected them to show us the monsters they’d caught, to let us see what they were really like after all that hunting round. Heaven knows whether they caught anything or not!”

“You fools!” swore Jia Zhen. “Monsters take shape or vanish into thin air just as they please. With all the heavenly generals here, how dare they show themselves? Now that the evil has been exorcised, they’ll have to stop making trouble — such is the power of the sacred doctrine.”

The young men waited sceptically to watch for further developments. The servants, however, did not question the claim that the monsters had been captured. They stopped panicking and let the matter drop. The recovery of Jia Zhen and the other invalids was also attributed to the Taoists’ magic.

Only one page chortled, “I don’t know what happened earlier on, but I went to the Garden that day with Lord She, and it was a big pheasant that flew past — that was plain as daylight. But Shuaner took fright, thought he’d seen an apparition and described it to the life! We all backed him up by fibbing, so Lord She took his story seriously. That’s why we had this grand show to watch today!”

But none of his hearers believed him, and still no one had the courage



一日，贾赦无事，正想要叫几个家下人搬住园中看守，惟恐夜晚藏匿奸人。方欲传出话去，只见贾琏进来，请了安，回说：“今日到大舅家去，听见一个荒信，说是二叔被节度使参进来，为的是失察属员，重征粮米，请旨革职的事。”贾赦听了，吃惊道：“只怕是谣言罢？前儿你二叔带书子来，说，探春于某日到了任所，择了某日吉时，送了你妹子到了海疆，路上风恬浪静，合家不必挂念。还说节度认亲，倒设席贺喜。那里有做了亲戚倒提参起来的？且不必言语，快到吏部打听明白，就来回我。”贾琏即刻出去，不到半日回来，便说：“才到吏部打听，果然二叔被参。题本上去，亏得皇上的恩典，没有交部，便下旨意，说是：‘失察属员，重征粮米，苛虐百姓，本应革职，姑念初膺外任，不谙吏治，被属员蒙蔽，着降三级，加恩仍以工部员外上行走，并令即日回京。’这信是准的。正在吏部说活的时候，来了一个江西引见的知县，说起我们二叔是很感激的。但说是个好上司，只是用人不当，那些家人在外招摇撞骗，欺凌属员，已经把好名声都弄坏了。节度大人早已知道，也说我们二叔是





to live in the Garden.

One day, when Jia She was at leisure, he thought of ordering some servants to move into the Garden as caretakers to prevent bad characters from hiding there at night. Before he could give this order, Jia Lian came in and paid his respects.

“Today, in Uncle Wang’s place, I heard that Second Uncle has been impeached by the governor,” he announced. “He’s accused of not keeping a check on his subordinates and of levying too much grain. The court has been petitioned to dismiss him.”

“It must surely be a rumour!” replied Jia She, very shocked. “Only the other day, he wrote to tell us the date of Tanchun’s arrival and the auspicious day chosen for seeing her off to the coast. She’d had a smooth journey, he said, so the family need not worry. He also wrote that the governor was treating him as a relative and had given him a congratulatory feast. How could anyone related to him impeach him? But let’s not waste time talking. Go straight to the Ministry of Civil Affairs to find out the facts, then come and let me know.”

Jia Lian left at once.

On his return a few hours later he said, “I’ve just heard in the ministry that he *has* been impeached. A report has been sent to the court, but thanks to His Majesty’s clemency it hasn’t been referred to the ministry. It has been decreed: ‘Since he failed to keep his subordinates in check and levied too heavy a grain tax, cruelly exploiting the people, he should be dismissed. But in view of the fact that he was new to this provincial post and inexperienced in administration, enabling his subordinates to deceive him, he is to be demoted three ranks and, by the gracious favour of the Emperor, can still serve as assistant minister of the Ministry of Works. He is to return forthwith to the capital.’

“This news is reliable. We were just discussing it in the ministry when a magistrate from Jiangxi, newly summoned to court, arrived. He has a high opinion of Second Uncle. Says he’s a good official but doesn’t know how to handle subordinates, so those servants of his made trouble outside, bullying and cheating people and spoiling his reputation. The governor, knowing this all along, also thinks well of Second Uncle. It’s puz-



个好人。不知怎么样，这回又参了。想是忒闹得不好，恐将来弄出大祸，所以借了一件失察的事情参的，倒是避重就轻的意思，也未可知。”贾赦未听说完，便叫贾琏：“先去告诉你婶子知道，且不必告诉老太太就是了。”贾琏去回王夫人。未知有何话说，下回分解。



zling that he should have impeached him now. Maybe things were getting so out of hand he was afraid there might be some big scandal and therefore accused him of negligence to get him off more lightly.”

Cutting him short, Jia She instructed him, “Go and tell your aunt about this, but don’t let the old lady know.”

Jia Lian went to report this news to Lady Wang. To know her reactions you must read the next chapter.





## 第一百三回

施毒计金桂自焚身 昧真禅雨村空遇旧

话说贾琏到了王夫人那边，一一的说了。次日，到了部里，打点停妥，回来又到王夫人那边将打点吏部之事告知王夫人。王夫人便道：“打听准了么？果然这样，老爷也愿意，合家也放心。那外任何尝不是做得的？不是这样回来，只怕叫那些混账东西把老爷的性命都坑了呢！”贾琏道：“太太怎么知道？”王夫人道：“自从你二叔放了外任，并没有一个钱拿回来，把家里的倒掏摸了好些去了。你瞧，那些跟老爷去的人，他男人在外头不多几时，那些小老婆子们都金头银面的妆扮起来了，可不是在外头瞒着老爷弄钱？你叔叔就由着他们闹去。要弄出事来，不但自己的官做不成，只怕连祖上的官也要抹掉了呢！”贾琏道：“太太说的很是。方才我听见参了，吓的了不得，直等打听明白才放心。也愿意老爷做个京官，安安逸逸的做几年，才保得住一辈子的声名。就是老太太知道了，倒也是放心的。只要太太说的宽缓些。”王夫人道：“我知道，你到底再去打听打听。”

贾琏答应了，才要出来，只见薛姨妈家的老婆子慌慌张张的走来，到王夫人里间屋内，也没说请安，便道：“我们太太叫我来告诉这里的姨太太说：我们家了不得了，又闹出事





## Chapter 103

### Jingui Plots Murder and Destroys Herself Jia Yucun, Blind to the Truth, Meets an Old Friend in Vain

Jia Lian went to tell Lady Wang all that had happened. The next day he returned to the Ministry of Civil Affairs for fuller information, then reported back to her.

“Is this news reliable?” she asked. “If so, the master will be pleased and our minds will be set at rest too. Those provincial posts are too risky. If he hadn’t been recalled like this, those scoundrels might have been the death of him!”

“How did you know that, madam?” he inquired.

“Since your Second Uncle went to this provincial post, instead of sending home a single cent he’s spent a whole lot of the family’s money. And look at those men who went with him: They hadn’t been gone long before their wives started dolling themselves up with gold and silver trinkets. Obviously they’ve been raking in money outside without the master knowing. And he’s let them get away with such goings-on. If there’d been a scandal, not only would he be dismissed — our ancestors might even be deprived of their titles!”

“You’re quite right, madam. When I first heard he’d been impeached I had the fright of my life, but after I got the facts clear I felt relieved. I hope he’ll pass some years quietly as an official in the capital, keeping his good reputation as long as he lives. Even if the old lady hears this she needn’t worry, provided you reassure her.”

“I know what to say. But go and see what more you can find out.”

Jia Lian assented and was on the point of leaving when in hurried one of Aunt Xue’s old serving-women in a fluster. Not stopping to pay her respects she blurted out:

“Our mistress has sent me, madam, to tell you that another dreadful thing has happened in our family!”



来了!”王夫人听了，便问：“闹出什么事来?”那婆子又说：“了不得，了不得!”王夫人哼道：“糊涂东西!有紧要事，你到底说呀!”婆子便说：“我们家二爷不在家，一个男人也没有，这件事情出来，怎么办!要求太太打发几位爷们去料理料理!”王夫人听着不懂，便着急道：“到底要爷们去干什么?”婆子道：“我们大奶奶死了!”王夫人听了，啐道：“呸!那行子女人死就死了罢咧，也值的大惊小怪的!”婆子道：“不是好好儿死的，是混闹死的!快求太太打发人去办办!”说着就要走。王夫人又生气，又好笑，说：“这老婆子好混账!琏哥儿，倒不如你去瞧瞧，别理那糊涂东西。”那婆子没听见打发人去，只听见说“别理他”，他便赌气跑回去了。

这里薛姨妈正在着急，再不见来。好容易那婆子来了，便问：“姨太太打发谁来?”婆子叹说道：“人再别有急难事。什么好亲好眷，看来也不中用!姨太太不但不肯照应我们，倒骂我糊涂!”薛姨妈听了，又气又急道：“姨太太不管，你姑奶奶怎么说来着?”婆子道：“姨太太既不管，我们家的姑奶奶自然更不管了，没有去告诉。”薛姨妈啐道：“姨太太是外人，姑娘是我养的，怎么不管?”婆子一时省悟道：“是啊!这么着我还去。”

正说着，只见贾琏来了，给薛姨妈请了安，道了恼，回说：“我婶子知道弟妇死了，问老婆子，再说不明，着急的很，打发我来问个明白，还叫我在这里料理。该怎么样，姨

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“What is it?”

“Something too awful for words!”

“You silly creature!” scolded Lady Wang. “If it’s so serious, tell me properly.”

“Master Ke is away, we’ve no man in the house; so how are we to cope? She wants you, madam, to send some gentlemen over to help us out.”

“But what do you want them for?” asked Lady Wang impatiently, having no idea what she was talking about.

“Madam Pan is dead!”

“Pah! Good riddance to bad rubbish! Why get so worked up?”

“It wasn’t a natural death — there’s been foul play. Please, madam, send someone over at once to cope!” With that she turned to go back.

Both angry and amused Lady Wang exclaimed, “What a fool this old woman is! You’d better go and see what’s happened, Lian. Pay no attention to that stupid creature.”

Not catching the instruction to him to go over, all the old woman heard was “pay no attention.” She hurried off in a huff.

Aunt Xue was waiting anxiously for her return. When at last the servant came back she asked her, “Well, whom is she sending?”

“It’s no use!” The old woman sighed. “When you’re in a fix, the kindest of kin will do nothing. Her Ladyship not only refuses to help us, she swore I was a fool!”

“If *she* won’t help,” cried Aunt Xue in exasperation, “What did the young mistress say?”

“If Her Ladyship won’t lift a finger, how can her daughter-in-law do anything? I didn’t go to tell her.”

“Her Ladyship isn’t one of our family, but how can the daughter whom I brought up ignore me?” demanded Aunt Xue irately.

“Of course!” exclaimed the old woman, catching on. “Well then, I’ll go again.”

But just then Jia Lian arrived. Having paid his respects to Aunt Xue and offered his condolences he said, “My aunt has heard that Pan’s wife is dead, but she couldn’t get any sense out of your servant and so she’s very worried. She’s sent me to find out what’s happened and told me to help. What can I do for you, aunt?”



太太只管说了办去。”薛姨妈本来气的干哭，听见贾琏的话，便赶忙说：“倒叫二爷费心。我说姨太太是待我最好的，都是这老货说不清，几乎误了事。请二爷坐下，等我慢慢的告诉你。”便道：“不为别的事，为的是媳妇不是好死的。”贾琏道：“想是为兄弟犯事，怨命死的？”薛姨妈道：“若这样倒好了！前几个月头里，他天天赤脚蓬头的疯闹。后来听见你兄弟问了死罪，他虽哭了一场，以后倒擦胭脂抹粉的起来。我要说他，又要吵个了不得，我总不理他。有一天，不知为什么来要香菱去作伴儿。我说：‘你放着宝蟾，要香菱做什么？况且香菱是你不爱的，何苦惹气呢？’他必不依。我没法儿，只得叫香菱到他屋里去。可怜香菱不敢违我的话，带着病就去了。谁知道他待香菱很好，我倒喜欢，你大妹妹知道了，说：‘只怕不是好心罢？’我也不理会。头几天香菱病着，他倒亲手去做汤给他喝。谁知香菱没福，刚端到跟前，他自己烫了手，连碗都砸了。我只说必要迁怒在香菱身上，他倒没生气，自己还拿笤帚扫了，拿水泼净了地，仍旧两个人很好。昨儿晚上，又叫宝蟾去做了两碗汤来，自己说和香菱一块儿喝。隔了一会子，听见他屋里闹起来，宝蟾急的乱嚷，以后香菱也嚷着，扶着墙出来叫人。我忙着看去，只见媳妇鼻子眼睛里都流出血来，在地下乱滚，两只手在心口里乱抓，两只脚乱蹬，把我就吓死了！问他也说不出来，闹了一会子就死了。我瞧那个光景儿是服了毒的。宝蟾就哭着来揪香菱，说他拿药药死奶奶了。我看香菱也不是这么样的人。再者，他病的起还起不来，怎么能药人呢？无奈宝蟾一



Aunt Xue had been sobbing with rage, but on hearing this she said quickly, "I'm sorry to put you out, Master Lian. I know how good my sister is to me, but this old creature can't give a message clearly and nearly held matters up. Please take a seat and I'll tell you all about it. The thing is — she didn't die a natural death."

"Did she kill herself in a pique because of Pan's trouble?"

"I only wish she had! These last few months she made scenes every day, going barefoot with tousled hair like a crazy creature. Although at the news of Pan's death sentence she did cry, she soon started making up again with rouge and powder; and had I protested she would have made a big row, so I ignored her. Then one day, for some reason, she came and asked to have Xiangling to keep her company. I told her, 'You have Baochan, so what do you want Xiangling for? It's not as if you liked her; why let her provoke you?' As she insisted, however, I had to tell Xiangling to move in with her. The poor girl dared not disobey me and, bad as her health was, she went there. I was pleasantly surprised when Jingui treated her very well, but when Baochai knew she said, 'Do you suppose Jingui is plotting something?' I paid no attention, though.

"A few days ago Xiangling fell ill, and Jingui made some soup for her herself. But Xiangling was out of luck: as Jingui took it to her she scalded her own hand and the bowl was smashed. I'd have expected her to blame it on Xiangling, but instead of losing her temper she swept up the pieces herself then mopped the floor, and they remained on good terms.

"Last night, she told Baochan to make two more bowls of soup for her to drink with Xiangling. After a while, I heard a great commotion in her room: first Baochan was screaming like mad, then Xiangling joined in and staggered out, leaning against the wall, to call for help.

"I hurried in and found my daughter-in-law thrashing about on the floor. Blood was gushing from her nose and eyes, and she was clawing with both hands at her stomach. I was frightened to death! When I asked what had happened she couldn't speak, and presently she died in agony. It looked to me as if she had taken poison.

"Then Baochan tearfully seized hold of Xiangling, accusing her of poisoning her mistress. I don't believe Xiangling would do such a thing. In any case, confined to her bed, how *could* she? But Baochan insisted



口咬定。我的二爷!这叫我怎么办?只得硬着心肠,叫老婆子们把香菱捆了,交给宝蟾,便把房门反扣了。我和你二妹妹守了一夜,等府里的门开了,才告诉去的。二爷!你是明白人,这件事怎么好?”贾琏道:“夏家知道了没有?”薛姨妈道:“也得撕掳明白了,才好报啊!”贾琏道:“据我看起来,必要经官才了的下来。我们自然疑在宝蟾身上,别人却说宝蟾为什么药死他们姑娘呢?若说在香菱身上,倒还装得上。”

正说着,只见荣府的女人们进来说:“我们二奶奶来了。”贾琏虽是大伯子,因从小儿见的,也不回避。宝钗进来见了母亲,又见了贾琏,便往里间屋里和宝琴坐下。薛姨妈进来也将前事告诉了一遍。宝钗便说:“若把香菱捆了,可不是我们也说是香菱药死的了么?妈妈说这汤是宝蟾做的,就该捆起宝蟾来问他呀。一面就该打发人报夏家去,一面报官才是。”薛姨妈听见有理,便问贾琏。贾琏道:“二妹子说的很是。报官还得我去托了刑部里的人,相验问口供的时候,方有照应。只是要捆宝蟾放香菱,倒怕难些。”薛姨妈道:“并不是我要捆香菱,我恐怕香菱病中受冤着急,一时寻死,又添了一条人命,才捆了交给宝蟾,也是个主意。”贾琏道:“虽是这么说,我们倒帮了宝蟾了。若要放都放,要捆都捆,他们三个人是一处的。只要叫人安慰香菱就是了。”薛姨妈便叫人开门进去。宝钗就派了带来的几个女人帮着捆



she'd done it. So what could I do, Lian? I had to harden my heart to tell the matrons to tie Xiangling up and leave her in Baochan's charge. Then we locked them into the room, and I sat up all night with your cousin Baoqin waiting for your gate to open so that we could send you word. You have good sense, Lian. Tell me, how should we handle this?"

"Does the Xia family know about it?" he asked.

"No. We must clear up the business before we tell them."

"I think we'll have to go through official channels to get the matter settled. Naturally it's Baochan whom we suspect, but other people will ask what reason she had to poison her own mistress. To them, Xiangling would seem more likely to do it."

As they were talking, maids from the Rong Mansion came in to announce their young mistress. Although Jia Lian was Baochai's elder cousin-in-law, as they had known each other since childhood he did not withdraw when she entered. Baochai paid her respects to her mother and him, then went into the inner room to sit with Baoqin. Aunt Xue followed her in and told her what had happened.

Baochai pointed out, "If we have Xiangling bound, it will look as if we too believe she was the poisoner. You say the soup was prepared by Baochan, mother. In that case, you should tie her up and question her, at the same time sending to tell the Xia family and to report this to the authorities."

Aunt Xue thought this reasonable and consulted Jia Lian.

"Baochai is quite right," he agreed. "When we have reported this, I must also go and ask some men in the Board of Punishments to help see to things at the inquest and interrogation. But I think it may make things awkward if we tie up Baochan and set Xiangling loose."

"I didn't want to tie up Xiangling," Aunt Xue told him. "But I was afraid that, ill as she is, this false accusation might make her so desperate she'd try to kill herself — then we'd have another death on our hands. That's why I decided to have her tied up and put in Baochan's charge."

"Still, this is strengthening Baochan's case," he objected. "They should either both be set free or both bound up, as the three of them were together. Well, just get somebody to comfort Xiangling."

Aunt Xue ordered the door to be opened and went in, while Baochai





宝蟾。只见香菱已哭的死去活来。宝蟾反得意洋洋，以后见人要捆他，便乱嚷起来。那禁得荣府的人吆喝着，也就捆了，竟开着门，好叫人看着。

这里报夏家的人已经去了。那夏家先前不住在京里，因近年消索，又惦记女孩儿，新近搬进京来。父亲已没，只有母亲，又过继了一个混账儿子，把家业都花完了，不时的常到薛家。那金桂原是个水性人儿，那里守得住空房，况兼天天心里想念薛蝌，便有些饥不择食的光景。无奈他这个干兄弟又是个蠢货，虽也有些知觉，只是尚未入港，所以金桂时常回去，也帮贴他些银钱。这些时正盼金桂回家，只见薛家的人来，心里想着：“又拿什么东西来了。”不料说这里的姑娘服毒死了，他就气的乱嚷乱叫。金桂的母亲听见了，更哭喊起来，说：“好端端的女孩儿在他家，为什么服了毒呢？”哭着喊着的，带了儿子，也等不得雇车，便要走来。那夏家本是买卖人家，如今没了钱，那顾什么脸面，儿子头里走，他就跟了个破老婆子出了门，在街上哭哭啼啼的雇了一辆车，一直跑到薛家。进门也不搭话，就“儿”一声“肉”一声的闹起。

那时贾璉到刑部去托人，家里只有薛姨妈、宝钗、宝琴，何曾见过这个阵仗儿，都吓的不敢则声。要和他讲理，他也不听，只说：“我女孩儿在你家，得过什么好处？两口子朝打暮骂，闹了几时，还不容他两口子在一处。你们商量着把我女婿弄在监里，永不见面。你们娘儿们仗着好亲戚受用

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sent the maids she had brought with her to help tie up Baochan, who had been gloating over the sight of Xiangling crying her heart out. When Baochan saw them coming with ropes to bind her she screamed, but the maids from the Rong Mansion silenced her and trussed her up. The door was left open with people on watch outside.

By then they had sent to inform the Xia family which had only recently moved to the capital, as in the last few years they had gone bankrupt and Mrs. Xia, a widow, missed her daughter. She had an adopted son, a scoundrel who had squandered all their money and who often called on the Xue family. Jingui was too amorous to live without a man and had long been hankering after Xue Ke, but hers was a case of "beggars can't be choosers." However, this foster-brother of hers was dense. Though he knew pretty well what she wanted he had not yet made love to her; and so Jingui, on her frequent visits home, would help him out with money. Today he was looking forward to a visit from her, when the arrival of a Xue family servant convinced him that here was another gift for him. At the news that she had died of poison, he set up an angry outcry. His mother raised an even bigger uproar.

"My daughter was doing all right there!" she screamed. "Why should she poison herself?"

Weeping and wailing, she set off on foot with her son without waiting for a carriage, for the Xias being bankrupt tradesmen did not trouble to keep up appearances. The son walked on ahead while his mother, accompanied by an old slattern, sobbed and snivelled in the street as she hired a carriage. As soon as she entered the Xues' gate, without greeting anyone she started loudly bewailing her "darling daughter," and clamouring for revenge.

Jia Lian had gone to the Board of Punishments to enlist help, leaving only Aunt Xue, Baochai and Baoqin at home. They had never seen such goings-on before and were too frightened to speak. Indeed, even had they reasoned with her, Mrs. Xia would not have listened.

"What good treatment did my daughter ever get in your family?" she ranted. "Her husband beat and cursed her all the time; then you wouldn't let the young couple stay together. You plotted to have my son-in-law imprisoned, so that she'd never set eyes on him again. Mother and daugh-



也罢了，还嫌他碍眼，叫人药死他，倒说是服毒！他为什么服毒？”说着，直奔薛姨妈来。薛姨妈只得退后，说：“亲家太太！且瞧瞧你女孩儿，问问宝蟾，再说歪话还不迟呢！”宝钗宝琴因外面有夏家的儿子，难以出来拦护，只在里边着急。

恰好王夫人打发周瑞家的照看，一进门来，见一个老婆子指着薛姨妈的脸哭骂。周瑞家的知道必是金桂的母亲，便走上来说：“这位是亲家太太么？大奶奶自己服毒死的，与我们姨太太什么相干？也不犯这么遭塌呀！”那金桂的母亲问：“你是谁？”薛姨妈见有了人，胆子略壮了些，便说：“这就是我们亲戚贾府里的。”金桂的母亲便道：“谁不知道你们有仗腰子的亲戚，才能够叫姑爷坐在监里！如今我的女孩儿倒白死了不成？”说着，便拉薛姨妈说：“你到底把我女孩儿怎么弄杀了？给我瞧瞧！”周瑞家的一面劝说：“只管瞧去，不用拉拉扯扯。”把手只一推。夏家的儿子便跑进来不依，道：“你仗着府里的势头儿来打我母亲么？”说着，便将椅子打去，却没有打着。里头跟宝钗的人听见外头闹起来，赶着来瞧，恐怕周瑞家的吃亏，齐打伙儿上去，半劝半喝，那夏家的母子，索性撒起泼来，说：“知道你们荣府的势头儿！我们家的姑娘已经死了，如今也都不要命了！”说着，仍奔薛姨妈拼命。地下的人虽多，那里挡得住，自古说的：“一人拼命，万夫莫当。”



ter, you enjoy yourselves with your fine relatives' backing, but you still couldn't bear the sight of Jingui and got someone to poison her, then accused her of killing herself! Why should she take poison?"

She charged at Aunt Xue, who fell back protesting, "Madam! First go and look at your daughter and question Baochan, before making such allegations."

As Mrs. Xia's adopted son was there, Baochai and Baoqin were unable to come to Aunt Xue's rescue. They could only wring their hands in the inner room.

Then, as luck would have it, Lady Wang sent Zhou Rui's wife to help out. She came in to see an old woman wagging a finger at Aunt Xue and screaming at her. She knew this must be Jingui's mother.

"Are you Mrs. Xia, madam?" asked Mrs. Zhou stepping forward. "The young mistress has poisoned herself. It wasn't Madam Xue's doing. How can you abuse her like this?"

"And who may *you* be?" Mrs. Xia retorted.

This reinforcement emboldened Aunt Xue to say, "She is one of the household of our Jia relatives."

"We all know you have powerful relatives," sneered Mrs. Xia. "That's why you can keep my son-in-law in jail. But does that mean that my child's death can go unavenged?" Seizing hold of Aunt Xue she demanded, "Just how did you murder my daughter anyway? Show me!"

Mrs. Zhou interposed, "Just go and see for yourself. Stop tugging at other people." She gave her a shove.

The adopted son ran over to protest, "Are you banking on your masters' power to beat up my mother?" He threw a chair at Mrs. Zhou, but missed her.

Baochai's maids inside on hearing this commotion hurried out, afraid Mrs. Zhou might get hurt. They crowded forward to intervene, expostulating and warning the fellow off. But that only made Mrs. Xia and her son set up a still greater clamour.

"We know how powerful your Rong Mansion is!" they yelled. "Now our girl has been killed, you may as well kill us too!"

Again they charged Aunt Xue. The maids, for all there were so many of them, were powerless to stop them for as the saying goes, "Ten thou-



正闹到危急之际，贾琏带了七八个家人进来，见是如此，便叫人先把夏家的儿子拉出去，便说：“你们不许闹，有话好好儿的说。快将家里收拾收拾，刑部里头的老爷们就来相验了。”金桂的母亲正在撒泼，只见来了一位老爷，几个在头里吆喝，那些人都垂手侍立。金桂的母亲见这个光景，也不知是贾府何人。又见他儿子已被众人揪住，又听见说刑部来验，他心里原想看见女孩儿的尸首，先闹个稀烂，再去喊冤，不承望这里先报了官，也便软了些。薛姨妈已吓糊涂了，还是周瑞家的回说：“他们来了也没去瞧瞧他们姑娘，便作践起姨太太来了。我们为劝他，那里跑进一个野男人，在奶奶们里头混撒村混打，这可不是没有王法了！”贾琏道：“这会子不用和他讲理，等回来打着问他，说：男人有男人的地方儿，里头都是些姑娘奶奶们。况且有他母亲还瞧不见他们姑娘么？他跑进来不是要打抢来了么！”家人们做好做歹，压伏住了。

周瑞家的仗着人多，便说：“夏太太，你不懂事！既来了，该问个青红皂白。你们姑娘是自己服毒死了；不然，就是宝蟾药死他主子了。怎么不问明白，又不看尸首，就想讹人来了呢？我们就肯叫一个媳妇儿白死了不成？现在把宝蟾捆着；因为你们姑娘必要点病儿，所以叫香菱陪着他，也在一个屋里住：故此，两个人都看守在那里。原等你们来眼看着刑部相验，问出道理来才是啊！”金桂的母亲此时势孤，也只得跟着周瑞家的到他女孩儿屋里，只见满脸黑血，直挺挺



sand men are no match for one desperado.”

Things had just taken this ugly turn when Jia Lian arrived with seven or eight men-servants. Sizing up the situation, he ordered his men to drag Mrs. Xia's son away.

“Stop this brawling and talk reasonably,” he said. “This place must be straightened up at once. Officers from the Board of Punishments are coming to hold an inquest.”

The arrival of this gentleman with attendants before him to clear the way made all the servants present stand at attention, and Jingui's mother realized that this must be one of the Jia family. Then her son was seized and she heard there was to be an official inquest. She had been meaning to raise a great ballyhoo over her daughter's corpse, then appeal to the court for justice, little thinking that the others would inform the authorities first. This took the wind out of her sails. Aunt Xue was still too stunned to speak, and it was Mrs. Zhou who reported to Jia Lian:

“This woman came here not to look at her daughter but to abuse Madam Xue. We were remonstrating with her when a wild man burst in to raise pandemonium. In the presence of ladies too — it was simply outrageous!”

“We needn't argue with them now,” said Jia Lian. “Later we can have him beaten and interrogated. Men should keep to themselves and not intrude on ladies. His mother could surely have seen her daughter by herself. Why should he rush in if not to loot the place?”

Meanwhile his servants had secured the young man.

“What a way to behave, Mrs. Xia!” cried Zhou Rui's wife now that she had more support. “Since you came, you should have asked the facts of the matter. Either your daughter committed suicide, or Baochan poisoned her. Why try to blackmail people before finding out the facts and seeing the corpse? Would Madam Xue let her daughter-in-law die and do nothing about it? We've tied Baochan up. Because your daughter was always making trouble, she asked Xiangling to keep her company and they slept in the same room. That's why both she and Baochan are under guard there. We were waiting for you to come and attend the inquest, at which we'll find out just what happened.”

Aware that her position was weak, Mrs. Xia had to go with Zhou



的躺在炕上，便叫哭起来。宝蟾见他家的人来，便哭喊道：“我们姑娘好意待香菱，叫他在一块儿住，他倒抽空儿药死我们姑娘！”那时薛家上下人等俱在，便齐声吆喝道：“胡说！昨日奶奶喝了汤才药死的，这汤可不是你做的？”宝蟾道：“汤是我做的，端了来，我有事走了。不知香菱起来放了些什么在里头，药死的。”金桂的母亲没听完，就奔香菱，众人拦住。

薛姨妈便道：“这样子是砒霜药的，家里决无此物。不管香菱宝蟾，终有替他买的。回来刑部少不得问出来，才赖不去。如今把媳妇科放平正，好等官来相验。”众婆子上来抬放。宝钗道：“都是男人进来，你们将女人动用的东西检点检点。”只见炕褥底下有一个揉成团的纸包儿。金桂的母亲瞧见，便拾起打开看时，并没有什么，便擦开了。宝蟾看见道：“可不是有了凭据了！这个纸包儿我认得：头几天耗子闹的慌，奶奶家去找舅爷要的，拿回来搁在首饰匣内。必是香菱看见了，拿来药死奶奶的。若不信，你们看看首饰匣里有没有了。”

金桂的母亲便依着宝蟾的话，取出匣子来，只有几支银簪子。薛姨妈便说：“怎么好些首饰都没有了？”宝钗叫人打开箱柜，俱是空的，便道：“嫂子这些东西被谁拿去？这可要问宝蟾。”金桂的母亲心里也虚了好些，见薛姨妈查问宝



Rui's wife to her daughter's room. The sight of Jingui lying stark on the *kang*, her face covered with clotted blood, set her wailing aloud.

When Baochan saw Mrs. Xia she sobbed, "Our young lady was kind to Xiangling, getting her to move in with her, yet Xiangling seized this chance to poison her!"

By now the whole Xue household had gathered there. "Nonsense!" they protested. "She died after drinking that soup yesterday. Weren't you the one who prepared it?"

"Yes, I was. But after bringing it in I went out to see to something else. Then Xiangling must have put some poison in it."

Before she had finished speaking, Jingui's mother dashed towards Xiangling, but the others barred her way.

Aunt Xue said, "It looks as if she was poisoned by arsenic. We certainly have none here. No matter whether it was Xiangling or Baochan, someone must have bought it for her. After investigation the authorities are sure to find out. The culprit can't get away. Now let's lay her out properly ready for the inquest."

As the women-servants set about doing this, Baochai proposed, "You should clear away those feminine articles — there will be men coming in."

Then, under the mattress on the *kang*, they discovered a crumpled paper packet. Jingui's mother pounced on this and opened it, but finding nothing in it threw it away.

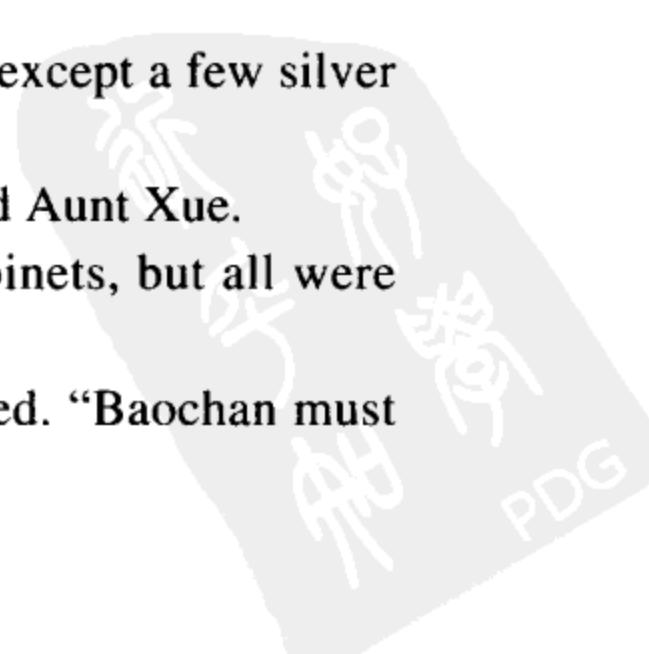
"There's the evidence all right!" exclaimed Baochan. "I recognize this packet. A few days ago, when we were plagued by rats, my mistress went to ask her brother for some arsenic and on her return put it in her jewel case. Xiangling must have seen it and used it to poison her. If you don't believe me, look in the jewel case."

Jingui's mother did so, but found nothing there except a few silver hairpins.

"Where have all her trinkets gone to?" wondered Aunt Xue.

Baochai made servants open the cases and cabinets, but all were empty.

"Who took my sister-in-law's things?" she asked. "Baochan must answer for this."







蟾，便说：“姑娘的东西，他那里知道？”周瑞家的道：“亲家太太别这么说。我知道宝姑娘是天天跟着大奶奶的，怎么说不知道？”宝蟾见问得紧，又不好胡赖，只得说道：“奶奶自己每每带回家去，我管得么？”众人便说：“好个亲家太太！哄着拿姑娘的东西，哄完了，叫他寻死，来讹我们！好罢咧！回来相验，就是这么说。”宝钗叫人：“到外头告诉璉二爷说：别放了夏家的人！”

里头金桂的母亲忙了手脚，便骂宝蟾道：“小蹄子别嚼舌头了！姑娘几时拿东西到我家去？”宝蟾道：“如今东西是小，给姑娘偿命是大。”宝琴道：“有了东西，就有偿命的人了！快请璉二哥哥问准了夏家的儿子买砒霜的话，回来好回刑部里的话。”金桂的母亲着了急道：“这宝蟾必是撞见鬼了，混说起来！我们姑娘何尝买过砒霜？要这么说，必是宝蟾药死了的！”宝蟾急的乱嚷，说：“别人赖我也罢了，怎么你们也赖起我来呢？你们不是常和姑娘说，叫他别受委屈，闹得他们家破人亡，那时将东西卷包儿一走，再配一个好姑爷：这个话是有的没有？”金桂的母亲还未及答言，周瑞家的便接口说道：“这是你们家的人说的，还赖什么呢？”金桂的母亲恨的咬牙切齿的骂宝蟾，说：“我待你不错呀！为什么你倒拿话来葬送我呢？回来见了官，我就说是你药死姑娘的！”

宝蟾气的瞪着眼说：“请太太放了香菱罢，不犯着白害别





"How should she know?" asked Jingui's mother uneasily.

"Don't say that, madam," put in Mrs. Zhou. "I know Baochan was with her all the time. Of course she must know."

Under such pressure, Baochan could not deny it and had to confess, "My mistress always took something each time she went home. How could I stop her?"

"A fine mother you are!" the rest jeered at Mrs. Xia. "Squeezing your daughter till she had nothing left, then making her kill herself so that you could blackmail us! Very well, we'll report this at the inquest."

Baochai ordered a maid, "Go and ask Master Lian outside not to let any of the Xia household get away. In the inner room Mrs. Xia was on pins and needles.

"You bitch!" she swore at Baochan. "Stop blabbing! When did my daughter ever take things home?"

"The things don't matter," countered Baochan. "What's important is to find out who murdered her."

"Once we've found those things, we shall know who murdered her," Baoqin declared. "Hurry up and ask Cousin Lian to check up on the arsenic her son bought, then report it to the authorities."

"This Baochan must have lost her mind, talking such rubbish," protested Jingui's mother frantically. "My daughter never bought any arsenic. If Baochan says this, *she* must have poisoned her!"

In desperation Baochan started shouting, "Other people may accuse me falsely, but how can *you*? Many's the time I heard you tell your daughter not to take things lying down but to raise a rumpus and ruin their family, then move out bag and baggage and marry a better man. Did you tell her that or not?"

Before Mrs. Xia could speak Zhou Rui's wife chimed in, "When one of your own servants bears witness against you, how can you deny it?"

Gnashing her teeth Mrs. Xia swore at Baochan, "I never treated you badly! Do you want to be the death of me talking that way? When the officers come, I'll tell them *you* were the one who poisoned my daughter!"

Baochan's eyes nearly started out of her head for fury. "Madam," she begged Aunt Xue, "please let Xiangling go. We shouldn't wrong



人，我见官自有我的话。”宝钗听出这个话头儿来了，便叫人反倒放开了宝蟾，说：“你原是个爽快人，何苦白冤在里头？你有话，索性说了，大家明白，岂不完了事了呢？”宝蟾也怕见官受苦，便说：“我们奶奶天天抱怨说：‘我这样人，为什么碰着这个瞎眼的娘，不配给二爷，偏给了这么个混账糊涂行子！要是能够和二爷过一天，死了也是愿意的！’说到这里，便恨香菱。我起初不理睬，后来看见和香菱好了，我只道是香菱怎么哄转了。不承望昨儿的汤不是好意——”金桂的母亲接说道：“越发胡说了！若是要药香菱，为什么倒药了自己呢？”宝钗便问道：“香菱，昨日你喝汤来着没有？”香菱道：“头几天我病的抬不起头来，奶奶叫我喝汤，我不敢说不喝。刚要挣扎起来，那碗汤已经洒了，倒叫奶奶收拾了个难，我心里很过不去。昨儿听见叫我喝汤，我喝不下去，没有法儿，正要喝的时候儿，偏又头晕起来。见宝蟾姐姐端了去，我正喜欢；刚合上眼，奶奶自己喝着汤，叫我尝尝，我便勉强也喝了两口。”宝蟾不待说完便道：“是了！我老实说罢。昨儿奶奶叫我做两碗汤，说是和香菱同喝。我气不过，心里想着：香菱那里配我做汤给他喝呢？我故意的一碗里头多抓了一把盐，记了暗记儿，原想给香菱喝的。刚端进来，奶奶却拦着我叫外头叫小子们雇车，说今日回家去。我出去说了回来，见盐多的这碗汤在奶奶跟前呢。我恐怕奶奶喝着咸，又要骂我。正没法的时候，奶奶往后头走动，我眼错不见，就把香菱这碗汤换过来了。也是合该如此。奶奶回来就



innocent people. I know what to say when I'm interrogated."

Hearing this, Baochai told them to untie Baochan instead. "An easy-going girl like you, why get yourself involved needlessly?" she asked. "If you know something, speak out and be done with it so that we can get this straight."

Afraid that if it came to an interrogation she might be tortured, Baochan told them, "My mistress was forever complaining, 'With my looks, why did I have to have such a senseless mother, who instead of marrying me to Master Ke gave me to that stupid ruffian! If I could spend a day with Master Ke, I'd die content!' That's what made her hate Xiangling. At first I didn't realize this, and later when she was good to Xiangling I supposed it was because Xiangling had won her round. I thought she ordered that soup out of kindness...."

"This is even greater nonsense!" fumed Jingui's mother. "If she wanted to poison Xiangling, why should she get poisoned herself?"

Baochai asked, "Xiangling, did you drink that soup yesterday?"

"A few days ago I was too ill even to raise my head," Xiangling replied. "When the mistress told me to drink I dared not refuse; but before I could struggle up the soup was spilt and she had to clean up the mess — I felt very bad about it. Yesterday, again, she told me to drink some soup. I didn't want to, but I had to. Before I could start on it, though, I came over dizzy and to my relief Sister Baochan took the bowl away. I was dozing off when the mistress drank her own soup and told me to try mine, so I forced myself to take a couple of sips...."

Baochan broke in, "That's it! I'll tell you the truth. Yesterday the mistress told me to make two bowls of soup for her to drink with Xiangling. I was furious! I thought: Who is Xiangling that I should make soup for *her*? So, on purpose, I put an extra handful of salt in one of the bowls and marked it secretly, meaning that one for Xiangling. But as I carried it in the mistress stopped me and sent me to tell a page to order a carriage, as she wanted to go home. When I came back from this errand, I saw the bowl I'd marked in front of the mistress. I was afraid she'd scold me for over-salting it, and didn't know what to do; but then she moved to the back of the room, and while she wasn't looking I changed the bowls round. Well, it served her right! She came back and carried the soup to



拿了汤去到香菱床边，喝着说：‘你到底尝尝。’那香菱也不觉咸，两个人都喝完了。我正笑香菱没嘴道儿，那里知道这死鬼奶奶要药香菱，必定趁我不在，将砒霜撒上了，也不知道我换碗。这可就是‘天理昭彰，自害自身’了！”于是众人往前后一想，真正一丝不错，便将香菱也放了，扶着他仍旧睡在床上。

不说香菱得放，且说金桂的母亲心虚事实，还想辩赖。薛姨妈等你言我语，反要他儿子偿还金桂之命。正然吵嚷，贾琏在外嚷说：“不用多说了，快收拾停当。刑部的老爷就到了。”此时惟有夏家母子着忙，想来总要吃亏的，不得已反求薛姨妈道：“千不是，万不是，总是我死的女孩儿不长进。这也是他自作自受。要是刑部相验，到底府上脸面不好看，求亲家太太息了这件事罢！”宝钗道：“那可使不得。已经报了，怎么能息呢？”周瑞家的等人大家做好做歹的劝说：“若要息事，除非夏亲家太太自己出去拦验，我们不提长短罢了。”贾琏在外也将他儿子吓住。他情愿迎到刑部具结拦验，众人依允。薛姨妈命人买棺成殓，不提。

且说贾雨村升了京兆府尹，兼管税务。一日，出都查勘开垦地亩，路过知机县，到了急流津，正要渡过彼岸，因待人夫，暂且停轿。只见村旁有一座小庙，墙壁坍塌，露出几





Xiangling's bed, saying while she drank her bowl, 'You must at least taste this.' Xiangling didn't seem to find it too salty, and they both finished their bowls while I laughed up my sleeve at Xiangling for not noticing the salt. How was I to know that my devilish mistress wanted to poison her? She must have put in the arsenic while I was out, then didn't know that I'd changed the bowls around. Truly, 'Heaven is just, and each reaps as he has sown.'"

The others thought over the sequence of events and could find no flaw in her story. They untied Xiangling too and made her lie down in bed.

But in spite of these incriminating facts Jingui's mother went on protesting, whereupon Aunt Xue and the others, all talking together, insisted that her son must pay with his life for the murder.

Jia Lian called from outside, "There's no need to argue. Get everything cleared up quickly. The officers from the Board of Punishments are coming."

This flustered Mrs. Xia and her son, who foresaw dire consequences.

"It's all the fault of my dead daughter," Mrs. Xia had to plead with Aunt Xue. "She brought this on herself. If we let them hold an inquest, it will reflect badly on your family too. Do hush the business up, madam!"

"That's impossible," said Baochai. "We've already reported it; how can it be hushed up?"

Zhou Rui's wife intervened, "The only way to hush the matter up is for Mrs. Xia herself to call off the inquest, in which case we shall say no more about it."

Jia Lian outside had also intimidated the son so that he was only too willing to go to the Board of Punishments to sign a statement that no inquest was needed as the cause of death was clear and to promise not to bring any suit later on. And to this the others agreed. Aunt Xue sent to buy a coffin for Jingui — but no more of this.

Let us return to Jia Yucun, who had now been promoted to be prefect of the capital in charge of taxation. One day he went out of the city to check on the acreage of arable land, and passing through the County of Esoteric Understanding he reached the ford in the Stream of Rapid Reversal. He made his chair-bearers stop there to wait for his retinue. And



株古松，倒也苍老。雨村下轿，闲步进庙，但见庙内神像，金身脱落，殿宇歪斜，旁有断碣，字迹模糊，也看不明白。意欲行至后殿，只见一株翠柏下荫着一间茅庐，庐中有一个道士，合眼打坐。雨村走近看时，面貌甚熟，想着倒像在那里见过的，一时再想不起来。从人便欲吆喝，雨村止住，徐步向前，叫一声“老道”。那道士双眼略启，微微的笑道：“贵官何事？”雨村便道：“本府出都查勘事件，路过此地，见老道静修自得，想来道行深通，意欲冒昧请教。”那道人道：“来自有地，去自有方。”雨村知是有些来历的，便长揖请问：“老道从何处焚修，在此结庐？此庙何名？庙中共有几人？或欲真修，岂无名山？或欲结缘，何不通衢？”那道人道：“‘葫芦’尚可安身，何必名山结舍？庙名久隐，断碣犹存，形影相随，何须修募？岂似那‘玉在匣中求善价，钗于奁内待时飞’之辈耶！”雨村原是个颖悟人，初听见“葫芦”两字，后闻“钗玉”一对，忽然想起甄士隐的事来，重复将那道士端详一回，见他容貌依然，便屏退从人，问道：“君家莫





seeing a small temple by the village, its crumbling walls revealing some hoary pines, he sauntered towards it. The gold had flaked off the images inside, and the hall was rickety. On one side was a broken tablet, but he could not decipher the half-obliterated inscription on it.

He decided to stroll to the back. In the shade of a green cypress there he saw a thatched hut in which a Taoist priest was sitting cross-legged, his eyes closed in meditation. As Yucun went closer, the man's face struck him as familiar and he suspected that they had met before, though he could not remember where. His attendants wanted to rouse the priest by shouting, but he stopped them. Walking slowly towards him he called out a greeting.

The Taoist opened his eyes a crack and asked with a smile, "What brings you here, Your Honour?"

"I have come from the capital on a tour of inspection, and happened to pass this way. Seeing you meditating so tranquilly, I felt sure you must have a profound understanding of the Way and would therefore like to make so bold as to ask for your instructions."

"Our coming and our going — each has its predestined place," was the Taoist's reply.

Sensing that this was no ordinary priest, Yucun bowed low and asked, "Where have you been practising virtue, venerable master? And why are you staying here? What is the name of this temple? How many inmates has it? Are there not holy mountains where you could cultivate Truth? Or if you want to do virtuous deeds, why not choose somewhere more accessible?"

The Taoist replied, "A gourd is shelter enough for me, I need no holy mountains. The name of this temple has long been lost, but the broken tablet remains; and since the shadow follows the form, why should I ask for alms to have the temple repaired? 'The jade in the box hopes to fetch a good price; the pin in the casket longs to soar on high' — that doesn't apply to me."

Yucun was quick-witted. The mention of "gourd," "jade" and "pin" at once reminded him of Zhen Shiyin, and looking more intently at the Taoist he recognized him.

"Aren't you old Mr. Zhen, sir?" he asked, after motioning his atten-





非甄老先生么？”那道人微微笑道：“什么‘真’？什么‘假’？要知道‘真’即是‘假’，‘假’即是‘真’。”雨村听说出“贾”字来，益发无疑；便从新施礼，道：“学生自蒙慨赠到都，托庇获隽公车，受任贵乡，始知老先生超悟尘凡，飘举仙境。学生虽溯洄思切，自念风尘俗吏，末由再睹仙颜，今何幸于此处相遇！求老仙翁指示愚蒙。倘荷不弃，京寓甚近，学生当得供奉，得以朝夕聆教。”那道人也站起来回礼，道：“我于蒲团之外，不知天地间尚有何物。适才尊官所言，贫道一概不解。”说毕，依旧坐下。雨村复又心疑：“想去若非士隐，何貌言相似若此？离别来十九载，面色如旧，必是修炼有成，未肯将前身说破。但我既遇恩公，又不可当面错过。看来不能以富贵动之，那妻女之私更不必说了。”想罢，又道：“仙师既不肯说破前因，弟子于心何忍？”正要下礼，只见从人进来禀说：“天色将晚，快请渡河。”雨村正无主意，那道人道：“请尊官速登彼岸，见面有期，迟则风浪顿起。果蒙不弃，贫道他日尚在渡头候教。”说毕，仍合眼打坐。雨村无奈，只得辞了道人出庙。正要过渡，只见一人飞奔而来。未知何人，下回分解。



dants to withdraw.

With a faint smile the Taoist answered, "Why talk about *zhen* (true) and *jia* (false)? They are the same."

The word *jia*, a homonym for Yucun's surname, confirmed his conjecture. He bowed again and said, "Since you generously helped me to go to the capital, I was lucky enough to pass the examination and was assigned to your honourable district. Only then did I learn that you, venerable sir, had left the dusty world and become an immortal. Although I longed to trace you, I feared that as a mundane, vulgar official I would never see your saintly countenance again. I am overjoyed at this encounter here! I beg you, venerable saint, to instruct the ignorant. If you do not spurn me, my house in the capital is near at hand and I would count it an honour to entertain you there so that I can hear your instructions every day."

The Taoist rose to return his bow and replied, "I know of nothing in this world but my hassock. What Your Honour just said completely passes this poor priest's understanding." With that he sat down again.

Yucun thought dubiously, "If he isn't Zhen Shiyin how is it that he looks and talks just like him? We haven't met for nineteen years, yet he appears unchanged. It must be because he has achieved immortality that he's unwilling to disclose his past. But now that I have found my benefactor, I can't let slip this opportunity. Evidently he's not to be tempted by wealth or rank, much less by mention of his wife and daughter."

"How can I bear it, saintly teacher," he said, "if you draw a veil over your past?"

He was about to bow again when one of his servants came to report, "It is growing dark, sir, high time to cross the ford."

As Yucun hesitated the Taoist said, "Pray lose no time in crossing, Your Honour. We shall meet again. If you delay, a storm may spring up. If you really wish to see me, I shall wait for you some other day at the ford." With that he sat down again and closed his eyes.

Jia Yucun had no choice but to say goodbye to the priest and leave the temple. He was about to cross the ford when someone came rushing towards him. If you want to know who it was, read the next chapter.

## 第一百四回

醉金刚小鳅生大浪 痴公子余痛触前情

话说贾雨村刚欲过渡，见有人飞奔而来，跑到跟前，口称：“老爷！方才逛的那庙火起了。”雨村回首看时，只见烈焰烧天，飞灰蔽日。雨村心想：“这也奇怪！我才出来，走不多远，这火从何而来？莫非士隐遭劫于此？”欲待回去，又恐误了过河；若不回去，心下又不安。想了一想，便问道：

“你方才见那老道士出来了没有？”那人道：“小的原随老爷出来，因腹内疼痛，略走了一走。回头看见一片火光，原来就是那庙中火起，特赶来禀知老爷，并没有见有人出来。”雨村虽则心里狐疑，究竟是名利关心的人，那肯回去看视，便叫那人：“你在这里等火灭了，进去瞧那老道在与不在，即来回禀。”那人只得答应了伺候。雨村过河，仍自去查看，查了几处，遇公馆便自歇下。

明日，又行一程，进了都门，众衙役接着，前呼后拥的走着。雨村坐在轿内，听见轿前开路的人吵嚷。雨村问是何事，那开路的拉了一个人过来跪在轿前，禀道：“那人酒醉，



## Chapter 104

### The Drunken Diamond Brags That Small Fry Can Stir Up Big Billows A Crazy Lordling Grieves over the Past

As Jia Yucun was about to cross the ford someone rushed up to him. "Your Honour!" this man, one of his runners, exclaimed. "That temple you just visited is on fire!"

Yucun turned to see flames leaping skyward and the sun blotted out by smoke and dust.

"How extraordinary!" he thought. "I've barely left the place, How could this blaze have started? I hope this hasn't done for Zhen Shiyin!"

He felt an urge to go back but did not want to delay his tour of inspection; yet he could not set his mind at rest without investigating. After a moment's reflection he asked, "Did you see that old Taoist leave the temple?"

"I followed you out, Your Honour," said the man. "Then I had the gripes and had to relieve myself. When I turned I saw flames — the temple had caught fire—so I hurried here to report it. I didn't see anybody leaving the place."

Although Yucun was worried, his own career was his first concern and he did not want to turn back.

"You stay here till the fire burns out," he ordered. "Then go in to see whether the old priest was trapped or not, and come back to report to me."

The man assented and remained behind while Yucun crossed the river to carry on with his inspection. After checking up on a few districts, he put up in a hostl for the night.

The following day he journeyed another stage and re-entered the capital, runners before him clearing the way while others of his attendants followed behind. Then, seated in his sedan-chair, he heard the men in front shouting angrily and asked them what had happened. One of the runners dragged over a man and made him kneel down before the prefect's

不知回避，反冲突过来。小的吆喝他，他倒恃酒撒泼，躺在街心，说小的打了他了。”雨村便道：“我是管理这里地方的，你们都是我的子民。知道本府经过，喝了酒，不知退避，还敢撒赖！”那人道：“我喝酒是自己的钱；醉了，躺的是皇上的地。就是大人老爷也管不得！”雨村怒道：“这人目无法纪！问他叫什么名字。”那人回道：“我叫醉金刚倪二。”雨村听了生气，叫人：“打这东西，瞧他是金刚不是！”手下把倪二按倒，着实的打了几鞭子。倪二负痛，酒醒求饶，雨村在轿内哈哈笑道：“原来是这么个金刚！我且不打你，叫人带进衙门里慢慢的问你！”众衙役答应，拴了倪二，拉着就走。倪二哀求，也不中用。

雨村进内复旨回曹，那里把这件事放在心上。那街上看热闹的，三三两两传说：“倪二仗着有些力气，恃酒讹人，今儿碰在贾大人手里，只怕不轻饶的！”这话已传到他妻女耳边，那夜果等倪二不见回家，他女儿便到各处赌场寻觅。那赌博的都是这么说，他女儿哭了。众人都道：“你不用着急。那贾大人是荣府的一家。荣府里的一个什么二爷和你父亲相好，你同你母亲去找他说个情，就放出来了。”倪二的女儿



chair.

"This drunkard didn't get out of the way but came charging at us," he reported. "When ordered to stop, he put on a drunken act and flopped down in the middle of the road, then accused me of knocking him down."

"I am in charge of this district," Yucun announced. "All citizens here come under my jurisdiction. When you saw your prefect coming, you were too drunk to make way yet had the nerve to make false accusations!"

"I buy drink with my own money," retorted the fellow. "When I'm tipsy it's the Emperor's land I lie down on. Not even high officials can interfere."

"Lawless scoundrel!" Yucun fumed. "Ask him his name."

"I am Ni Er the Drunken Diamond."

Yucun was furious. "Have this wretch beaten," he ordered. "We'll soon see whether he's hard as a diamond!"

The runners pinned Ni Er down and gave him some hard lashes till, sobered up by the pain, he begged for mercy.

Yucun from his chair scoffed, "So that's the rough diamond you are! I won't have you beaten now but taken to the yamen for a thorough interrogation."

The runners shouted assent, tied Ni Er up and dragged him off, ignoring his entreaties.

Yucun went to court to make his report, and by the time he returned to his office this incident had slipped his mind completely. But men in the street who had witnessed it commented to one another, "Ni Er, in his cups, counts on his strength to throw his weight about; but now he's fallen into Prefect Jia's clutches he's not likely to get off lightly!"

This talk reached the ears of Ni Er's wife and daughter, who waited in vain that night for him to come home. The girl went to search different gambling-houses for him, and when everyone there confirmed the report she wept.

"Don't worry," they said. "Prefect Jia is connected with the Rong Mansion, and a certain Second Master Jia of that family is one of your father's friends. If you and your mother ask him to put in a word, your father will be let off."



想了一想：“果然我父亲常说隔壁贾二爷和他好，为什么不找他去？”赶着回来就和母亲说了，娘儿两个去找贾芸。那日贾芸恰好在家，见他母女两个过来，便让坐。贾芸的母亲便命倒茶。倪家母女将倪二被贾大人拿去的话说了一遍，“求二爷说个情儿放出来！”贾芸一口应承，说：“这算不得什么，我到西府里说一声就放了。那贾大人全仗着西府里才得做了这么大官，只要打发个人去一说就完了。”倪家母女欢喜，回来便到府里告诉了倪二，叫他不用忙，已经求了贾二爷，他满口应承，讨个情便放出来的。倪二听了也喜欢。

不料贾芸自从那日给凤姐送礼不收，不好意思进来，也不常到荣府。那荣府的门上原看着主子的行事，叫谁走动，才有些体面，一时来了，他便进去通报；若主子不大理了，不论本家亲戚，他一概不回，支回去就完事。那日贾芸到府，说：“给琏二爷请安。”门上的说：“二爷不在家，等回来，我们替回罢。”贾芸欲要说“请二奶奶的安”，又恐门上厌烦，只得回家。又被倪家母女催逼着，说：“二爷常说府上不论那个衙门，说一声儿谁敢不依。如今还是府里的一家儿，又不为什么大事，这个情还讨不来，白是我们二爷了！”贾芸脸上下不来，嘴里还说硬话：“昨儿我们家里有事，没打发人说去，少不得今儿说了就放。什么大不了的





Ni Er's daughter thought, "Yes, I've often heard father say that Mr. Jia Yun next door is his friend, so why not get him to help?"

She hurried home to propose this to her mother, and together they called on Jia Yun. He happened to be in that day and promptly offered them seats while his mother ordered tea. Then Ni Er's wife and daughter told him their story.

"We've come to beg you to put in a word, Second Master, to get him set free," they entreated.

"That's easy," Jia Yun bragged. "As soon as I mention this to the West Mansion he'll be released. This Mr. Jia Yucun owes his high post to the help of the Rong Mansion, so once they send him a message the thing will be settled."

Mother and daughter went joyfully home, then took word to Ni Er in the lock-up that he need not fret because Jia Yun had promised to see about his release. Ni Er's spirits rose again.

However, since the embarrassing occasion when Xifeng had declined his presents, Jia Yun had seldom called at the Rong Mansion. For the gatemen there watched their masters' behaviour to visitors and acted accordingly. Welcome guests who were treated with favour they announced; but those who were cold-shouldered they turned away, even if they were relatives, fobbing them off with excuses.

Today Jia Yun went to the gate saying that he had come to pay his respects to Jia Lian.

"The Second Master is out," the gatemen told him. "We'll tell him when he comes back that you called."

Jia Yun thought of asking to see Xifeng instead, but for fear of another snub he refrained and went home, where Ni Er's wife and daughter importuned him again.

"You always said that not a single yamen, no matter which, dared disobey your family," they said. "Now this prefect is one of your clan, and it's not a big favour to ask. If you can't even do this, you're one of the Jias in vain!"

"Yesterday I was too busy to send a message, but today I'll tell them and he'll be released," he boasted to cover up his discomfiture. "You've nothing to worry about!"





事!”倪家母女只得听信。岂知贾芸近日大门竟不得进去，绕到后头，要进园内找宝玉，不料园门锁着，只得垂头丧气的回来。想起“那年倪二借银，买了香料送他，才派我种树；如今我没钱打点，就把我拒绝。那也不是他的能为，拿着太爷留下的公中银钱在外放加一钱，我们穷当家儿，要借一两也不能。他打谅保得住一辈子不穷的了！那里知道外头的名声儿很不好，我不说罢了；若说起来，人命官司不知有多少呢！”一面想着，来到家中，只见倪家母女正等着呢。贾芸无言可支，便说是：“西府里已经打发人说了，只言贾大人不依。你还求我们家的奴才周瑞的亲戚冷子兴去才中用。”倪家母女听了，说：“二爷这样体面爷们还不中用，若是奴才，是更不中用了。”贾芸不好意思，心里发急道：“你不知道，如今的奴才比主子强多着呢！”倪家母女听来无法，只得冷笑几声，说：“这倒难为二爷白跑了这几天！等我们那一个出来再道乏罢。”说毕出来，另托人将倪二弄出来了，只打了几板，也没有什么罪。

倪二回家，他妻女将贾家不肯说情的话说了一遍。倪二正喝着酒，便生气要找贾芸，说：“这小杂种，没良心的东西！头里他没有饭吃，要到府内钻谋事办，亏我倪二爷帮了他。如今我有了事，他不管。好罢咧！要是我倪二闹起来，连两府里都不干净！”他妻女忙劝道：“噯！你又喝了黄汤，就





So mother and daughter waited again for news. As for Jia Yun, unable to gain admission through the main gate, this time he went round to the back, meaning to go through the Garden to find Baoyu. But the back gate was locked. He retraced his steps dejectedly, telling himself, "I wangled a treeplanting job from her that year because Ni Er lent me money and I sent in that gift of aromatics. Now that I've no money for gifts she won't let me in. It's not as if she's a decent sort. She simply loans out the family's funds left by our ancestors at exorbitant interest, but won't let us poor relations have even one ounce of silver! Can they count on remaining rich all their lives? Why, their name stinks outside! I'm not one to blab — if I were, they would be involved in plenty of murder cases!"

Occupied by these reflections he reached home, where Ni Er's wife and daughter were waiting for him. Unable to put them off again he told them, "The West Mansion sent a message but Prefect Jia has ignored it. You had better get Leng Zixing, who's related to their steward Zhou Rui, to put in a word."

Mother and daughter objected, "If a gentleman like you failed, how could a servant succeed?"

"You don't understand," he blurted out in embarrassed exasperation. "Nowadays servants have much more say than their masters."

Seeing that he was unable to help, Mrs. Ni laughed sarcastically.

"Sorry to have troubled you for nothing these days," she said. "We shall thank you again when that man of mine comes out."

They left to ask others to intercede, and finally Ni Er was let off with only a few strokes, not convicted of any crime.

On his return, his wife and daughter told him how the Jia family had refused to help. Ni Er, who was drinking, flared up and wanted to seek Jia Yun out.

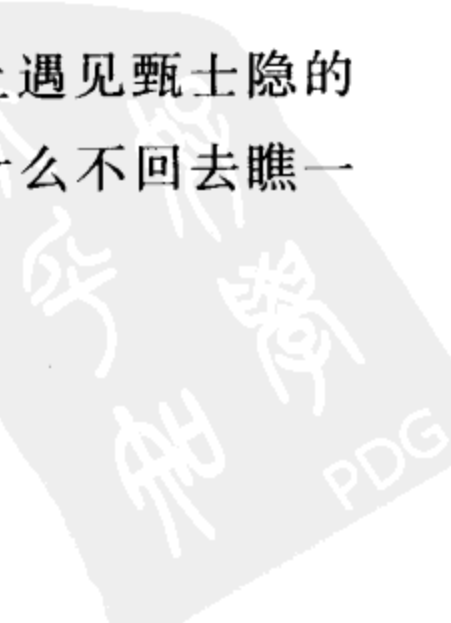
"The bastard, the ungrateful beast!" he fumed. "When he was starving and wanted to worm his way into that house to wangle a job, I was the one who helped him. Now when I land in trouble he leaves me in the lurch. Fine! If Ni Er raises a row, both the Jia Mansions will be dragged through the mud!"

"Ai! You're drunk again, talking so wildly," they objected. "Weren't



是这么有天没日头的。前儿可不是醉了闹的乱子，捱了打？还没好呢，你又闹了！”倪二道：“捱了打就怕他不成？只怕拿着不着由头儿！我在监里的时候儿，倒认得了好几个有义气的朋友。听见他们说起来，不独是城里姓贾的多，外省姓贾的也不少，前儿监里收下了好几个贾家的家人，我倒说这里的贾家小一辈子连奴才们虽不好，他们老一辈的还好，怎么犯了事呢？我打听了打听，说是和这里贾家是一家儿，都住在外省，审明白了，解进来问罪的，我才放心。若说贾二这小子，他忘恩负义，我就和几个朋友说他家怎么欺负人，怎么放重利，怎么强娶活人妻。吵嚷出去，有了风声到了都老爷耳朵里头，这一闹起来，叫他们才认得倪二金刚呢！”他女人道：“你喝了酒，睡去罢。他又强占谁家的女人来着？没有的事，你不用混说了。”倪二道：“你们在家里，那里知道外头的事？前年我在场儿里碰见了小张，说他女人被贾家占了，他还和我商量，我倒劝着他才压住了。不知道小张如今那里去了，这两年没见。若碰着他，我倪二太爷出个主意，叫贾二小子死给我瞧瞧！好好儿的孝敬孝敬我倪二太爷才罢了！”说着，倒身躺下，嘴里还是咕咕啾啾的说了一回，便睡去了。他妻女只当是醉话，也不理他。明日早起，倪二又往赌场中去了，不提。

且说雨村回到家中，歇息了一夜，将道上遇见甄士隐的事告诉了他夫人一遍。他夫人便埋怨他：“为什么不回去瞧一





you beaten the other day for making a drunken scene? Before you've got over it, here you are starting again!"

"Do you think a beating makes me afraid of them? I was only afraid of not finding a handle against them. In jail, I palled up with quite a few decent fellows. According to them, apart from all these Jias here in the city there are plenty of others in the provinces too, and not long ago a number of their servants were put in clink. I'd always known the younger Jia men and their servants here were a bad lot but thought the older generation all right, so I was surprised to hear they'd landed in trouble. After asking around I heard that those in trouble belong to branches of the clan in other provinces. Now they are on trial, brought here to wait for the verdict. So I no longer need worry.

"As this puppy Jia Yun has let me down for all I was so good to him, my friends and I can spread word that their family's ridden roughshod over people, practised usury and abducted other men's wives. When the scandal spreads and reaches the censor's ears they'll catch it! Then they'll get to know Ni Er the Diamond!"

"Go to bed and sleep it off," urged his wife. "Whose wives have they abducted? You're making it up. You mustn't talk such nonsense."

"Staying at home, what do *you* know about what goes on outside? The year before last I met a young fellow called Zhang in a gambling-den, and he told me that his betrothed had been bagged by the Jias. He asked my advice, and I stopped him from making a row. I don't know where he is now, I haven't seen him for the last couple of years. If I knock into him, I'll fix up a plan to do in that young bastard Jia Yun! I won't let him off unless he offers me rich gifts! How dare he refuse to help me?"

He lay down, muttered for a while to himself, then dozed off. His wife and daughter paid no attention, considering these threats mere drunken talk. The next morning Ni Er went back to his gambling-house, and there we can leave him.

Upon Jia Yucun's return home, after a night's rest he told his wife of his encounter with Zhen Shiyin.

"Why didn't you go back to have a look?" she asked reproachfully,



瞧?倘或烧死了,可不是咱们没良心!”说着,掉下泪来。雨村道:“他是方外的人了,不肯和咱们在一处的。”正说着,外头传进话来禀说:“前日老爷吩咐瞧那庙里失火去的人回来了。”雨村踱了出来。那衙役请了安,回说:“小的奉老爷的命回去,也没等火灭,冒着火进去瞧那道士,那里知他坐的地方儿都烧了。小的想着那道士必烧死了。那烧的墙屋往后塌了,道士的影儿都没有了。只有一个蒲团,一个瓢儿,还是好好的。小的各处找他的尸首,连骨头都没有一点儿。小的恐怕老爷不信,想要拿这蒲团瓢儿回来做个证见,小的这么一拿,谁知都成了灰了。”雨村听毕,心下明白,知士隐仙去,便把那衙役打发出去了。回到房中,并没提起士隐火化之言,恐怕妇女不知,反生悲感,只说并无形迹,必是他先走了。

雨村出来,独坐书房,正要细想士隐的话,忽有家人传报说:“内廷传旨,交看事件。”雨村疾忙上轿进内。只听见人说:“今日贾存周江西粮道被参回来,在朝内谢罪。”雨村忙到了内阁,见了各大臣,将海疆办理不善的旨意看了,出来即忙找着贾政,先说了些为他抱屈的话,后又道喜,问一路可好。贾政也将违别以后的话细细的说了一遍。雨村道:

“谢罪的本上了去没有?”贾政道:“已上去了。等膳后下来,看旨意罢。”正说着,只听里头传出旨来叫贾政,贾政即忙进去。各大人有与贾政关切的,都在里头等着。等了好





shedding tears. "If he got burnt to death, won't we seem too heartless?"

"He's outside the mundane world now and wouldn't have anything to do with us," Yucun assured her.

Just then a servant outside announced, "The man Your Honour left at the temple after the fire the other day has come back."

Yucun went out and that runner, having paid his respects, reported, "After going back on Your Honour's order, I didn't wait for the fire to burn out but went in through the flames to look for the priest. The fire had burnt the place where he had been sitting and the back wall had collapsed, so I expected to find him dead, but there was no sign of him, although a hassock and gourd there were undamaged. I looked everywhere for his corpse, yet found not a single bone. For fear that you might not believe me, I decided to bring back the hassock and gourd as evidence; but when I touched them they both turned to ashes!"

Yucun realized that Zhen Shiyin had vanished by magic, being an immortal. He dismissed the runner and went back to his room but did not repeat this message to his wife for fear that she as an ignorant woman might grieve, simply telling her that there was no trace of the priest so most likely he had escaped.

Then he went out and sat alone in his study to mull over Zhen Shiyin's conversation with him, when a servant suddenly brought him a summons to court to read some edicts. He hastily mounted his chair to go to the Palace, where he heard that Jia Zheng, recalled from his post as Grain Commissioner of Jiangxi, was to acknowledge his fault today at court.

He hurried to the cabinet and found the ministers assembled there reading an Imperial edict deploring the maladministration of the coastal provinces. Coming out, he went at once to find Jia Zheng, expressed his sympathy over his impeachment, then congratulated him on his return and asked about his journey. Jia Zheng described his experiences since last they met.

"Have you sent in your acknowledgement of culpability?" asked Yucun.

"Yes. After lunch I shall learn the Emperor's will."

That very moment he was summoned to an audience and hurried in, while the ministers concerned for him waited there.



一回，方见贾政出来。看见他带着满头的汗，众人迎上去接着，问：“有什么旨意？”贾政吐舌道：“吓死人，吓死人！倒蒙各位大人关切，幸喜没有什么事。”众人道：“旨意问了些什么？”贾政道：“旨意问的是云南私带神枪一案。本上奏明是原任太师贾化的家人，主上一时记着我们先祖的名字，便问起来。我忙着磕头奏明先祖的名字是代化，主上便笑了，还降旨意说：‘前放兵部，后降府尹的，不是也叫贾化么？’”那时雨村也在傍边，倒吓了一跳，便问贾政道：“老先生怎么奏的？”贾政道：“我便慢慢奏道：‘原任太师贾化是云南人；现任府尹贾某是浙江人。’主上又问，‘苏州刺史奏的贾范，是你一家子么？’我又磕头奏道：‘是。’主上便变色道：‘纵使家奴强占良民妻女，还成事么？’我一句不敢奏。主上又问道：‘贾范是你什么人？’我忙奏道：‘是远族。’主上哼了一声，降旨叫出来了。可不是咤事！”

众人道：“本来也巧。怎么一连有这两件事？”贾政道：“事倒不奇，倒是都姓贾的不好。算来我们寒族人多，年代久了，各处都有。现在虽没有事，究竟主上记着一个‘贾’字就不好。”众人说：“真是真，假是假，怕什么？”贾政道：“我心里巴不得不做官，只是不敢告老，现在我们家里两个世袭，这也无可奈何的。”雨村道：“如今老先生仍是工部，





It was some time before Jia Zheng emerged, his face streaming with sweat. The others crowded round to ask what had happened. He stuck out his tongue in dismay.

"I had the fright of my life!" he gasped. "Thank you, gentlemen, for your concern. Luckily nothing serious has happened."

They asked him what the Emperor had said.

"His Majesty wanted to know about the smuggling of firearms in Yunnan," Jia Zheng told them. "It was reported that the culprit was a servant of the former Senior Imperial Tutor Jia Hua, which reminded His Majesty of my ancestor's name, and he asked me what it was. At once I kowtowed and replied that it was Jia Daihua. Then the Emperor asked with a smile, 'Wasn't that former Minister of War who was later demoted to be prefect of the capital also called Jia Hua?'"

Yucun beside him gave a start. "What was your reply, sir?" he asked.

"I explained distinctly that the former Senior Imperial Tutor Jia Hua came from Yunnan, the present prefect from Huzhou in Zhejiang. Then His Majesty asked, 'Is that Jia Fan impeached by the prefect of Suzhou one of your family?' Kowtowing again I said, 'Yes, sir.' Then the Emperor demanded angrily, 'How can your family allow your servants to abduct a good citizen's wife?' I dared say nothing. 'What is Jia Fan's relation to you?' was the next question. 'He's a distant kinsman,' I said. The Emperor snorted at that and dismissed me. It was touch-and-go!"

"Quite a coincidence that," they commented, "these two cases one after the other."

"That's not so strange," said Jia Zheng. "What's bad is both men being Jias. Our poor clan is such a large one that after all these years we have relatives everywhere. Though no trouble came of it this time, the name Jia will stick in the Emperor's mind — and that's bad."

"Truth will always prevail," they assured him. "You've nothing to fear."

"I would give anything not to be an official, but I dare not retire. Besides, our family has two hereditary titles. This is something that can't be helped."

"You are still in the Ministry of Works, sir," pointed out Yucun. "A

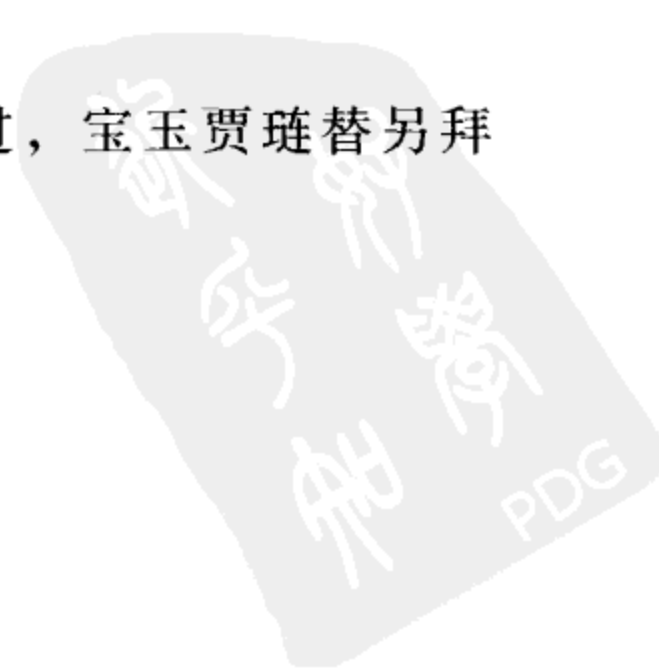




想来京官是没有事的。”贾政道：“京官虽然无事，我究竟做过两次外任，也就说不齐了。”众人道：“二老爷的人品行事，我们都佩服的。就是令兄大老爷，也是个好人。只要在令侄辈身上严紧些就是了。”贾政道：“我因在家的日子少，舍侄的事情不大查考，我心里也不甚放心。诸位今日提起，都是至相好，或者听见东宅的侄儿家有什么不奉规矩的事么？”众人道：“没听见别的，只有几位侍郎心里不大和睦，内监里头也有些。想来不怕什么，只要嘱咐那边令侄，诸事留神就是了。”

众人说毕，举手而散，贾政然后回家。众子侄等都迎接上来。贾政迎着请贾母的安，然后众子侄俱请了贾政的安，一同进府。王夫人等已到了荣禧堂迎接。贾政先到了贾母那里拜见了，陈述些违别的话。贾母问探春消息，贾政将许嫁探春的事都禀明了，还说：“儿子起身急促，难过重阳，虽没有亲见，听见那边亲家的人来，说的极好。亲家老爷太太都说请老太太的安。还说今冬明春，大约还可调进京来。这便好了。如今闻得海疆有事，只怕那时还不能调。”贾母始则因贾政降调回来，知探春远在他乡，一无亲故，心下伤感；后听贾政将官事说明，探春安好，也便转悲为喜，便笑着叫贾政出去。然后弟兄相见，众子侄拜见，定了明日清晨拜祠堂。

贾政回到自己屋内，王夫人等见过，宝玉贾琏替另拜





metropolitan post should be quite safe.”

“Even so, that’s hard to say after two provincial appointments.”

“We admire your character and your conduct, sir,” the other officials told him. “Your brother is a man of honour too. All you need do is control your nephews more strictly.”

“I am seldom at home to check up on them and can’t be too easy in my mind about them. Since you’ve brought this up and we are close friends, please tell me — have my nephews in the East Mansion been misconducting themselves?”

“Not really, but a few vice-ministers — some Imperial eunuchs too — are not on very good terms with them. It’s nothing to worry about if you just warn them to be more circumspect in future.”

They saluted him and left, and Jia Zheng went home. All his nephews and sons had turned out to welcome him, and when he had asked after the old lady’s health and the young men had paid their respects, together they entered the house. Lady Wang and the other womenfolk had assembled in the Hall of Glorious Felicity to meet him, but first he went to the old lady’s apartments to pay her his respects and report to her all that had happened since his departure. Asked for news of Tanchun, he described the marriage arrangements.

“I had to leave in too much of a hurry to wait for the Double Ninth Festival,” he explained. “But though I didn’t see her, I heard from the other family that everything went very well. Her father- and mother-in-law send their regards to you, madam. They hope, this winter or next spring, to be transferred to the capital, which would of course be still better. But I hear there is trouble in the coastal regions, so the transfer may be delayed.”

The old lady had been depressed by Jia Zheng’s demotion and Tanchun’s marrying so far from home; but his explanation of his recall and the good news of Tanchun cheered her up again and with a smile she urged him to go and rest. Jia Zheng saw his brother, sons and nephews next, and when the younger ones had paid their respects he informed them that the next morning he would sacrifice in the ancestral temple.

After Jia Zheng’s return to his quarters, when Lady Wang and others had greeted him, Baoyu and Jia Lian paid their respects again. Jia Zheng



见。贾政见了宝玉果然比起身之时脸面丰满，倒觉安静，独不知他心里糊涂，所以心甚喜欢，不以降调为念，心想幸亏老太太办理的好。又见宝钗沉厚更胜先时，兰儿文雅俊秀，便喜形于色。独见环儿仍是先前，究不甚钟爱。歇息了半天，忽然想起：“为何今日短了一人？”王夫人知是想着黛玉，前因家书未报，今日又刚到家，正是喜欢，不便直告，只说是病着。岂知宝玉的心里已如刀搅，因父亲到家，只得把持心性伺候。王夫人设筵接风，子孙敬酒。凤姐虽是侄媳，现办家事，也随了宝钗等递酒。贾政便叫递了一巡酒，“都歇息去罢。”命众家人不必伺候，待明早拜过宗祠，然后进见。分派已定，贾政与王夫人说些别后的话，余者王夫人都不敢言。倒是贾政先提起王子腾的事来，王夫人也不敢悲戚。贾政又说蟠儿的事，王夫人只说他是自作自受；趁便也将黛玉已死的话告诉。贾政反吓了一跳，不觉掉下泪来，连声叹息。王夫人也掌不住，也哭了。旁边彩云等即忙拉衣，王夫人止住，重又说些喜欢的话，便安寝了。

次日一早，至宗祠行礼，众子侄都随往。贾政便在祠旁厢房坐下，叫了贾珍贾琏过来，问起家中事务。贾珍拣可说的说了。贾政又道：“我初回家，也不便来细细查问，只是听





was relieved to see Baoyu looking better than at the time of his departure and, knowing nothing of his son's mental illness, he did not regret his demotion but was pleased to think how well the old lady had managed things. When, moreover, he observed that Baochai appeared still more quiet and composed and Lan quite cultured and handsome, he fairly beamed. Only Huan was unchanged, and his father could feel no real affection for him.

After a short rest, however, he asked abruptly, "Isn't there someone missing?"

Lady Wang knew he had noticed Daiyu's absence. As they had not written to him about her death and he was only just home and in high spirits, she did not like to break the news at once. She just said that Daiyu was unwell. Baoyu felt as if his heart had been pierced by a dagger, but as his father was back he had to repress his grief and wait on him. Lady Wang ordered a feast of welcome at which Jia Zheng's sons and grandsons poured him wine; and though Xifeng was the wife of a nephew, since she was running the household she joined Baochai and the others in passing the wine. After one round of toasts, Jia Zheng sent them away to rest and dismissed the servants too with instructions that the domestics could come to meet him after the ancestral sacrifice the next day.

When the others had gone, he and his wife talked of the happenings since their separation. Certain subjects Lady Wang did not venture to broach, and when he brought up the death of her brother Wang Ziteng she dared not show her grief. When he mentioned Xue Pan, she said simply that he had brought this trouble on himself, then she took this occasion to tell him about Daiyu's death. In consternation, Jia Zheng shed tears and sighed. Then Lady Wang gave way to weeping too until Caiyun who was attending her tugged her sleeve. She controlled herself then and talked of more cheerful topics, after which they retired for the night.

The next morning Jia Zheng worshipped in the ancestral temple, accompanied by all the younger male members of the family. This done, he took a seat in the temple annex and called Jia Zhen and Jia Lian in to ask about family affairs. Jia Zhen gave him a carefully edited account.

"Since I've just come home I can't make a detailed check-up," Jia



见外头说起你家里更不比从前，诸事要谨慎才好。你年纪也不小了，孩子们该管教管教，别叫他们在外头得罪人。琏儿也该听着。不是才回家就说你们，因我有所闻，所以才说的。你们更该小心些。”贾珍等脸涨通红的，也只答应个“是”字，不敢说什么。贾政也就罢了。回归西府，众家人磕头毕，仍复进内，众女仆行礼，不必多赘。

只说宝玉因昨日贾政问起黛玉，王夫人答以有病，他便暗里伤心，直待贾政命他回去，一路上已滴了好些眼泪。回到房中，见宝钗和袭人等说话，他便独坐外间纳闷。宝钗叫袭人送过茶去，知他必是怕老爷查问工课，所以如此，只得过来安慰。宝玉便借此过去向宝钗说：“你今夜先睡，我要定定神。这时更不如从前了，三言倒忘两语，老爷瞧着不好。你先睡，叫袭人陪我略坐坐。”宝钗不便强他，点头应允。

宝玉出来便轻轻和袭人说，央他：“把紫鹃叫来，有话问他。但是紫鹃见了我，脸上总是有气，须得你去解劝开了再来才好。”袭人道：“你说要定神，我倒喜欢，怎么又定到这上头去了？有话你明儿问不得？”宝玉道：“我就是今晚得闲，明日倘或老爷叫干什么，便没空儿了。好姐姐，你快去叫他来！”袭人道：“他不是二奶奶叫是不来的。”宝玉道：“所以得你去说明了才好。”袭人道：“叫我说什么？”宝玉道：





Zheng told him. "But I've heard outside that your household isn't doing as well as before. You must be more circumspect in everything. You are no longer young, and you should discipline those youngsters so that they don't offend people outside. You take this to heart too, Lian. It's not that I want to find fault as soon as I get back, but I've heard talk. You must take extra care."

Jia Zhen and Jia Lian flushed red, not venturing to answer more than "Yes, sir." Then Jia Zheng dismissed them and went back to the West Mansion. After all the men-servants had kowtowed to him he entered the inner quarters where the women-servants paid their respects in turn — we need not dwell on this.

Jia Zheng's question about Daiyu the previous day and Lady Wang's reply that she was unwell had set Baoyu brooding again. After his father dismissed him he went back, shedding tears all the way. As Baochai was chatting in his room with Xiren and others, he sat gloomily by himself in the outer room. Baochai told Xiren to take him tea then came out to cheer him up, imagining that he was worried that his father might question him about his studies.

"You go to bed first," said Baoyu. "I want to collect my thoughts a bit. My memory's not what it was, and if I keep forgetting what to say it'll make a bad impression on my father. If you go to sleep first, Xiren can keep me company here."

Baochai could not refuse and nodded agreement.

In the outer room, Baoyu softly begged Xiren to fetch Zijuan.

"I've something to ask her," he said. "But as she always looks so angry and cold-shoulders me when she sees me, you must do some explaining for me before she'll come."

Xiren answered, "I was pleased to hear that you wanted to collect your thoughts, but what's this you're thinking about? If you've something on your mind, why not ask her tomorrow?"

"I'm only free this evening. Tomorrow the master may give me something to do and keep me busy. Dear sister, please fetch her quickly!"

"She won't come unless Madam Bao sends for her."

"That's why I want you to go and persuade her."



“你还不知道我的心和他的心么？都为的是林姑娘。你说我并不是负心。我如今叫你们弄成了一个负心的人了！”说着这话，便瞧瞧里间屋子，用手指着说：“他是我本不愿意的，都是老太太他们捉弄的。好端端把个林妹妹弄死了。就是他死，也该叫我见见，说个明白，他死了也不抱怨我嘎！你到底听见三姑娘他们说过的，临死恨怨我。那紫鹃为他们姑娘，也是恨的我了不得。你想，我是无情的人么？晴雯到底是个丫头，也没有什么大好处，他死了，我实告诉你罢，我还做个祭文祭他呢。这是林姑娘亲眼见的。如今林姑娘死了，难道倒不及晴雯么？我连祭都不能祭一祭。况且林姑娘死了还有灵圣的，他想起来不更要怨我么？”袭人道：“你要祭就祭去，谁拦着你呢！”

宝玉道：“我自从好了起来，就想要做一篇祭文，不知道如今怎么一点灵机儿都没了。要祭别人呢，胡乱还使得；祭他，是断断粗糙不得一点儿的。所以叫紫鹃来问他姑娘的心，他打那里看出来的。我没病的头里还想的出来，病后都不记得了。你倒说林姑娘已经好了，怎么忽然死的？他好的时候，我不去，他怎么说来着？我病的时候，他不来，他又怎么说来着？所有他的东西，我诓过来，你二奶奶总不叫动，不知什么意思。”袭人道：“二奶奶惟恐你伤心罢了，还有什么呢？”宝玉道：“我不信。林姑娘既是念我，为什么临死把诗稿烧了，不留给我作个纪念？又听见说天上有音乐响，必是他成了神，或是登了仙去。我虽见过了棺材，到底不知道棺材里有他没有？”袭人道：“你这话越发糊涂了！怎么



“What should I say?”

“You understand how I feel and how she feels — both of us because of Miss Lin. Tell her that I wasn’t faithless to her. It was you people who made me look faithless.” He glanced towards the inner room and pointing at it continued, “I never wanted to marry *her*, but they tricked me into it — the old lady and others — and that was the death of poor Cousin Lin. But even so, they should have let me see her and clear myself — then she wouldn’t have died with such a sense of grievance! You must have heard from Miss Tanchun and the others that, at the last, she reproached me angrily. And Zijuan hates me like poison because of her.”

“But how can you think me so heartless? Qingwen was only a maid who didn’t mean so much to me, yet the truth is that when she died I wrote an elegy for her and sacrificed to her. Miss Lin saw that for herself. Now that Miss Lin is dead, would I treat her worse than Qingwen? But I can’t even sacrifice to her. Besides, her spirit is living on; so when she thinks about this won’t she blame me still more?”

“You can sacrifice to her if you like,” said Xiren. “What do you want of me?”

“Since my health started improving I’ve been wanting to write an elegy but somehow I’ve grown dim-witted. I can sacrifice any old way to other people, but there mustn’t be anything the least bit crude about a sacrifice to *her*. So I want to find out from Zijuan what her mistress was thinking and how she detected it. Before my illness I could have figured it out, but now I can’t remember a thing. You told me that Miss Lin was getting better; how did she come to die so suddenly? What did she say when she was well and I didn’t go to see her? She didn’t call when I was ill, and how did she explain that? And why is it your mistress never lets me touch those things of hers which I managed to get hold of?”

“She’s afraid they might upset you, that’s all.”

“I don’t believe it. If Miss Lin felt for me, why did she burn her poems before she died instead of leaving them to me as a memento? I heard tell that music sounded in the sky, so she must have become a goddess or an immortal. I saw her coffin, it’s true, but who knows whether she was in it or not?”

“You’re talking more and more nonsensically. How could anyone





一个人没死就搁在一个棺材里当死了的呢!”宝玉道:“不是嘎!大凡成仙的人,或是肉身去的,或是脱胎去的。好姐姐,你到底叫了紫鹃来!”袭人道:“如今等我细细的说明了你的心。他要肯来,还好;要不肯来,还得费多少话。就是来了,见你也不肯细说。据我的主意:明日等二奶奶上去了,我慢慢的问他,或者倒可仔细。遇到闲空儿,我再慢慢的告诉你。”宝玉道:“你说得也是,你不知道我心里的着急。”

正说着,麝月出来说:“二奶奶说:天已四更了,请二爷进去睡罢。袭人姐姐必是说高了兴了,忘了时候儿了。”袭人听了,道:“可不是?该睡了,有话明儿再说罢。”宝玉无奈,只得进去,又向袭人耳边道:“明儿好歹别忘了!”袭人笑说:“知道了。”麝月抹着脸笑道:“你们两个又闹鬼儿了。为什么不和二奶奶说明了,就到袭人那边睡去?由着你们说一夜,我们也不管。”宝玉摆手道:“不用言语。”袭人恨道:“小蹄子儿,你又嚼舌根!看我明儿撕你的嘴!”回头对宝玉道:“这不是你闹的?说了四更天的话。”一面说,一面送宝玉进屋,各人散去。

那夜宝玉无眠,到了次日,还想这事。只听得外头传进话来,说:“众亲朋因老爷回家,都要送戏接风。老爷再四推辞,说不必唱戏,竟在家里备了水酒,倒请亲朋过来,大家谈谈。于是定了后儿摆席请人,所以进来告诉。”不知所请何人,下回分解。

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announce a death simply by displaying an empty coffin?"

"I didn't mean that!" he cried. "But when people become immortals, some retain their bodily form, others shed their mortal frame. Good sister, *please* fetch Zijuan for me!"

"You'll have to wait till I've explained to her just how you feel. If she's willing to come, all right; if she refuses it may take time to talk her round. But even if she comes, at sight of *you* she's bound to hold certain things back. It seems to me I'd better question her tomorrow after Madam Bao had gone to see the old lady. That way I may find out more. Then when there's time to spare, I'll tell you about it."

"That's all very well, but I'm too impatient to wait!"

At this point Sheyue came out. "The young mistress says it's already the fourth watch and she wants the young master to go to bed," she announced. "And Sister Xiren must have been enjoying her chat so much that she lost track of the time."

"That's right!" exclaimed Xiren. "It's time to go to bed. We can talk again tomorrow."

Though distressed, Baoyu had to comply, but as he was leaving he whispered, "Mind you don't forget tomorrow!"

Xiren smiled and said, "All right."

"You two are up to some tricks again," Sheyue teased. "Why not ask the mistress to let you sleep with Xiren, then you can talk all night for all we care."

Baoyu waved his hand saying, "There's no need for that."

"You bitch, talking such rot!" scolded Xiren. "Tomorrow I'll pinch your lips." She turned to Baoyu. "Look at all the trouble you've caused. Sitting up so late talking but without so much as a word about this." They escorted him to the inner room then went to bed themselves.

Baoyu could not sleep that night, and he was still thinking of Daiyu the next day when a servant brought in the message, "Relatives and friends have offered to send over operas and feasts to celebrate the master's return; but the master has declined. He says there's no need for operas, but we'll have a simple meal at home to invite them all for a chat. The date fixed is the day after tomorrow, so I've come to notify you."

To know what visitors came, turn to the next chapter.





錦衣軍抄國  
衣查府



## 第一百五回

### 锦衣军查抄宁国府 驄马使弹劾平安州

话说贾政正在那里设宴请酒，忽见赖大急忙走上荣禧堂来，回贾政道：“有锦衣府堂官赵老爷带领好几位司官，说来拜望。奴才要取职名来回，赵老爷说：‘我们至好，不用的。’一面就下了车，走进来了。请老爷同爷们快接去。”贾政听了，心想：“和老赵并无来往，怎么也来？现在有客，留他不便，不留又不好。”正自思想，贾璉说：“叔叔快去罢。再想一回，人都进来了。”

正说着，只见二门上家人又报进来，说：“赵老爷已进二门了。”贾政等抢步接去。只见赵堂官满脸笑容，并不说什么，一径走上厅来。后面跟着五六位司官，也有认得的，也有不认得的，但是总不答话。贾政等心里不得主意，只得跟着上来让坐。众亲友也有认得赵堂官的，见他仰着脸不大理人，只拉着贾政的手笑着说了几句寒温的话。众人看见来头不好，也有躲进里间屋里的，也有垂手侍立的。

贾政正要带笑叙话，只见家人慌张报道：“西平王爷到了。”贾政慌忙去接，已见王爷进来。赵堂官抢上去请了安，便说：“王爷已到，随来的老爷们就该带领府役把守前后



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## Chapter 105

### Imperial Guards Raid the Ning Mansion A Censor Brings a Charge Against the Prefect of Pingan

Jia Zheng was entertaining his guests in the Hall of Glorious Felicity when in burst Lai Da.

“Commissioner Zhao of the Imperial Guards and several of his officers are here to see you, sir,” he announced. “When I asked for their cards the commissioner said, ‘No need: we are old friends.’ He dismounted from his carriage and came straight in. Please make haste to meet them, sir, with the young gentlemen.”

Jia Zheng, who had had no dealings with Commissioner Zhao, could not understand why he should have come uninvited. As he had guests he could hardly entertain him, yet not to ask him in would be discourteous.

He was thinking it over when Jia Lian urged, “Better go at once, uncle, before they all come in.”

That same moment a servant from the inner gate announced, “Commissioner Zhao has entered the inner gate.”

Jia Zheng and others hastily went to meet him. The commissioner, smiling, said not a word as he walked straight into the hall. Behind him were five or six of his officers, only a few of whom they recognized, but none of these answered their greetings. At a loss, Jia Zheng had to offer them seats. Certain of the guests knew Commissioner Zhao, yet with his head in the air he ignored them all, simply taking Jia Zheng’s hand as he made a few conventional remarks. This looked so ominous that some of the guests slipped into the inner room while all the rest stood at respectful attention.

Jia Zheng, forcing a smile, was about to make conversation when a flustered servant announced the Prince of Xiping. Before he could hasten to meet him the prince had entered.

Commissioner Zhao stepped forward at once to salute him, then or-





门。”众官应了出去。贾政等知事不好，连忙跪接。西平郡王用两手扶起，笑嘻嘻的说道：“无事不敢轻造，有奉旨交办事件，要赦老接旨。如今满堂中筵席未散，想有亲友在此未便，且请众位府上亲友各散，独留本宅的人听候。”赵堂官回说：“王爷虽是恩典，但东边的事，这位王爷办事认真，想是早已封门。”众人知是两府干系，恨不能脱身。只见王爷笑道：“众位只管就请。叫人来给我送出去，告诉锦衣府的官员说：这都是亲友，不必盘查，快快放出。”那些亲友听见，就一溜烟如飞的出去了。独有贾赦贾政一千人，唬得面如土色，满身发颤。

不多一会，只见进来无数番役，各门把守，本宅上下人等一步不能乱走。赵堂官便转过一副脸来，回王爷道：“请爷宣旨意，就好动手。”这些番役都撩衣奋臂，专等旨意。西平王慢慢的说道：“小王奉旨，带领锦衣府赵全来查看贾赦家产。”贾赦等听见，俱俯伏在地。王爷便站在上头说：“有旨意：贾赦交通外官，依势凌弱，辜负朕恩，有忝祖德，着革去世职。钦此。”赵堂官一叠声叫：“拿下贾赦。其余皆看守。”





dered his officers, "Since His Highness has arrived, you gentlemen can take runners to guard the front and back gates."

His officers assented and went out. Jia Zheng, knowing that this spelt trouble, fell on his knees to welcome the prince, who helped him to his feet with a smile.

"We wouldn't presume to intrude without special reason," he said. "We have come to announce an Imperial decree to Lord She. You have many feasters here, which is somewhat inopportune, so I'll ask your relatives and friends to disperse, leaving only your own household to hear the decree."

Commissioner Zhao put in, "Your Highness is very gracious, but the prince officiating at the East Mansion takes his duties so seriously that the gates are doubtless already sealed up."

Hearing that both mansions were involved, the guests were desperate to extricate themselves.

"These gentlemen are free to go," the prince said affably. "Have attendants see them out and notify your guards that there is no need to search them as they are all guests. Let them leave at once."

Then those relatives and friends streaked off like lightning, leaving Jia Zheng, Jia She and their households livid and trembling with fear. Meanwhile runners had swarmed in to guard all the doors, so that no one — whether master or man — could stir a foot from his place.

Commissioner Zhao turned to request the prince. "Please read the decree, Your Highness, then we can start the search."

The runners hitched up their tunics and rolled up their sleeves, ready to go into action.

The Prince of Xiping proclaimed slowly, "His Majesty has ordered me to bring Zhao Quan of the Imperial Guards to search Jia She's property."

Jia She and the rest prostrated themselves on the ground.

The prince, standing on the dais, continued. "Hear the Imperial decree: Jia She has intrigued with provincial officials and abused his power to molest the weak, showing himself unworthy of Our favour and sullyng his ancestors' good name. His hereditary rank is hereby abolished."

Commissioner Zhao thundered, "Arrest Jia She! Keep guard over the others."





维时，贾赦、贾政、贾琏、贾珍、贾蓉、贾蔷、贾芝、贾兰俱在，惟宝玉假说有病，在贾母那边打混，贾环本来不大见人的，所以就将现在几人看住。

赵堂官即叫他的家人传齐司员，带同番役，分头按房，查抄登账。这一言不打紧，唬得贾政上下人等面面相看；喜得番役家人摩拳擦掌，就要往各处动手。西平王道：“闻得赦老与政老同房各爨的，理应遵旨查看贾赦的家资。其余且按房封锁我们复旨去，再候定夺。”赵堂官站起来说：“回王爷：贾赦贾政并未分家。闻得他侄儿贾琏现在承总管家，不能不尽行查抄。”西平王听了，也不言语。赵堂官便说：“贾琏贾赦两处须得奴才带领查抄才好。”西平王便说：“不必忙。先传信后宅，且叫内眷回避，再查不迟。”一言未了，老赵家奴番役，已经拉着本宅家人领路，分头查抄去了。王爷喝命：“不许罗唆，待本爵自行查看！”说着，便慢慢的站起来吩咐说：“跟我的人一个不许动，都给我站在这里候着，回来一齐瞧着登数。”

正说着，只见锦衣司官跪禀说：“在内查出御用衣裙并多少禁用之物，不敢擅动，回来请示王爷。”一会子，又有一起人来拦住西平王，回说：“东跨所抄出两箱子房地契，又一箱借票，都是违例取利的。”老赵便说：“好个重利盘剥！很





At that time, all the men of both Jia Mansions were in the hall except for Baoyu, who had slipped off to join the old lady on the pretext of indisposition, and Jia Huan who was seldom presented to guests. So all the rest were now under surveillance.

Commissioner Zhao told his men to dispatch officers and runners to search the different apartments and draw up an inventory. This order made Jia Zheng's household exchange consternated glances, while the runners gleefully rubbed their hands, eager to ransack the place.

The prince interposed, "We hear that Lord She and Lord Zheng keep separate accounts, and according to the decree we are to search the former's property. The rest is to be sealed up pending further orders."

Commissioner Zhao rose to his feet. "May it please Your Highness," he said, "Jia She and Jia Zheng have not divided the family property, and we hear that Jia Zheng has put his nephew Jia Lian in charge of his household affairs. We shall therefore have to search the whole premises." When the prince made no comment he added, "I must go in person with my officers to search the houses of Jia She and Jia Lian."

"There is no hurry," demurred the prince. "Send word first so that the ladies inside may withdraw before you start to search."

But already the commissioner's attendants and runners, making the Jias' servants show them the way, had set off in different directions to ransack both mansions.

"No disorder now!" called the prince sternly. "I shall come in person to supervise the search!" Then getting up slowly he ordered, "None of those who came with me are to move. Wait here. Later we shall check up on the property and make an inventory."

Just then a guard came in and knelt to report, "In the inner apartments we have found some clothes from the Palace and other forbidden things which we haven't presumed to touch. I have come, Your Highness, to ask for your orders."

Presently another group gathered round the prince to report, "In Jia Lian's house we have found two cases of title-deeds and one of promissory notes — all at illegally exorbitant rates of interest."

"Good!" cried Commissioner Zhao. "So they are usurers too. All their property should certainly be confiscated! Please rest here, Your



该全抄!请王爷就此坐下,叫奴才去全抄来,再候定夺罢。”

说着,只见王府长史来禀说:“守门军传进来说:‘主上特派北静王到这里宣旨,请爷接去。’”赵堂官听了,心想:

“我好晦气,碰着这个酸王!如今那位来了,我就好施威了!”一面想着,也迎出来。只见北静王已到大厅,就向外站着说:“有旨意,锦衣府赵全听宣。”说:“奉旨:着锦衣官惟提贾赦质审,余交西平王遵旨查办。钦此。”西平王领了旨意,甚实喜欢,便与北静王坐下,着赵堂官提取贾赦回衙。里头那些查抄的人,听得北静王到,俱一齐出来。及闻赵堂官走了,大家没趣,只得侍立听候。北静王便拣选两个诚实司官并十来个老年番役,余者一概逐出。

西平王便说:“我正和老赵生气,幸得王爷到来降旨;不然,这里很吃大亏。”北静王说:“我在朝内听见王爷奉旨查抄贾宅,我甚放心,谅这里不致荼毒。不料老赵这么混账。但不知现在政老及宝玉在那里?里面不知闹到怎么样了?”众人回禀:“贾政等在下房看守着,里面已抄的乱腾腾了。”北静王便吩咐司员:“快将贾政带来问话。”众人领命,带了上来。贾政跪下,不免含泪乞恩。北静王便起身拉着,说:

“政老放心。”便将旨意说了。贾政感激涕零,望北又谢了





Highness, while I supervise the search before coming back for your instructions.”

Just then, however, the prince’s steward announced, “The guards at the gate say that His Majesty has sent the Prince of Beijing to proclaim another decree and they ask the commissioner to receive him.”

As Commissioner Zhao started out to meet the Prince of Beijing he told himself, “I was out of luck having that crabbed prince foisted on me. Now, with this other one here, I should be able to crack down on them hard!”

The Prince of Beijing had already entered the hall. Standing facing the doorway he announced, “Here is a decree. Let Zhao Quan, Commissioner of the Imperial Guards, pay heed.” He then proclaimed, “The commissioner’s sole task is to arrest Jia She for trial. The Prince of Xiping will determine what other measures to take according to the earlier decree.”

Elated by this, the Prince of Xiping seated himself beside the Prince of Beijing and sent the commissioner back to his yamen with Jia She. This development disappointed all his officers and runners, who had come out on hearing of the second prince’s arrival. They had to stand there awaiting Their Highnesses’ orders. The Prince of Beijing selected two honest officers and a dozen of the older runners, sending away the rest.

The Prince of Xiping told him, “I was just losing patience with Old Zhao. If you hadn’t brought that decree in the nick of time, sir, they’d have been really hard hit here.”

“When I heard at court that Your Highness had been sent to search the Jia Mansions I was relieved, knowing you would let them off more lightly,” the Prince of Beijing replied. “I never thought Old Zhao was such a scoundrel. But where are Jia Zheng and Baoyu now? And how much damage has been done inside?”

His men reported, “Jia Zheng and the rest are under guard in the servants’ quarters, and the whole place has been turned upside-down.”

At the Prince of Beijing’s orders, the officers fetched Jia Zheng for questioning. He fell on his knees before Their Highnesses and with tears in his eyes begged for mercy. The prince helped him up and urged him not to worry, then informed him of the terms of the new decree. With



恩，仍上来听候。王爷道：“政老，方才老赵在这里的时候，番役呈禀有禁用之物并重利欠票，我们也难掩过。这禁用之物，原备办贵妃用的，我们声明也无碍。独是借券，想个什么法儿才好。如今政老且带司员实在将赦老家产呈出，也就完事；切不可再有隐匿，自干罪戾。”贾政答应道：“犯官再不敢。但犯官祖父遗产并未分过；惟各人所住的房屋有的东西便为己有。”两王便说：“这也无妨，惟将赦老那边所有的交出就是了。”又吩咐司员等依命行去，不许胡乱混动。司员领命去了。

且说贾母那边女眷也摆家宴。王夫人正在那边说：“宝玉不到外头，看你老子生气。”凤姐带病哼哼唧唧的说：“我看宝玉也不是怕人，他见前头陪客的人也不少了，所以在这里照应，也是有的。倘或老爷想起里头少个人在那里照应，太太便把宝兄弟献出去，可不是好？”贾母笑道：“凤丫头病到这个分儿，这张嘴还是那么尖巧！”

正说到高兴，只听见邢夫人那边的人一直声的嚷进来说：“老太太，太太！不……不好了！多多少少的穿靴带帽的强……强盗来了！翻箱倒笼的来拿东西！”贾母等听着发呆。又见平儿披头散发，拉着巧姐，哭哭啼啼的来说：“不好了！我正和姐儿吃饭，只见来旺被人拴着进来说：‘姑娘快快传进去





tears of gratitude, Jia Zheng kowtowed towards the north to thank the Emperor then turned back for further instructions.

The prince said, "When Old Zhao was here just now, Your Lordship, his runners reported finding various articles for Imperial use and some promissory notes for usurious loans — this we cannot cover up. Regarding those forbidden articles, as they were for Her Imperial Highness' use it will do no harm to report them. But we must find some way to explain those IOU's. Now I want you, sir, to take the officers and honestly hand over to them all your brother's property, to end the matter. Don't on any account conceal anything, or you will be asking for trouble."

"I would never dare," answered Jia Zheng. "But we never divided up our ancestral estate, simply considering the things in our two houses as our own property."

"Very well," they said. "Just hand over everything in Lord She's house." They sent the two officers off with orders to attend only to this and nothing else.

Let us return now to the ladies' feast in the Lady Dowager's quarters. Lady Wang had just warned Baoyu that unless he went out to join the gentlemen his father might be angry.

Xifeng, still unwell, said faintly, "I don't think Baoyu's afraid of meeting them, but he knows there are plenty of people there to entertain the guests, so he's waiting on us here instead. If it occurs to the master that they need more people there to look after the guests, you can trot out Baoyu, madam. How about that?"

"This minx Xifeng!" the old lady chuckled. "She still has the gift of the gab for all she's so ill!"

The fun was at its height when one of Lady Xing's maids came rushing in crying, "Your Ladyships! We're done for! A whole lot of robbers have come, all in boots and official caps... They'er opening cases, overturning crates, ransacking the whole place! ...."

The old lady and the others had not recovered from this shock when Pinger, her hair hanging loose, dashed in with Qiaojie.

"We're ruined!" she wailed. "I was having lunch with Qiaojie when Lai Wang appeared in chains, and told me to lose no time in warning you



请太太们回避，外头王爷就进来抄家了!’我听了几乎唬死!正要进房拿要紧的东西，被一伙子人浑推浑赶出来了。这里该穿该带的快快的收拾罢!”邢王二夫人听得，俱魂飞天外，不知怎样才好。独见凤姐先前圆睁两眼听着，后来一仰身便栽倒地下。贾母没有听完，便吓得涕泪交流，连话也说不出。

那时，一屋子人，拉这个，扯那人，正闹得翻天覆地。又听见一叠声嚷说：“叫里头女眷们回避，王爷进来了!”宝钗宝玉等正在没法，只见地下这些丫头婆子乱拉乱扯的时候，贾琏喘吁吁的跑进来说：“好了，好了!幸亏王爷救了咱们了!”众人正要问他，贾琏见凤姐死在地下，哭着乱叫；又见老太太吓坏了，也回不过气来，更是着急。还亏了平儿将凤姐叫醒，令人扶着。老太太也苏醒了，又哭的气短神昏，躺在炕上，李纨再三宽慰。然后贾琏定神，将两王恩典说明；惟恐贾母邢夫人知道贾赦被拿，又要唬死，且暂不敢明说，只得出来照料自己屋内。一进屋门，只见箱开柜破，物件抢得半空。此时急的两眼直竖，淌泪发呆，听见外头叫，只得出来。见贾政同司员登记物件，一人报说：

枷楠寿佛一尊。枷楠观音像一尊。佛座一件。枷楠念珠二串。金佛一堂。镀金镜光九件。玉佛三尊。玉寿星八仙一堂。枷楠金玉如意各二柄。古磁瓶罍十七件。古玩软片共十四箱。玉缸一口。小玉缸二件。玉盘二对。玻璃大屏二架。炕屏二架。玻璃盘四件。玉盘四件。玛瑙盘二件。淡金盘四件。金碗六对。金抢碗八个。金匙四十把。银大碗银盘各六十个。三镶金牙箸四把。镀金执壶十二把。折盂三对。茶托二件。银碟银杯一百六十件。黑狐皮十八张。貂皮五十六张。黄白狐皮各四十四



ladies to keep out of the way, as some prince has come to raid our house! I nearly died of fright! Before I could go in to fetch any valuables, a band of men drove me out. You'd better make haste to get together the clothes and things you need."

Lady Xing and Lady Wang were completely flummoxed, frightened out of their wits. Xifeng who had listened wide-eyed now collapsed in a faint. The old lady was crying with terror, unable to utter a word.

Pandemonium reigned as the maids tried to attend to their mistresses. Then they heard shouts, "The women inside must make themselves scarce! The prince is coming!"

Baochai and Baoyu looked on helplessly as the maids and nurses attempted desperately to hustle the ladies out. Then in ran Jia Lian.

"It's all right now!" he panted. "Thank goodness the prince has come to our rescue!"

Before they could question him, he saw Xifeng lying as if dead on the floor and gave a cry of alarm. Then the sight of the old lady, terror-stricken and gasping for breath, made him even more frantic. Luckily Pinger and others managed to revive Xifeng and help her up. The old lady recovered consciousness too, but lay back dizzily on the couch sobbing and choking for breath, while Li Wan did her best to soothe her.

Taking a grip on himself, Jia Lian explained to them how kindly the two princes had intervened. But fearing that the news of Jia She's arrest might make the old lady and Lady Xing die of fright, he withheld it for the time being and went back to his own quarter.

Once over the threshold, he saw that all their cases and wardrobes had been opened and rifled. He stood speechless in consternation, shedding tears, till he heard his name called and had to go out. Jia Zheng was there with two officers drawing up an inventory, which one of the officers read out as follows:

One hundred and twenty-three gold trinkets set with jewels; thirteen strings of pearls two pale gold plates; two pairs of gold bowls; two gilded bowls; forty gold spoons; eighty big silver bowls and twenty silver plates; two pairs of ivory chopsticks inlaid with gold; four gilded pots; three pairs of gilded cups; two tea-trays; seventy-six silver saucers; thirty-six silver cups; eighteen black fox furs; six deep-grey fox furs; thirty-six





张。猢狲皮十二张。云狐筒子二十五件。海龙二十六张。海豹三张。虎皮六张。麻叶皮三张。獭子皮二十八张。绛色羊皮四十张。黑羊皮六十三张。香鼠筒子二十件。豆鼠皮二十四方。天鹅绒四卷。灰鼠二百六十三张。倭缎三十二度。洋呢三十度。哔叽三十三度。姑绒四十度。绸缎一百三十卷。纱绫一百八十卷。线绉三十二卷。羽缎羽纱各二十二卷，氍毹三十卷。妆蟒缎十八卷。各色布三十捆。皮衣一百三十二件。绵夹单纱绢衣三百四十件。带头儿九副。铜锡等物五百余件。钟表十八件。朝珠九挂。珍珠十三挂。赤金首饰一百二十件，珠宝俱全。上用黄缎迎手靠背三分。宫妆衣裙八套。脂玉圈带二条。黄缎十二卷。潮银七千两。淡金一百五十二两。钱七千五百串。

一切动用家伙及荣国赐第一一开列。房地契纸，家人文书，亦俱封裹。

贾琏在旁窃听，不见报他的东西，心里正在疑惑，只闻二王问道：“所抄家资，内有借券，实系盘剥，究是谁行的？政老据实才好。”贾政听了，跪在地下磕头，说：“实在犯官不理家务，这些事全不知道，问犯官侄儿贾琏才知。”贾琏





sable furs; thirty yellow fox furs; twelve ermine furs; three grey fox furs; sixty marten furs; forty grey fox-leg furs; twenty brown sheep-skins; two raccoon furs; two bundles of yellow fox-leg furs; twenty pieces of white fox fur; thirty lengths of Western worsted; twenty-three lengths of serge; twelve lengths of velveteen; twenty musk-rat furs; four pieces of spotted squirrel fur; one bolt of velvet; one piece of plum-deer skin; two fox furs with ornamental cloud patterns; a roll of badgercub skin; seven bundles of platypus fur; a hundred and sixty squirrel furs; eight male wolf-skins; six tiger-skins; three seal-skins; sixteen otter furs; forty bundles of grey sheep-skins; sixty-three black sheep-skins; ten sets of red fox-fur hat material; twelve sets of black fox-fur hat material; two sets of sable-fur hat material; sixteen small fox furs; two beaver-skins; two otter-skins; thirty-five civet-cat furs; twelve lengths of Japanese silk; one hundred and thirty bolts of satin; one hundred and eighty-one bolts of gauze; thirty-two bolts of crepe; thirty bolts of Tibetan serge; eight bolts of satin with serpent designs; three bales of hemp-cloth; three bales of different kinds of cloth; one hundred fur coats; thirty-two Tibetan serge garments; three hundred and forty padded and unpadded garments; thirty-two jade articles; nine jade buckles; over five hundred utensils of copper and tin; eighteen clocks and watches; nine chaplets; thirty-two lengths of different kinds of satin with serpent designs; three satin cushions with serpent designs for Imperial use; eight costumes for Palace ladies; one white jade belt; twelve bolts of yellow satin; seven thousand and two hundred taels of silver; fifty taels of gold; seven thousand strings of cash.

Separate lists were made of all the furnishings and the mansions conferred on the Duke of Rongguo. The title-deeds of houses and land and the bonds of the family slaves were also sealed up.

Jia Lian, listening at one side, was puzzled not to hear his own property listed.

Then the two princes said, "Among the property confiscated are some IOU's which are definitely usurious. Whose are they? Your Lordship must tell the truth."

Jia Zheng knelt down and kowtowed. "I am guilty of never having managed the household affairs and that is the truth," he said. "I know nothing about such transactions. Your Highnesses will have to ask my nephew Jia Lian."



连忙走上，跪下禀说：“这一箱文书既在奴才屋里抄出来的，敢说不知道么？只求王爷开恩。奴才叔叔并不知道的。”两王道：“你父已经获罪，只可并案办理。你今认了，也是正理。如此，叫人将贾琏看守，余俱散收宅内。政老，你须小心候旨，我们进内复旨去了。这里有官役看守。”说着，上轿出门。贾政等就在二门跪送。北静王把手一伸，说：“请放心。”觉得脸上大有不忍之色。

此时贾政魂魄方定，犹是发怔。贾兰便说：“请爷爷到里头先瞧瞧老太太去呢。”贾政听了，疾忙起身进内。只见各门上妇女乱糟糟的，都不知要怎样。贾政无心查问，一直到了贾母房中，只见人人泪痕满面，王夫人宝玉等围着贾母，寂静无言，各各掉泪，惟有邢夫人哭作一团。因见贾政进来，都说：“好了，好了！”便告诉老太太说：“老爷仍旧好好的进来了，请老太太安心罢。”贾母奄奄一息的，微开双目，说：“我的儿，不想还见的着你！”一声未了，便嚎啕的哭起来。于是满屋里的人俱哭个不住。贾政恐哭坏老母，即收泪说：“老太太放心罢。本来事情原不小，蒙主上天恩，两位王爷的恩典，万般轸恤。就是大老爷暂时拘质，等问明白了，主上还有恩典。如今家里一些也不动了。”贾母见贾赦





Jia Lian hastily stepped forward and knelt to report, "Since those documents were found in my humble house, how can I deny knowledge of them? I only beg Your Highnesses to be lenient to my uncle who knew nothing about this."

The two princes said, "As your father has already been found guilty, your cases can be dealt with together. You did right to admit this. Very well then, let a guard be kept over Jia Lian; the rest of the household can return to their different quarters. Lord Zheng, you must wait prudently for a further decree. We shall go now to report to His Majesty, leaving officers and runners here to keep watch."

They mounted their sedan-chairs, Jia Zheng and the others kneeling at the inner gate to see them off. The Prince of Beijing, on leaving, stretched out one hand with a look of compassion and said, "Please set your minds at rest."

By now Jia Zheng felt slightly calmer, although still dazed.

Jia Lan suggested, "Grandfather, won't you go in to see the old lady first? Then we can send for news of the East Mansion."

Jia Zheng hastily did so, and found serving-women from different apartments all milling about in confusion. In no mood to check what they were doing he entered his mother's room, where one and all were in tears. Lady Wang, Baoyu and others had gathered silently around the old lady, tears streaming down their cheeks. Lady Xing was shaken by sobs. At his arrival they exclaimed in relief.

"The master has come back safely," they told the old lady. "Don't worry any more, madam."

The Lady Dowager, apparently at her last gasp, feebly opened her eyes and quavered, "My son, I never thought to see you again!"

She burst out weeping and all the others joined in until Jia Zheng, fearing these transports of grief might be too much for his mother, held back his tears.

"Set your heart at rest, madam," he urged. "It is a serious matter, but His Gracious Majesty and the two princes have shown us the kindest consideration. The Elder Master has been taken into custody for the time being; but once the matter is cleared up the Emperor will show more clemency. And our property is not being confiscated."



不在，又伤心起来，贾政再三安慰方止。

众人俱不敢走散。独邢夫人回至自己那边，见门全封锁，丫头老婆也锁在几间屋里，无处可走，便放声大哭起来。只得往凤姐那边去，见二门傍边也上了封条，惟有屋门开着，里头呜咽不绝。邢夫人进去，见凤姐面如纸灰，合眼躺着，平儿在旁暗哭。邢夫人打谅凤姐死了，又哭起来。平儿迎上来说：“太太先别哭。奶奶才抬回来，像是死了的。歇息了一会子，苏过来，哭了几声，这会子略安了安神儿。太太也请定定神儿罢。但不知老太太怎么样了？”

邢夫人也不答言，仍走到贾母那边。见眼前俱是贾政的人，自己夫子被拘，媳妇病危，女儿受苦，现在身无所归，那里止得住悲痛。众人劝慰。李纨等令人收拾房屋，请邢夫人暂住。王夫人拨人服侍。

贾政在外，心惊肉跳，拈须搓手的等候旨意。听见外面看守军人乱嚷道：“你到底是那一边的？既碰在我们这里，就记在这里册上，拴着他交给里头锦衣府的爷们。”贾政出外看时，见是焦大，便说：“怎么跑到这里来？”焦大见问，便号天跺地的哭道：“我天天劝这些不长进的爷们，倒拿我当作冤家！爷还不知道焦大跟着太爷受的苦吗？今儿弄到这个田地，珍大爷蓉哥儿都叫什么王爷拿了去了；里头女主儿们都被什么府里衙役抢的披头散发，圈在一处空房里；那些不成





Jia She's arrest distressed the old lady anew, and Jia Zheng did his best to comfort her.

Lady Xing was the only one who ventured to leave, going back to her apartments. She found the doors sealed up and locked, the serving-women confined in a few rooms. Unable to get in she burst out wailing, then made her way back to Xifeng's apartments. The side-gate there was also sealed, but Xifeng's room was open and from it came the sound of continuous sobbing. Entering, she saw Xifeng lying with closed eyes, her face ashen-pale, while Pinger wept beside her. Thinking her dead, Lady Xing started sobbing too.

"Don't cry, madam," said Pinger, stepping forward to greet her. "We carried her back just now in a dead faint, but presently she came to and cried a little. Now she is quieter. Please calm down, madam. How is the old lady now?"

Lady Xing made no answer but went to rejoin the Lady Dowager. The only people there were members of Jia Zheng's household, and she could not hold back her grief at the thought that both her husband and son had been arrested, her daughter-in-law was at death's door, and her daughter was ill-treated by her husband, so that she had nowhere to turn. The others tried to console her. Li Wan told servants to clear out some rooms for her for the time being, and Lady Wang assigned maids to look after her.

Jia Zheng outside was on tenterhooks, tweaking his beard and wringing his hands as he waited for the Emperor's next decree.

"Which house do you belong to anyway?" he heard the guards outside shouting. "As you've come butting in here, we'll put you down on our list and chain you up to hand over to the officers inside."

Jia Zheng went out and saw it was Jiao Da.

"Why did you come here?" he asked.

Jiao Da stamped his foot and wailed, "I warned those degenerate masters of ours all along, but they treated me as their sworn enemy! Even you don't know, sir, what hardships I endured serving the old duke. Now things have come to a pretty pass with Sir Zhen and Rong arrested by some princes' officers! The ladies' trinkets were looted by the officers and runners and they were shut up in an empty room! And those



材料的狗男女都像猪狗似的拦起来了；所有的都抄出来搁着，木器钉的破烂，磁器打的粉碎。他们还要把我拴起来！我活了八九十岁，只有跟着太爷捆人的，那里有倒叫人捆起来的！我说我是西府里的，就跑出来。那些人不依，押到这里，不想这里也是这么着。我如今也不要命了，和那些人拼了罢！”说着撞头。众衙役见他年老，又是两王吩咐，不敢发狠。便说：“你老人家安静些儿罢。这是奉旨的事，你先歇歇听信儿。”贾政听着，虽不理他，但是心里刀搅一般，便道：“完了，完了！不料我们一败涂地如此！”

正在着急听候内信，只见薛蝌气嘘嘘的跑进来说：“好容易进来了！姨父在那里呢？”贾政道：“来的好！外头怎么放进来的？”薛蝌道：“我再三央及，又许他们钱，所以我才能够出入的。”贾政便将抄去之事告诉了他，就烦他打听打听，说：“别的亲友，在火头儿上，也不便送信，是你就好通信了。”薛蝌道：“这里的事，我倒想不到；那边东府的事，我已听见说了。”贾政道：“究竟犯什么事？”薛蝌道：“今儿为我哥哥打听决罪的事，在衙门里听见有两位御史，风闻是珍大哥引诱世家子弟赌博，这一款还轻；还有一大款强占良民之妻为妾，因其不从，凌逼致死。那御史恐怕不准，还将咱们家的鲍二拿去，又还拉出一个姓张的来。只怕连都察院都有不是，为的是姓张的起先告过。”贾政尚未听完，便跺脚道：



useless slaves cooped up like pigs and dogs! Everything has been confiscated, furniture broken in pieces, porcelain smashed — they even want to put *me* in chains too! I've lived eighty to ninety years and trussed people up for the old duke; how can I let myself be trussed up instead? I told them I belonged to the West Mansion and broke out, but those fellows wouldn't let me go. They hauled me here, where I find things are just as bad. I'm sick of life — I'll have it out with them!" With that he butted the runners.

As he was so old and their orders were not to make trouble, the runners simply said, "Pipe down, old man. This is done by Imperial decree. You'd better take it easy and wait for news."

Although Jia Zheng tried to ignore this, he felt as if a knife had been plunged in his heart. "We're done for, done for!" he sighed. "To think that we should be reduced to this!"

As he was waiting impatiently for news from court, Xue Ke came running in. "What a time I had getting in here!" he panted. "Where is uncle?"

"Thank Heaven you've come!" Jia Zheng exclaimed. "How did you gain admittance?"

"By pleading hard and promising them money."

Jia Zheng described the raid to him and asked him to make inquiries. "I can't very well send messages to other relatives and friends now that we're under fire," he explained. "But you can deliver messages for me."

"It never occurred to me that you'd have trouble here, sir; but I've heard something about the East Mansion's business."

"What exactly are the charges against them?"

"Today I went to the yamen to find out what Cousin Pan's sentence is, and I heard that two censors have accused Cousin Zhen of corrupting young nobles by getting them to gamble — that isn't so serious. The more serious charge is of abducting the wife of an honest citizen, who was forced to kill herself rather than submit. To bring this charge home, the censors got our man Bao Er and a fellow called Zhang as witnesses. This may involve the Court of Censors too, as that fellow Zhang had brought a suit before."





“了不得!罢了,罢了!”叹了一口气,扑簌簌的掉下泪来。

薛蝌宽慰了几句,即便又出去打听,隔了半日,仍旧进来,说:“事情不好。我在刑科里打听,倒没有听见两王复旨的信,只听说:李御史今早又参奏平安州奉承京官,迎合上司,虐待百姓,好几大款。”贾政慌道:“那管他人的事!到底打听我们的怎么样?”薛蝌道:“说是平安州,就有我们,那参的京官就是大老爷,说的是包揽词讼,所以火上浇油。就是同朝这些官府,俱藏躲不迭,谁肯送信?即如才散的这些亲友们,有各自回家去了的,也有远远儿的歇下打听的。可恨那些贵本家都在路上说:‘祖宗撂下的功业,弄出事来了,不知道飞到那个头上去呢,大家也好施为施为……’”贾政没有听完,复又顿足道:“都是我们大老爷忒糊涂!东府也忒不成事体!如今老太太和琏儿媳妇是死是活,还不知道呢!你再打听去,我到老太太那边瞧瞧。若有信,能够早一步才好!”

正说着,听见里头乱嚷出来说,“老太太不好了!”急的贾政即忙进去。未知生死如何,下回分解。





Jia Zheng stamped his foot. "Terrible! We're done for!" he sighed, tears streaming down his cheeks.

Xue Ke tried to reassure him then went off to find out more news, returning a few hours later.

"It looks bad," he informed him. "When I asked at the Board of Punishments, I didn't hear the result of the two princes' report but was told that this morning Censor Li brought another charge against the prefect of Pingan, accusing him of pandering to an official in the capital and oppressing the people to please his superior — there were several serious charges."

"Never mind about other people," said Jia Zheng impatiently. "What did you hear about *us*?"

"That charge against the prefect of Pingan involves us too, sir. The official in the capital referred to by the censor was Lord She, who's accused of tampering with lawsuits. This adds fuel to the flames! All your colleagues are trying hard to keep out of this, so who would send you word? Even those relatives and friends at your feast either went home or are keeping well away until they know the upshot. Some clansmen of yours — confound them! — have been saying openly, "Their ancestors left them property and titles. Now that they're in trouble who knows whom the title may go to. We all ought to take steps.... ' "

Without hearing him out Jia Zheng stamped his foot again. "What a fool my brother is!" he groaned. "It's a scandal, too, the way they've carried on in the East Mansion! For all we know this may be the death of the old lady and Lian's wife! Go and see what more you can find out while I look in on the old lady. If there's any news, the sooner we know it the better."

Just then a great commotion broke out inside and they heard cries of "The old lady's dying!" Jia Zheng hurried anxiously in. To know whether she lived or died, you must read the next chapter.



## 第一百六回

王熙凤致祸抱羞惭 贾太君祷天消祸患

话说贾政闻知贾母危急，即忙进去看视，见贾母惊吓气逆，王夫人鸳鸯等唤醒回来，即用疏气安神的丸药服了，渐渐的好些，只是伤心落泪。贾政在旁劝慰，总说：“是儿子们不肖，招了祸来，累老太太受惊。若老太太宽慰些，儿子们尚可在外料理；若是老太太有什么不自在，儿子们的罪孽更重了！”贾母道：“我活了八十多岁，自作女孩儿起，到你父亲手里，都托着祖宗的福，从没有听说过这些事；如今到老了，见你们倘或受罪，叫我心里过的去吗？倒不如合上眼，随你们去罢了！”说着，又哭。

贾政此时着急异常，又听外面说：“请老爷，内廷有信。”贾政急忙出来，见是北静王府长史，一见面便说：“大喜！”贾政谢了，请长史坐下，请问：“王爷有何谕旨？”那长史道：“我们王爷同西平郡王进内复奏，将大人惧怕之心、感激天恩之语都代奏过了。主上甚是悯恤，并念及贵妃溘逝未久，不忍加罪，着加恩仍在工部员外上行走。所封家产，惟将贾赦的人官，余俱给还，并传旨令尽心供职。惟抄出借券，令我们王爷查核。如有违禁重利的，一概照例入



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## Chapter 106

### Xifeng Is Conscience-Smitten at Causing Calamity The Lady Dowager Prays to Heaven to Avert Disaster

The cry that the Lady Dowager was dying made Jia Zheng speed over to see her. She had in fact fainted from shock, but Lady Wang, Yuanyang and the rest had revived her and given her a sedative which had gradually restored her, though she was still crying for grief.

In the hope of soothing her he said, "Your unfilial sons have brought this trouble upon our family, alarming you, madam. If you will take comfort, we can still handle the situation outside; but if you fall ill our guilt will be even greater!"

"I'm four score years and more," was her reply. "Ever since my girlhood when I married your father, thanks to our ancestors I've lived in the lap of luxury and never even heard tell of a nightmare like this. Now, in my old age, seeing you come to grief — it's too bad! I wish I could die and be done with worrying about you!" She broke down again.

Jia Zheng was at his wit's end when a servant outside announced a messenger from the court. He went out at once and saw that it was the Prince of Beijing's chamberlain.

"Good news, sir!" were the chamberlain's first words.

Jia Zheng thanked him and offered him a seat. "What instructions has His Highness for me?" he asked.

"Our master and the Prince of Xiping reported to the Emperor your trepidation, sir, and your gratitude for His Majesty's magnanimity. As it is not long since the Imperial Consort's passing, His Majesty, being most merciful, cannot bring himself to condemn you. You are to retain your post in the Ministry of Works. Regarding the family property, only Jia She's share is to be confiscated; the rest will be restored to you and you are enjoined to work well. As for those promissory notes, our master has been ordered to examine them. All those at usurious, illegal rates of inter-

官；其在定例生息的，同房地文书，尽行给还。贾琏着革去职衔，免罪释放。”贾政听毕，即起身叩谢天恩，又拜谢王爷恩典：“先请长史大人代为禀谢，明晨到阙谢恩，并到府里磕头。”那长史去了。少停，传出旨来，承办官遵旨一一查清，入官者入官，给还者给还。将贾琏放出，所有贾赦名下男妇人等造册入官。

可怜贾琏屋内东西，除将按例放出的文书发给外，其余虽未尽入官的，早被查抄的人尽行抢去，所存者只有家伙物件。贾琏始则惧罪，后蒙释放，已是大幸，及想起历年积聚的东西并凤姐的体己，不下五七万金，一朝而尽，怎得不疼；且他父亲现禁在锦衣府，凤姐病在垂危，一时悲痛。又见贾政含泪叫他，问道：“我因官事在身，不大理家，故叫你们夫妇总理家事。你父亲所为，固难谏劝，那重利盘剥，究竟是谁干的？况且非咱们这样人家所为。如今入了官，在银钱呢，是不打紧的，这声名出去还了得吗？”贾琏跪下说道：“侄儿办家事，并不敢存一点私心，所有出入的账目，自有赖大、吴新登、戴良等登记，老爷只管叫他们来查问。现在这几年，库内的银子出多人少，虽没贴补在内，已在各处做了好些空头，求老爷问太太就知道了。这些放出去的账，连侄儿也不知道那里的银子，要问周瑞、来旺才知



est are to be confiscated according to regulations. Those on which the standard rates are charged are to be returned to you, together with your title-deeds. Jia Lian is dismissed from his post, but will be released without further punishment.”

Jia Zheng rose to kowtow his thanks to the Emperor, then bowed his thanks to the prince.

“I beg you, sir, to report my gratitude now,” he said. “Tomorrow I shall go to court to express my thanks, then go to your mansion to kowtow to His Highness.”

Soon after the chamberlain had left the Imperial edict arrived and was put into force by the officers in charge, who confiscated certain things, returning the rest. Jia Lian was released, while all Jia She’s men and women bondservants were registered and sequestered.

Unhappy Jia Lian had lost virtually all his possessions apart from some furnishings and those legitimate promissory notes which were returned to him. For though the rest of his property was not confiscated, the runners during their raid had carried it off. He had dreaded being punished and rejoiced at his release, but the loss overnight of all his savings as well as Xifeng’s money — seventy or eighty thousand taels at least — was naturally galling; on top of which he was afflicted by his father’s imprisonment by the Imperial Guards and Xifeng’s critical condition. And now Jia Zheng reproached him with tears in his eyes.

“Because of my official duties, I turned over the supervision of our family affairs to you and your wife,” he said. “Of course you could hardly keep a check on your father, but who is responsible for this usury? Such conduct is most unbecoming a family like ours. Now that those notes of yours have been confiscated, the financial loss is of secondary importance, but think of the damage to our reputation!”

Jia Lian fell on his knees to reply, “In running the household I never presumed to act on selfish interests. All our income and expenditure were entered in the accounts by Lai Da, Wu Xindeng and Dai Liang, and you can check on them by asking them, sir. In the last few years, our expenditure has exceeded our income; and as I haven’t made good the difference there are certain deficits in the accounts. If you ask the mistress, sir, she will confirm this. As for those loans, I myself have no idea where



道。”贾政道：“据你说来，连你自己屋里的事还不知道，那些家中上下的事更不知道了！我这会子也不查问你。现今你无事的人，你父亲的事和你珍大哥的事，还不快去打听打听吗？”贾琏一心委屈，含着眼泪，答应了出去。

贾政连连叹气，想道：“我祖父勤劳王事，立下功勋，得了两个世职，如今两房犯事，都革去了。我瞧这些子侄没一个长进的！老天哪，老天哪！我贾家何至一败如此！我虽蒙圣恩格外垂慈，给还家产，那两处食用。自应归并一处，叫我一人那里支撑的住？方才琏儿所说，更加诧异，说不但库上无银，而且尚有亏空！这几年竟是虚名在外，只恨我自己为什么糊涂若此？倘若我珠儿在世，尚有膀臂；宝玉虽大，更是无用之物。”想到那里，不觉泪满衣襟。又想：“老太太若大年纪，儿子们并没奉养一日，反累他老人家吓得死去活来，种种罪孽，叫我委之何人？”

正在独自悲切，只见家人禀报：“各亲友进来看候。”贾政一一道谢，说起“家门不幸，是我不能管教子侄，所以至此。”有的说：“我久知令兄赦大老爷行事不妥，那边珍爷更加骄纵。若说因官事错误，得个不是，于心无愧。如今自己闹出的，倒带累了二老爷。”有的说：“人家闹的也多，也没见御史参奏。不是珍老大得罪朋友，何至如此！”有的说：





the money came from. We shall have to find out from Zhou Rui and Lai Wang."

"According to you, you don't know even what is going on in your own apartments, to say nothing about family affairs! Well, I won't cross-examine you now. You've got off lightly yourself, but shouldn't you go to find out about the cases of your father and Cousin Zhen?"

Wronged as he felt, Jia Lian assented with tears and went away.

Heaving sigh after sigh Jia Zheng thought, "My ancestors spared no pains in his sovereign's service, winning fame and two hereditary titles; but now that both our houses have got into trouble these titles have been lost. As far as I can see, none of our sons or nephews amounts to anything. Merciful Heaven! Why should our Jia family be ruined like this? Though His Gracious Majesty has shown extraordinary compassion by restoring my property, how am I — alone — to meet our two households' expenses? Jia Lian's admission just now was even more shocking: it seems that not only is our treasury empty but there are deficits in the accounts, so we've made a mere show of affluence all these years, and I can only blame myself for being such a fool! If my son Zhu were alive he would have been my right hand. Baoyu, though he's grown up, is a useless creature." By now tears had stained his clothes, and he reflected, "My mother is so old yet not for a single day have we, her sons, provided for her out of our own earnings. Instead of that we've made her faint for terror. How can I shirk the blame for all these misdeeds?"

He was sunk in self-abasement when a servant announced some relatives and friends who had called to condole with him. Jia Zheng thanked each in turn.

"I am to blame for this family disaster," he said. "I failed to bring up my sons and nephews well."

One of them replied, "I have long known of your brother Lord She's unseemly conduct, and Master Zhen of that mansion was even more profligate. If they are blamed for their malpractices, it is no more than they deserve. Unfortunately, this scandal they've created has involved you as well, sir."

Another said, "Plenty of others kick over the traces without being impeached by the censors. This must be because Master Zhen offended





“也不怪御史，我们听见说是府上的家人同几个泥腿在外头哄嚷出来的。御史恐参奏不实，所以诳了这里的人去，才说出来的。我想府上待下人最宽的，为什么还有这事？”有的说：“大凡奴才们是一个养活不得的。今儿在这里都是好亲友，我才敢说。就是尊驾在外任，我保不得——你是不爱钱的，——那外头的风声也不好，都是奴才们闹的，你该堤防些。如今虽说没有动你的家，倘或再遇着主上疑心起来，好些不便呢。”贾政听说，心下着忙道：“众位听见我的风声怎样？”众人道：“我们虽没见实据，只听得外头人说你在粮道任上，怎么叫门上家人要钱。”贾政听了，便说道：“我这是对天可表的，从不敢起这个念头。只是奴才们在外头招摇撞骗，闹出事来，我就耽不起。”众人道：“如今怕也无益，只好将现在的管家们都严严的查一查，若有抗主的奴才，查出来严严的办一办也罢了。”

贾政听了点头。便见门上的进来回说：“孙姑爷打发人来说，自己有事不能来，着人来瞧瞧。说大老爷该他一项银子，要在二老爷身上还的。”贾政心内忧闷，只说：“知道了。”众人都冷笑道：“人说令亲孙绍祖混账，果然有的。如今丈人抄了家，不但不来瞧瞧帮补，倒赶忙的来要银子，真真不在理上！”贾政道：“如今且不必说他，那头亲事原是家兄配错了的。我的侄女儿的罪已经受够了，如今又找上我来了。”



some of his friends.”

“It’s not the censors’ fault,” put in another. “We heard that one of your servants connived with some rogues outside to raise a hue and cry against your house. Then for fear there wasn’t sufficient evidence, the censors tricked others of your men into talking. I always had the impression that your family treated its servants most generously, so why should such a thing happen?”

“No slaves are any good,” someone else declared. “We’re all relatives and friends here and can speak frankly. Even at that post in the provinces, sir, scrupulous as you are yourself, I suspect that those grasping servants of yours damaged your reputation; so you had better watch out. Though your property hasn’t been touched, if the Emperor’s suspicions are aroused it may be troublesome.”

In consternation Jia Zheng asked, “What talk against me have you gentlemen heard?”

“There’s no evidence of this, but it was said that when you served as Grain Commissioner you allowed your subordinates to feather their nests.”

“I swear to Heaven I never dared to think of such a thing!” Jia Zheng protested. “But if those slaves of mine fleeced and swindled people, and trouble comes of it, I shall be done for!”

“It’s no use panicking,” they said. “You must make a serious check-up of your stewards, and if you find any of them insubordinate you should crack down on them hard.”

Jia Zheng nodded. Then a gateman came in to report, “The Elder Master’s son-in-law Young Master Sun has sent word that he is too busy to call in person and so has sent a messenger instead. He says that the Elder Master owed him money and wants you to pay him back, sir.”

“Very well.” answered Jia Zheng with a sinking heart.

The others sneered, “No wonder your kinsman Sun Shaozu is said to be a scoundrel. Now that his father-in-law’s house has been raided, instead of coming to help out he loses no time in demanding his money back. This is truly fantastic!”

“Let’s not talk about him,” said Jia Zheng. “My brother should never have agreed to that match. My niece has already paid dearly for his mistake, and now her husband has started dunning me!”



正说着，只见薛蝌进来说道：“我打听锦衣府赵堂官必要照御史参的办，只怕大老爷和珍大爷吃不住。”众人都道：“二老爷，还是得你出去求求王爷，怎么挽回挽回才好；不然，这两家子就完了。”贾政答应致谢，众人都散。

那时天已点灯时候，贾政进去请贾母的安，见贾母略略好些。回到自己房中，埋怨贾琏夫妇不知好歹，如今闹出放账的事情，大家不好，心里很不受用。只是凤姐现在病重，况他所有的什物，尽被抄抢，心内自然难受，一时也未便说他，暂且隐忍不言。一夜无话。

次早，贾政进内谢恩，并到北静王府西平王府两处叩谢，求二位王爷照应他哥哥侄儿。二王应许。贾政又在同寅相好处托情。

且说贾琏打听得父兄之事不大妥，无法可施，只得回到家中。平儿守着凤姐哭泣，秋桐在耳房里抱怨凤姐。贾琏走到旁边，见凤姐奄奄一息，就有多少怨言，一时也说不出。平儿哭道：“如今已经这样，东西去了，不能复来。奶奶这样，还得再请个大夫瞧瞧才好啊！”贾琏啐道：“呸！我的性命还不保，我还管他呢！”

凤姐听见，睁眼一瞧，虽不言语，那眼泪直流。看见贾琏出去，便和平儿道：“你别不达时务了。到了这个田地，你还顾我做什么？我巴不得今儿就死才好！只要你能够眼里有我，我死后，你扶养大了巧姐儿，我在阴司里也感激你的

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As they were talking Xue Ke brought back the news, "Commissioner Zhao of the Imperial Guards insists on pressing the charges made by the censors. I'm afraid things look black for the Elder Master and for Master Zhen."

"You must go and beg the princes to intervene, sir," Jia Zheng's friends urged him. "Otherwise both your families will be ruined."

He agreed and thanked them, after which they dispersed.

It was already time to light the lamps. Jia Zheng went inside to pay his respects to his mother and found her better. Returning to his own quarters, he brooded resentfully over the folly of Jia Lian and his wife, whose usury — now that it had come to light — had landed the whole family in trouble. He was most put out by this disclosure of Xifeng's misdoings. But since she was so ill and must be distraught too by the loss of all her possessions, he could hardly reprimand them for the time being. Thus the night passed without further incident.

The next morning Jia Zheng went to court to express his gratitude for the Imperial favour, then called on both princes to kowtow his thanks and beg them to intervene on behalf of his brother and nephew. After they had agreed to do this, he went to enlist the help of other colleagues.

Let us return to Jia Lian. Unable to extricate his father and cousin from the straits they were in, he returned home. He found Pinger sitting weeping by Xifeng, who was being abused by Qiutong in the side-room. Jia Lian walked over to Xifeng, but as she seemed at her last gasp he had to hold back his reproaches.

"What's done is done," sobbed Pinger. "We can't get back what we've lost. But the mistress is so ill, you must send for a doctor for her."

"Pah!" spat out Jia Lian. "My own life is still at stake; why should I care about *her*?"

At this Xifeng opened her eyes and, without a word, shed tears. As soon as Jia Lian had left she said to Pinger, "Stop being so dense. Now that things have come to this pass, why worry about me? I only wish I could die this very minute! If you have any feeling for me, just bring up Qiaojier after my death and I shall be grateful to you in the nether regions!"



情!”平儿听了，越发抽抽搭搭的哭起来了。凤姐道：“你也不糊涂。他们虽没有来说，必是抱怨我的。虽说事是外头闹起，我不放账，也没我的事。如今枉费心计，挣了一辈子的强，偏偏儿的落在人后头了！我还恍惚听见珍大爷的事，说是强占良民妻子为妾，不从逼死，有个姓张的在里头，你想想还有谁呢？要是这件事审出来，咱们二爷是脱不了的，我那时候儿可怎么见人呢？我要立刻就死，又耽不起吞金服毒的。你还要请大夫。这不是你疼我，反倒害了我了么？”平儿愈听愈惨，想来实在难处，恐凤姐自寻短见，只得紧紧守着。

幸贾母不知底细，因近日身子好些，又见贾政无事，宝玉宝钗在旁，天天不离左右，略觉放心。素来最疼凤姐，便叫鸳鸯：“将我的体己东西拿些给凤丫头，再拿些银钱交给平儿，好好的伏侍好了凤丫头，我再慢慢的分派。”又命王夫人照看邢夫人。此时宁国府第入官，所有财产房地等项并家奴等俱已造册收尽。这里贾母命人将车接了尤氏婆媳过来。可怜赫赫宁府，只剩得他们婆媳两个并佩凤偕鸾二人，连一个下人没有。贾母指出房子一所居住，就在惜春所住的间壁。又派了婆子四人，丫头两个伏侍。一应饭食起居在大厨房内分送。衣裙什物又是贾母送去。零星需用亦在账房内开销，俱照荣府每人月例之数。

那贾赦、贾珍、贾蓉在锦衣府使用，账房内实在无项可





This only made Pinger sob more bitterly.

“You’ve sense enough to see,” Xifeng continued, “that even if they haven’t come to complain he must hold me to blame. Though the trouble was sparked off outside, if I hadn’t been greedy for money I’d have been in the clear. Now after scheming so hard and trying all my life to get ahead, I’ve ended up worse off than anyone else! If only I hadn’t trusted the wrong people! I heard something vaguely too about Master Zhen’s trouble and how he abducted the wife of an honest citizen named Zhang to be his concubine, forcing her to kill herself rather than submit. Well, we know, don’t we, who that fellow Zhang was? If that business comes out, Master Lian will be involved too and I shall lose face completely. I’d like to die this instant, but I haven’t the courage to swallow gold or take poison. And here you are talking of getting a doctor for me! That’s not doing me a kindness but a bad turn.”

This upset Pinger even more. She was at her wit’s end. For fear that Xifeng might try to take her own life, she kept a close watch over her.

Luckily the Lady Dowager was ignorant of these developments. Now that her health was improving, she was relieved that Jia Zheng had kept out of trouble and Baoyu and Baochai stayed by her side every day. As Xifeng had been her favourite she told Yuanyang, “Give some of my things to Xifeng, and take Pinger some money so that she can look after her well. Once she’s better I’ll see what else can be done for her.” She also told Lady Wang to help Lady Xing.

Since the whole estate of the Ning Mansion had been confiscated, all its bondservants registered and taken away, the Lady Dowager sent carriages to fetch Madam You and her daughter-in-law over. Alas for the Ning Mansion, once so grand! All that remained of it was these two ladies and the concubines Peifeng and Xieluan, without a single servant. The old lady placed at their disposal a house next to Xichun’s, sent four women-servants and two maids to wait on them, had food prepared for them by the main kitchen, and provided them with clothing and other necessities. She also allotted them the same monthly allowances as were issued by the accountants’ office to members of the Rong Mansion.

As for the expenses incurred by Jia She, Jia Zhen and Jia Rong in prison, the accountants’ office was quite unable to meet them. Xifeng



支。如今凤姐儿一无所有；贾琏外头债务满身；贾政不知家务，只说：“已经托人，自有照应。”贾琏无计可施，想到那亲戚里头，薛姨妈家已败，王子腾已死，余者亲戚虽有，俱是不能照应的，只得暗暗差人下屯，将地亩暂卖数千金，作为监中使费。贾琏如此一行，那些家奴见主家势败，也便趁此弄鬼，并将东庄租税也就指名借用些。此是后话，暂且不提。

且说贾母见祖宗世职革去，现在子孙在监质审，邢夫人尤氏等日夜啼哭，凤姐病在垂危，虽有宝玉宝钗在侧，只可解劝，不能分忧；所以日夜不宁，思前想后，眼泪不干。一日傍晚，叫宝玉回去，自己扎挣坐起，叫鸳鸯等各处佛堂上香；又命自己院内焚起斗香，用拐拄着，出到院中。琥珀知是老太太拜佛，铺下大红猩毡拜垫。贾母上香跪下，磕了好些头，念了一回佛，含泪祝告天地道：“皇天菩萨在上：我贾门史氏，虔诚祷告，求菩萨慈悲。我贾门数世以来，不敢行凶霸道。我帮夫助子，虽不能为善，也不敢作恶。必是后辈儿孙骄奢淫佚，暴殄天物，以致闾府抄检。现在儿孙监禁，





had no property left; Jia Lian was heavily in debt; while Jia Zheng who had no head for affairs simply said:

“I have asked friends to see that they are looked after.”

Jia Lian in desperation thought of appealing to their relatives, but Aunt Xue's family was bankrupt, Wang Ziteng was dead, and none of the rest was in a position to help. All he could do was send some stewards in secret to raise a few thousand taels by selling certain country estates to defray the prison expenses. As soon as he did this, however, the servants realized that the family was on the rocks and seized this chance for hanky-panky, filching money from the rents of the eastern manors too. But this is anticipating.

To revert to the old lady, she had not a moment's peace of mind but kept weeping as she wondered what was to become of them all. Their hereditary titles had been abolished, one of her sons and two younger kinsmen were in jail awaiting trial, Lady Xing and Madam You were disconsolate, and Xifeng was at death's door. Though Baoyu and Baochai kept her company to console her, they could not share her worries.

One evening, after sending Baoyu away, she struggled to sit up and told Yuanyang and the other maids to burn incense in the various shrines and then to light a censerful in her courtyard. Leaning on her cane she went out there. Hupo, knowing that she meant to worship Buddha, had placed a red felt cushion on the ground. The old lady offered incense and knelt down to kowtow and invoke Buddha several times.

She prayed to Heaven then with tears in her eyes, “Born a Shi, I married into the Jia family, and I earnestly implore holy Buddha in Heaven to have mercy on us! For generations our Jia family has never dared transgress or abuse our power. A devoted wife and mother, though unable to do much good I have never done anything wicked. But some of the Jia descendants must have offended Heaven by their arrogance and dissipation; thus our family has been raided, its property confiscated. Now my son and grandsons are in jail and fortune is frowning on them. I alone am responsible for these misfortunes because I failed to give them the proper training. Now I entreat Heaven to save us, turning the sorrow of those in jail to joy, and curing those who are ill. Even if the whole family





自然凶多吉少，皆由我一人罪孽，不教儿孙，所以至此。我今叩求皇天保佑，在监的逢凶化吉，有病的早早安身。总有阖家罪孽，情愿一人承当，只求饶恕儿孙。若皇天怜念我虔诚，早早赐我一死，宽免儿孙之罪！”默默说到此处，不禁伤心，呜呜咽咽的哭泣起来。鸳鸯珍珠一面解劝，一面扶进房去。

只见王夫人带了宝玉宝钗，过来请晚安。见贾母伤悲，三人也大哭起来。宝钗更有一层苦楚：想哥哥也在外监，将来要处决，不知可能减等；公婆虽然无事，眼见家业萧条；宝玉依然疯傻，毫无志气。想到后来终身，更比贾母王夫人哭的悲痛。宝玉见宝钗如此，他也有一番悲戚，想着：“老太太年老不得安心，老爷太太见此光景，不免悲伤；众姐妹风流云散，一日少似一日，追思园中吟诗起社，何等热闹；自林妹妹一死，我郁闷到今，又有宝姐姐伴着，不便时常哭泣；况他又忧兄思母，日夜难得笑容。”今日看他悲哀欲绝，心里更加不忍，竟嚎啕大哭起来。鸳鸯、彩云、莺儿、袭人看着，也各有所思，便都抽抽搭搭的。余者丫头们看的伤心，不觉也都哭了。竟无人劝。满屋中哭声惊天动地，将外头上夜婆子吓慌，急报于贾政知道。

那贾政正在书房纳闷，听见贾母的人来报，心中着忙，飞奔进内。远远听得哭声甚众，打量老太太不好，急的魂魄俱丧。疾忙进来，只见坐着悲啼，才放下心来，便道：“老太太伤心，你们该劝解才是啊，怎么打伙儿哭起来了？”众人



has sinned, let me alone take the blame! Spare my sons and grandsons! Have pity, Heaven, on a pious woman! Grant me an early death, but spare my children and grandchildren!" Her voice faltered here from distress and she burst out sobbing. Yuanyang and Zhenzhu as they helped her back inside did their best to comfort her.

Lady Wang had just brought Baoyu and Baochai to pay their evening respects. The old lady's grief set the three of them crying too. The saddest of all was Baochai as she reflected that her brother was imprisoned in the provinces, with no knowing whether his death sentence would be commuted or not; and though her father-in-law was not in trouble, the Jia family was declining, while Baoyu was still deranged and showed no sign of trying to make good. Anxiety over her future made her weep still more bitterly than Their Ladyships. And her grief infected Baoyu.

He mused, "My grandmother can't be at peace in her old age, and that naturally upsets my father and mother. All the girls have scattered like clouds before the wind, with fewer left every day. How jolly it was, I remember, when we started that poetry club in the Garden; but ever since Cousin Lin's death I've felt gloomy, yet with Baochai by me I can't cry too often. And now *she's* so worried about her brother and mother, she hardly smiles all day." The sight of her now so overcome with grief was more than he could bear. He broke down and sobbed.

At this, Yuanyang, Caiyun, Yinger and Xiren, each of whom had her own cares, started sobbing too. This moved the other maids to tears as well, and nobody restrained them. So the wailing in the room grew louder and louder till the womenservants keeping watch outside hurried off in alarm to report this to the master.

Jia Zheng was sitting gloomily in his study when this message from his mother's servants was announced. He hurried over frantically and while still at a distance heard the whole household crying, which convinced him that the old lady must be dying. Running distractedly in, he was relieved to see her sitting there sobbing.

"When the old lady is upset, the rest of you should comfort her," he chided the others. "Why are you all weeping too?"

They hastily dried their tears and stared blankly around. Jia Zheng stepped forward to console his mother, then once more briefly reprimanded

这才急忙止哭，大家对面发怔。贾政上前安慰了老太太，又说了众人几句。都心里想道：“我们原怕老太太悲伤，所以来劝解；怎么忘情，大家痛哭起来？”

正自不解，只见老婆子带了史侯家的两个女人进来，请了贾母的安，又向众人请安毕，便说道：“我们家的老爷、太太、姑娘打发我来说：听见府里的事，原没什么大事，不过一时受惊。恐怕老爷太太烦恼，叫我们过来告诉一声，说：这里二老爷是不怕的了。我们姑娘本要自己来的，因不多几日就要出阁，所以不能来了。”贾母听了，不便道谢，说：“你回去给我问好。这是我们的家运合该如此。承你们老爷太太惦记着，改日再去道谢。你们姑娘出阁，想来姑爷是不用说的了，他们的家计如何呢？”两个女人回道：“家计倒不怎么着，只是姑爷长的很好，为人又和平。我们见过好几次，看来和这里的宝二爷差不多儿，还听见说，文才也好。”贾母听了，喜欢道：“这么着才好，这是你们姑娘的造化。只是咱们家的规矩还是南方礼儿，所以新姑爷我们都没见过。我前儿还想起我娘家的人来，最疼的就是你们姑娘，一年三百六十天，在我跟前的日子倒有二百多天。混的这么大了，我原想给他说个好女婿，又为他叔叔不在家，我又不便作主。他既有造化配了个好姑爷，我也放心。月里头出阁，我原想过来吃杯喜酒，不料我们家闹出这样事来，我的心就像的热锅里熬的似的，那里能够再到你们家去？你回去说我问好，我们这里的人，都请安问好。你替另告诉你们姑娘，不用把我放在心上。我是八十多岁的人了，就死也算不得没福了。只愿他过了门，两口儿和和顺顺的百年到老，我就心安了。”说着，不觉掉下泪来。那女人道：“老太太也不



the rest, all of whom were wondering how they could have forgotten themselves and broken down when they had come meaning to soothe the old lady.

Just then a serving-woman brought in two maids from Marquis Shi's family. They paid their respects to the Lady Dowager and the rest of the company.

"We've been sent by our master, mistress and young mistress," they announced. "They've heard that your trouble here isn't serious, nothing more than a passing alarm. For fear Your Lordship and Ladyships might be worried, they sent us to say that the Second Master here has nothing to fear. Our young mistress wanted to come herself but couldn't because soon she'll be getting married."

"Give them our regards when you go back," responded the old lady, as it was inappropriate to thank these underlings. "This misfortune must have been fated. It was kind of your master and mistress to think of us, and another day we'll go over to express our gratitude. I take it they've found your young lady a good husband — what's his family's position?"

"They are not too well-off," the maids answered. "But he's a handsome young man, and, from what we've seen of him, very easy-going. He looks rather like your Master Bao, and is said to have literary talents too."

"That's good," said the old lady cheerfully. "Being southerners, though we've lived here so long we abide by the customs of the south, so we haven't seen him yet. The other day I was thinking of my old family, and your young mistress is the one I love most — I used to have her here for the best part of the year. When she was old enough I meant to find a suitable husband for her, but because her uncle was away I couldn't arrange a match. If she's lucky enough to have found a good young man, that sets my mind at rest. I'd wanted to attend the wedding feast this month, but my heart is burning over this terrible upset here, so how can I possibly go? When you get back, give them my best regards. All of us here send our greetings. And tell your young lady not to worry about me. I'm more than eighty years old, and even if I die today I shall have had a good life. I just hope that she and her husband will live happily together till old age; then I'll rest content in my grave." By now she was weeping



必伤心，姑娘过了门，等回了九，少不得同着姑爷过来请老太太的安，那时老太太见了才喜欢呢。”贾母点头。

那女人出去，别人都不理论，只有宝玉听着发了一回怔，心里想道：“为什么人家养了女孩儿到大了必要出嫁呢？一出了嫁就改换了一个人似的。史妹妹这么个人，又叫他叔叔硬压着配了人了。他将来见了我，必是也不理我了。我想一个人到了这个没人理的分儿，还活着做什么！”想到这里，又是伤心；见贾母此时才安，又不敢哭，只得闷坐着。

一时，贾政不放心，又进来瞧瞧老太太。见是好些，便出来传了赖大，叫他将阊府里管事的家人的花名册子拿来，一齐点了一点。除去贾赦入官的人，尚有三十余家，共男女二百十二名。贾政叫现在府内当差的男人共四十一名进来，问起历年居家用度，共有若干进来，该用若干出去。那管总的家人将近年支用簿子呈上。贾政看时，所入不敷所出，又加连年宫里花用，账上多有在外浮借的。再查东省地租，近年所交不及祖上一半，如今用度比祖上加了十倍。贾政不看则已，看了急的跺脚道：“这还了得！我打谅琏儿管事，在家自有把持，岂知好几年头里，已经‘寅年用了卯年’的，还是这样装好看！竟把世职俸禄当作不打紧的事，有什么不败的呢？我如今要省俭起来，已是迟了。”想到这里，背着手踱来踱去，竟无方法。





again.

“Don’t grieve, madam,” said the maids. “Nine days after the wedding you may be sure she’ll come here with her husband to pay her respects. Then how pleased you’ll be to see them!”

The old lady nodded and the two maids left.

Others dismissed this from their minds, but Baoyu started brooding, “What a life, with things going from bad to worse every day! Why must a girl marry into another family when she grows up? Marriage seems to change her into a different person. Now our dear Cousin Shi is being forced by her uncle to get married, so when next she sees me she’s bound to keep at a distance. What is there to live for if everybody shuns you?” His heart ached again, but since his grandmother was just calming down he dared not weep and simply sat brooding instead.

Presently Jia Zheng returned, as he still had misgivings about the old lady. Finding her better, he went back and sent orders to Lai Da to bring him the register of the servants in charge of the various household tasks. He checked the names. There were more than thirty families left — two hundred and twelve men and women in all — not counting Jia She’s bondservants who had been sequestered.

Jia Zheng summoned the twenty-one men-servants then working in the mansion to question them about the family’s income and expenditure in the past. When the stewards in charge presented the accounts for recent years, he saw that their expenditure had exceeded their income, in addition to which there had been yearly expenses in the Palace, and there were many entries of sums borrowed from outside too. He then looked into their land rents in the east province, which of late amounted to less than half the rent delivered to their ancestors, whereas the family expenses had increased tenfold. This discovery made him stamp in desperation.

“This is scandalous!” he exclaimed. “I put Lian in charge to keep a check on things; but it seems that for years we’ve been spending our rents a year in advance, yet insisted on keeping up appearances! Setting no store by our hereditary titles and emoluments, how could we fail to be ruined? Even if I retrench now it will be too late.” He paced up and down, hands clasped behind his back, unable to hit on any way out.



众人知贾政不知理家，也是白操心着急，便说道：“老爷也不用心焦，这是家家这样的。若是统总算起来，连王爷家还不够过的呢！不过是装着门面，过到那里是那里罢咧。如今老爷到底得了主上的恩典，才有这点子家产，若是一并入了官，老爷就不过了不成？”贾政嗔道：“放屁！你们这班奴才最没良心的！仗着主子好的时候儿，任意开销；到弄光了，走的走，跑的跑，还顾主子的死活吗？如今你们说是没有查抄，你们知道吗？外头的名声，连大本儿都保不住了，还搁的住你们在外头支架子，说大话，诓人骗人？到闹出事来，望主子身上一推就完了！如今大老爷和你珍大爷的事，说是咱们家人鲍二吵嚷的，我看这册子上并没有什么鲍二，这是怎么说？”众人回道：“这鲍二是不在档子上的。先前在宁府册上。为二爷见他老实，把他们两口子叫过来了。后来他女人死了，他又回宁府去。自从老爷衙门里头有事，老太太、太太们和爷们往陵上去了，珍大爷替理家事，带过来的，以后也就去了。老爷几年不管家务事，那里知道这些事呢？老爷只打量着册子上有这个名称就只有这一个人呢！不知道一个人手底下亲戚们也有好几个，奴才还有奴才呢！”贾政道：“这还了得！”想来一时不能清理，只得喝退众人，早打了主意在心里了，且听贾赦等的官事审的怎样再定。

一日，正在书房筹算，只见一人飞奔进来，说：“请老爷快进内廷问话。”贾政听了，心下着忙，只得进去。未知吉凶，下回分解。





The stewards knew that their master was worrying to no purpose, as he had no idea how to manage the household. "Don't worry, sir," they said. "This happens to every family. Why, even the princes, if you work out their expenses, don't have enough to live on. They just keep up appearances and get by for as long as they can. You at least have this small property thanks to the Emperor's favour, sir; but even if it had been confiscated too, wouldn't you still manage somehow?"

"You're farting!" swore Jia Zheng. "You slaves have no conscience! When your masters prosper you throw money around; when they're done for you take off, leaving them to their fate. You say it's good that our property hasn't been confiscated, but with a grand reputation while unable to hold on to our capital, how can we stand your putting on airs outside, boasting and cheating people? And when trouble comes of it, you shift the blame to your masters! This charge against the Elder Master and Master Zhen is said to have come of our servant Bao Er blabbing; but this register lists no Bao Er — why is that?"

"This Bao Er was not on our roster. His name used to be on the Ning Mansion register. Because Master Lian thought him an honest fellow he had him and his wife transferred here. When later his wife died, Bao Er went back to the Ning Mansion. Then when you were busy in your yamen, sir, and Their Ladyships and the young gentlemen were away mourning for the Imperial Consort, Master Zhen took over the management of the house and reinstated Bao Er. But afterwards he left. Since you haven't run the household all these years, sir, how could you know such things? You may think this is the only name not on the roster, but actually each steward has quite a few of his relatives under him as under-servants."

"Disgraceful!" was Jia Zheng's comment, and with that he dismissed them. Aware that he could not set his house in order overnight, he postponed taking action until Jia She's case was settled.

One day he was thinking things over in his study when one of his men rushed in. "Your Lordship, you are wanted at once at court for questioning!" he announced.

With some trepidation Jia Zheng obeyed this summons. To know whether it boded well or not, read the next chapter.

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## 第一百七回

散余资贾母明大义 复世职政老沐天恩

话说贾政进内，见了枢密院各位大臣，又见了各位王爷。北静王道：“今日我们传你来，有遵旨问你的事。”贾政急忙跪下。众大臣便问道：“你哥哥交通外官、恃强凌弱、纵儿聚赌、强占良民妻女不遂逼死的事，你都知道么？”贾政回道：“犯官自从主恩钦点学政任满后，查看赈恤，于上年冬底回家，又蒙堂派工程，后又任江西粮道，题参回都，仍在工部行走，日夜不敢怠惰。一应家务，并未留心伺察，实在糊涂。不能管教子侄，这就是辜负圣恩。只求主上重重治罪。”北静王据说转奏。

不多时，传出旨来，北静王便述道：“主上因御史参奏贾赦交通外官，恃强凌弱，——据该御史指出平安州互相往来，贾赦包揽词讼——严鞫贾赦，据供平安州原系姻亲来往，并未干涉官事，该御史亦不能指实。惟有倚势强索石呆子古扇一款是实的，然系玩物，究非强索良民之物可比。虽



## Chapter 107

### The Lady Dowager Impartially Shares Out Her Savings Jia Zheng's Hereditary Title Is Restored by Imperial Favour

Jia Zheng found the whole Privy Council as well as the princes assembled in the Palace.

The Prince of Beijing announced, "We have summoned you today on His Majesty's orders for an interrogation."

Jia Zheng at once fell on his knees.

"Your elder brother connived with provincial officials to oppress the weak, and allowed his son to organize gambling parties and abduct another man's wife, who took her own life rather than submit. Were you cognizant of these facts?" the ministers asked him.

"After my term of office as Chief Examiner by His Majesty's favour, I inspected famine relief," replied Jia Zheng. "I returned home at the end of winter the year before last and was sent to inspect some works, after which I served as Grain Commissioner of Jiangxi until I was impeached and came back to the capital to my old post in the Ministry of Works. Never, day or night, did I neglect my duties. But in my folly I paid insufficient attention to household affairs and failed to train my sons and nephews correctly. I have proved unworthy of the Imperial favour and beg His Majesty for severe punishment."

The Prince of Beijing reported this to the Emperor, who soon issued an edict which the prince proclaimed:

We have ordered a strict investigation of Jia She, who has been impeached by the censors for conniving with local officials to oppress the weak and, in league with the prefect of Pingan, subverting the law. Jia She admits that he and the prefect were connected by marriage but denies intervening in a lawsuit, and the censors have no evidence of this. It is true that he took advantage of his power to extort antique fans from the Stone Idiot; but fans are mere trifles and this offence is less serious than





石呆子自尽，亦系疯傻所致，与逼勒致死者有间。今从宽将贾赦发往台站效力赎罪。所参贾珍强占良民妻女为妾不从逼死一款，提取都察院原案，看得尤二姐实系张华指腹为婚未娶之妻，因伊贫苦自愿退婚，尤二姐之母愿结贾珍之弟为妾。并非强占。再尤三姐自刎掩埋、并未报官一款：查尤三姐原系贾珍妻妹，本意为伊择配，因被逼索定礼，众人扬言秽乱，以致羞忿自尽，并非贾珍逼勒致死。但身系世袭职员，罔知法纪，私埋人命，本应重治，念伊究属功臣后裔，不忍加罪，亦从宽革去世职，派往海疆效力赎罪。贾蓉年幼无干，省释。贾政实系在外任多年，居官尚属勤慎，免治伊治家不正之罪。”

贾政听了，感激涕零，叩首不及；又叩求王爷代奏下忱。北静王道：“你该叩谢天恩，更有何奏？”贾政道：“犯官仰蒙圣恩，不加大罪，又蒙将家产给还，实在扞心惶愧，愿将祖宗遗受重禄，积余置产，一并交官。”北静王道：“主上仁慈待下，明慎用刑，赏罚无差。如今既蒙莫大深恩，给还财产，你又何必多此一奏？”众官也说不必。

贾政便谢了恩，叩谢了王爷出来，恐贾母不放心，急忙





robbery with violence. Though the Stone Idiot committed suicide, it was because he was deranged, not because he was hounded to death. Jia She is to be shown lenity and sent to the frontier to expiate his crime.

As for the charge that Jia Zhen abducted another man's wife and she killed herself rather than be his concubine, a study of the censorate's original report reveals that Second Sister You was betrothed to Zhang Hua but he, being poor, consented to break the engagement, and her mother agreed to marry her to Jia Zhen's younger cousin as his concubine. This was not a case of abduction. Regarding the charge that Third Sister You's suicide and burial were not reported to the authorities, it transpires that she was the sister of Jia Zhen's wife and they engaged her to a man who demanded the betrothal gifts back because of talk of her loose morals. She killed herself for shame; Jia Zhen did not hound her to death.

However, Jia Zhen deserves harsh punishment because, although he inherited a title, he flouted the law by a clandestine burial; but in view of his descent from a meritorious minister we will forbear from inflicting punishment and in our clemency will revoke his hereditary title and send him to serve at the coast to expiate his crime. Jia Rong, being young and not involved, is to be released. Since Jia Zheng has undeniably worked diligently and prudently for many years outside the capital, his reprehensible mismanagement of his household is condoned.

Jia Zheng, moved to tears of gratitude, had kowtowed repeatedly while listening to this edict. He now begged the Prince of Beijing to petition the Emperor for him.

"You should kowtow your thanks for the Imperial favour," replied the prince. "What other petition have you?"

"Although I am guilty, His Majesty in His great favour has not punished me severely and my property has been returned to me. Overwhelmed with shame as I am, I would like to make over to the state my ancestral estate, emoluments and savings."

"His Majesty, ever merciful to His subjects, disciplines them with perspicacity, meting out unerring rewards and punishments," replied the prince. "Since you have been shown such clemency and had your property restored, it would be inappropriate to present any further petition."

The other ministers also dissuaded him. Then Jia Zheng kowtowed his gratitude and having thanked Their Highnesses withdrew, hurrying



赶回。上下男女人等不知传进贾政是何吉凶，都在外头打听，一见贾政回家，都略略的放心，也不敢问。只见贾政忙忙的走到贾母跟前，将蒙圣恩宽免的事细细告诉了一遍。贾母虽则放心，只是两个世职革去，贾赦又往台站效力，贾珍又往海疆，不免又悲伤起来。邢夫人尤氏听见这话，更哭起来。贾政便道：“老太太放心。大哥虽则台站效力，也是为国家办事，不致受苦，只要办得妥当，就可复职。珍儿正是年轻，很该出力。若不是这样，便是祖父的余德亦不能久享。”说了些宽慰的话。

贾母素来本不大喜欢贾赦，那边东府贾珍究竟隔了一层，只有邢夫人尤氏痛哭不止。邢夫人想道：“家产一空，丈夫年老远出，膝下虽有琏儿，又是素来顺他二叔的，如今都靠着二叔，他两口子自然更顺着那边去了。独我一人孤苦伶仃，怎么办？”那尤氏本来独掌宁府的家计，除了贾珍，也算是惟他为尊，又与贾珍夫妻相和；如今犯事远出，家财抄尽，依住荣府，虽则老太太疼爱，终是依人门下。又兼带着佩凤偕鸾，那蓉儿夫妇也还不能兴家立业。又想起：“二妹妹三妹妹都是琏二爷闹的，如今他们倒安然无事，依旧夫妻完聚，只剩我们几个，怎么度日？”想到这里，痛哭起来。

贾母不忍，便问贾政道：“你大哥和珍儿现已定案，可能





home to reassure his mother.

All the men and women, high and low, in the Rong Mansion had been wondering what this summons to the Palace meant and had sent out for news. Jia Zheng's return relieved them but none dared question him. He hastened to the old lady's side to explain to her all the details of his pardon; but although this set her mind at rest, she could not help grieving over the loss of the two hereditary titles and the banishment of Jia She and Jia Zhen to such distant regions. As for Lady Xing and Madam You, this news reduced them to tears.

"Don't worry, madam," said Jia Zheng, hoping to comfort his mother. "Though Elder Brother is going to serve at the frontier, he will be working for the government too and isn't likely to undergo any hardships. Provided he handles matters well, he may be reinstated. Zhen is young, it is only right for him to work hard; otherwise he won't be able for long to enjoy the fortune left us by our ancestors."

The old lady had never been too fond of Jia She, while Jia Zhen being of the East Mansion was not one of her descendants. Only Lady Xing and Madam You were sobbing as if they would never stop.

Lady Xing was thinking. "We've lost everything and my husband is going so far away in his old age. Though I still have my son Lian, he always listens to his Second Uncle, and now that we have to live on him naturally Lian and his wife will take their side. What's to become of me left all on my own?"

Madam You had been in sole charge of household affairs in the Ning Mansion, second only to Jia Zhen, and they were a well-matched couple. Now he was to be banished in disgrace, all their property had been confiscated, and she would have to live in the Rong Mansion where, though the old lady was fond of her, she would be a poor dependent saddled with Peifeng and Xieluan into the bargain; for her son Rong and his wife were in no position to restore the family's fortunes.

She thought, "Lian was the one to blame for my two sisters' deaths; yet he's in no trouble now, not parted from his own wife, while we're left stranded. How are we to cope?" These reflections made her sob.

The old lady's heart ached for them. She asked Jia Zheng, "Can't your elder brother and Zhen come home now that they've been sen-



回家?蓉儿既没他的事,也该放出来了。”贾政道:“若在定例呢,大哥是不能回家的。我已托人徇个私情,叫我大哥同着侄儿回家,好置办行装,衙门内业已应了。想来蓉儿同着他爷爷父亲一起出来。只请老太太放心,儿子办去。”

贾母又道:“我这几年老的不成人了,总没有问过家事。如今东府里是抄了去了,房子入官不用说;你大哥那边,琏儿那里,也都抄了。咱们西府里的银库和东省地土,你知道还剩了多少?他两个起身,也得给他们几千银子才好。”贾政正是没法,听见贾母一问,心想着:“若是说明,又恐老太太着急;若不说明,不用说将来,只现在怎样办法呢?”想毕,便回道:“若老太太不问,儿子也不敢说。如今老太太既问到这里,现在琏儿也在这里,昨日儿子已查了:旧库的银子早已虚空,不但用尽,外头还有亏空。现今大哥这件事,若不花银托人,虽说主上宽恩,只怕他们爷儿两个也不大好,就是这项银子尚无打算。东省的地亩,早已寅年吃了卯年的租儿了,一时也弄不过来,只好尽所有蒙圣恩没有动的衣服首饰折变了,给大哥和珍儿作盘费罢了。过日的事只可再打算。”

贾母听了,又急的眼泪直淌,说道:“怎样着?咱们家到了这个田地了么?我虽没有经过,我想起我家向日比这里还强十倍,也是摆了几年虚架子,没有出这样事,已经塌下来了,不消一二年就完了!据你说起来,咱们竟一两年就不能支了?”贾政道:“若是这两个世俸不动,外头还有些挪移;如今无可指称,谁肯接济?”说着,也泪流满面,“想起亲



tenced? And as Rong is not involved, shouldn't he be released as well?"

"According to the rules, elder brother can't come home," he told her. "But I've asked people to put in a word so that he and Zhen can come back to get their luggage together, and the ministry has agreed. I expect Rong will return with his grand-uncle and father. Please don't worry, madam. I shall see to this."

"These years I've grown so old and useless that I haven't checked up on our family affairs," she said. "Now the East Mansion has been confiscated. Not only the house either, but your elder brother and Lian have lost all their property too. Do you know how much is left in our West Mansion's treasury? And how much land in our eastern estates? You must give them a few thousand taels for their journeys."

Jia Zheng was in a dilemma. He reflected, "If I tell her the truth she may be very worried; but if I don't, how am I to manage now — to say nothing of the future?"

Accordingly he answered, "If you hadn't questioned me, madam, I wouldn't have ventured to report this. But since you ask — and Lian is here too — I must tell you that yesterday I investigated. Our treasury is empty. Not only is all the silver gone but we have debts outside too. Now that elder brother is in this predicament, if we don't bribe people to help, then in spite of His Majesty's kindness they may be hard put to it. But I can't think where the money is to come from. We've already used up next year's rent from our eastern estates, so can't raise any sums there for the time being. We shall just have to sell those clothes and trinkets which thanks to Imperial favour weren't confiscated, to cover the travelling expenses of elder brother and Zhen. As to what to live on ourselves, we can worry about that later."

The old lady shed tears in her consternation.

"Is our family reduced to this?" she exclaimed. "I didn't see it for myself, but in the old days my family was ten times richer than this one, yet after a few years of keeping up appearances — though we were never raided like this — it went downhill and in less than two years was done for! Do you mean to say we shan't be able to manage even for a couple of years?"

"If we'd kept those two hereditary stipends we could still manoeu-





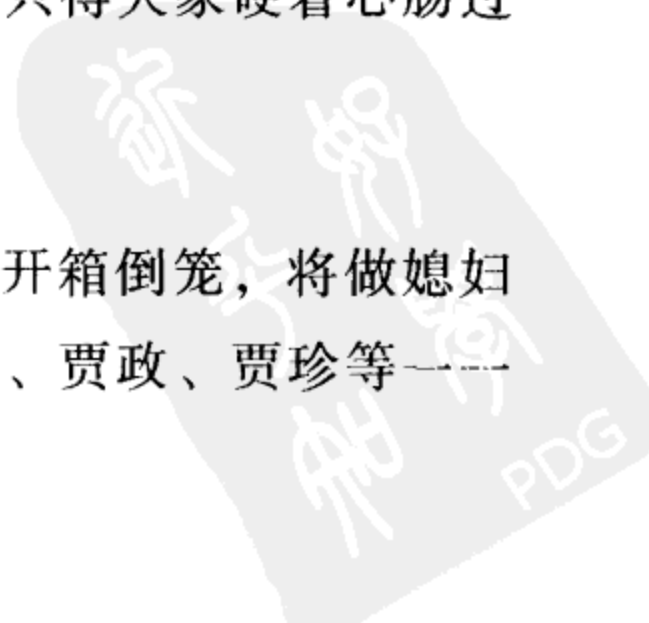
戚来，用过我们的，如今都穷了；没有用过我们的，又不肯照应。昨日儿子也没有细查，只看了家下的人丁册子，别说是上头的钱一无所出，那底下的人也养不起许多。”

贾母正在忧虑，只见贾赦、贾珍、贾蓉一齐进来给贾母请安。贾母看这般光景，一只手拉着贾赦，一只手拉着贾珍，便大哭起来。他两人脸上羞惭，又见贾母哭泣，都跪在地下哭着说道：“儿孙们不长进，将祖上功勋丢了，又累老太太伤心，儿孙们是死无葬身之地的了！”满屋中人看这光景，又一齐大哭起来。

贾政只得劝解：“倒先要打算他两个的使用。大约在家只可住得一两日，迟则人家就不依了。”老太太含悲忍泪的说道：“你两个且各自同你们媳妇们说说话儿去罢。”又吩咐贾政道：“这件事是不能久待的！想来外面挪移，恐不中用。那时误了钦限，怎么办？只好我替你们打算罢了。就是家中如此乱糟糟的，也不是常法儿！”一面说着，便叫鸳鸯吩咐去了。

这里贾赦等出来，又与贾政哭泣了一会，都不免将从前任性、过后恼悔、如今分离的话说了一会，各自夫妻们那边悲伤去了。贾赦年老，倒还撂的下；独有贾珍与尤氏怎忍分离？贾琏贾蓉两个也只有拉着父亲啼哭。虽说是比军流减等，究竟生离死别。这也是事到如此，只得大家硬着心肠过去。

却说贾母叫邢王二夫人同着鸳鸯等开箱倒笼，将做媳妇到如今积攒的东西都拿出来，又叫贾赦、贾政、贾珍等一一





vre outside. But whom can we expect to help us now?" In tears he continued, "All those relatives whom we helped before are poor, and the others we didn't help won't be willing to come to our rescue. I didn't investigate too carefully yesterday, but simply looked at the register of our servants. Quite apart from the fact that we can't meet our own expenses, we can't afford to feed such a large staff."

The old lady was distraught with anxiety when Jia She, Jia Zhen and Jia Rong came in together to pay their respects to her. At sight of them she clasped Jia She with one hand, Jia Zhen with the other, and sobbed. Her grief made them blush for shame and fall to their knees.

"We are reprobates who have forfeited the honours accorded to our ancestors and brought you grief, madam," they said tearfully. "We don't even deserve a piece of ground in which to bury our bones after death!"

All present seeing this gave way to weeping.

Jia Zheng interposed, "The first thing to do is make ready for their journey. The authorities will probably not agree to their staying at home for more than a couple of days."

Holding back her tears the old lady dismissed Jia She and Jia Zhen to see their wives. Then she told Jia Zheng, "There's no time to be lost! I'm afraid it's no use trying to raise money outside, and it will be bad if they fail to leave by the appointed time. So I had better settle this for you. But the household is topsy-turvy — this won't do!" She sent Yuanyang off to restore order.

After Jia She and Jia Zhen had withdrawn with Jia Zheng, weeping again they deplored their past excesses and spoke of their grief at parting. Then they went to lament with their wives. Jia She being old did not mind leaving Lady Xing; but Jia Zhen and Madam You could not bear to be parted, and Jia Lian and Jia Rong wept beside their fathers. For though their banishment was less harsh than service in the army, the exiles might never again see their families. However, since things had come to such a pass they had to make the best of the situation.

The old lady made Lady Xing, Lady Wang, Yuanyang and the others open up her cases and take out all the things she had stored away since coming here as a bride. Then she summoned Jia She, Jia Zheng and Jia



的分派。给贾赦三千两，说：“这里现有的银子你拿二千两去做你的盘费使用，留一千给大太太零用。这三千给珍儿。你只许拿一千去，留下二千给你媳妇收着。仍旧各自过日子。房子还是一处住，饭食各自吃罢。四丫头将来的亲事，还是我的事。只可怜凤丫头操了一辈子心，如今弄的精光，也给他三千两，叫他自己收着，不许叫琏儿用。如今他还病的神昏气短，叫平儿来拿去。这是你祖父留下的衣裳，还有我少年穿的衣服首饰，如今我也用不着了。男的呢，叫大老爷、珍儿、琏儿、蓉儿拿去分了。女的呢，叫大太太、珍儿媳妇、凤丫头拿了分去。这五百两银子交给琏儿，明年将林丫头的棺材送回南去。”分派定了，又叫贾政道：“你说外头还该着账呢，这是少不得的，你叫拿这金子变卖偿还。这是他们闹掉了我的。你也是我的儿子，我并不偏向。宝玉已经成了家，我下剩的这些金银东西，大约还值几千银子，这是都给宝玉的了。珠儿媳妇向来孝顺我，兰儿也好，我也分给他们些。这就是我的事情完了。”

贾政等见母亲如此明断分晰，俱跪下哭着说：“老太太这么大年纪，儿孙们没点孝顺，承受老祖宗这样恩典，叫儿孙们更无地自容了！”贾母道：“别瞎说了！要不闹出这个乱儿来，我还收着呢。只是现在家人太多，只有二老爷当差，留几个人就够了。你就吩咐管事的，将人叫齐了，分派妥当。各家有人就罢了。譬如那时都抄了，怎么样呢？我们里头的，也要叫人分派，该配人的配人，赏去的赏去。如今虽说

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Zhen to share out her belongings.

Jia She received three thousand taels of silver with the instructions, "Take two thousand for your journey and leave your wife one thousand."

"This three thousand is for Zhen," the old lady continued. "You are only to take one thousand, leaving your wife two thousand. She and your concubines can go on as before, sharing the same house but eating separately; and I shall see to Xichun's marriage in future. Poor Xifeng had put herself out for us all these years yet now she has nothing left; so I shall give her three thousand too, on condition that she keeps it herself and doesn't let Lian use it. As she's still only half-conscious, tell Pinger to come and take it. And here are clothes left by your grandfather and costumes and trinkets I wore when I was young, which I have no further use for. The Elder Master, Zhen, Lian and Rong can divide his clothes between them; the rest are to be shared out by the Elder Mistress, Zhen's wife and Xifeng. This five hundred taels of silver is for Lian, for when he takes Daiyu's coffin back south next year."

Having made this apportionment she told Jia Zheng, "You spoke of debts outside; well, they must be cleared. Take this gold to settle them. It's the others' fault that I have to part with all my possessions like this; but you're my son too, and I can't show favouritism. Baoyu is already married. The gold, silver and other things which I have left must be worth a few thousand taels, and that will go to him. Zhu's wife has always been dutiful to me, and Lan's a good lad, so I'll give them something too. This is all that I can do."

Impressed by her sound judgement and fair treatment, Jia Zheng and the rest knelt down and said with tears, "You are so advanced in years, Old Ancestress, and your sons and grandsons have failed in their duty to you. Your goodness to us makes us doubly ashamed!"

"Stop talking nonsense," she answered. "If not for this trouble I'd have kept everything to myself. But our household is too large now, with only the Second Master holding a post, so we can manage with just a few servants. Tell the stewards to summon them all and make the necessary retrenchment. Provided each house had someone, that's enough. What should we have done, anyway, if they'd all been sequestered? The maids should be re-assigned too, and some of them married off, some given



这房子不入官，你到底把这园子交了才是呢。那些地亩还交琏儿清理，该卖的卖，留的留，再不可支架子，做空头。我索性说了罢：江南甄家还有几两银子，大太太那里收着，该叫人就送去罢。倘或再有点事儿出来，可不是他们‘躲过了风暴又遭了雨’了么？”贾政本是不知当家立计的人，一听贾母的话，一一领命，心想：“老太太实在真真是理家的人！都是我们这些不长进的闹坏了！”

贾政见贾母劳乏，求着老太太歇歇养神。贾母又道：“我所剩的东西也有限，等我死了，做结果我的使用。下剩的都给伏侍我的丫头。”贾政等听到这里，更加伤感，大家跪下：“请老太太宽怀。只愿儿子们托老太太的福，过了些时，都邀了恩眷，那时兢兢业业的治起家来，以赎前愆，奉养老太太到一百岁。”贾母道：“但愿这样才好，我死了也好见祖宗。你们别打量我是享得富贵受不得贫穷的人哪！不过这几年看着你们轰轰烈烈，我乐得都不管，说说笑笑，养身子罢了。那知道家运一败，直到这样！若说外头好看，里头空虚，是我早知道了的，只是‘居移气，养移体’，一时下不了台就是了。如今借此正好收敛，守住这个门头儿，不然，叫人笑话。你还不知，只打量我知道穷了，就着急的要死。我心里是想着祖宗莫大的功勋，无一日不指望你们比祖宗还强，能够守住也罢了。谁知他们爷儿两个做些什么勾当！”

贾母正自长篇大论的说，只见丰儿慌慌张张的跑来回王





their freedom. And though this mansion of ours wasn't taken over by the authorities, you should at least give up the Garden. As for our other estates, let Lian investigate to see which should be sold and which kept up. We must stop putting on an empty show. I can speak bluntly: the Zhen family down south still has some money in the Elder Mistress' keeping, which she should send back. Because if any other trouble should happen to us in future, wouldn't they be 'out of the frying-pan into the fire?'"

Jia Zheng had no head for family affairs and readily agreed to all her proposals. "The old lady certainly is a good manager!" he reflected. "It's her worthless sons who have ruined the family." Then, as his mother looked tired, he urged her to go and rest.

"I haven't much else," she continued. "What there is can be spent on my funeral, and anything left over can go to my maids."

Distressed to hear her talk like this, Jia Zheng and the others knelt down again and pleaded, "Don't take it so hard, madam! Sharing in your good fortune, we can hope later on for more marks of Imperial favour; and then we shall exert our selves to set our house in order, and atone for our faults by caring for you until you are a hundred."

"I certainly hope it turns out like that, so that I can face our ancestors after death. But you mustn't imagine I'm someone who enjoys riches and rank and can't endure poverty. These last few years you seemed to be doing fine, so I didn't interfere, content to laugh and chat and nurse my health, never dreaming that our family was doomed to ruin like this! I knew all along that we were putting on an empty show, but everyone in the household was so used to luxury that we couldn't cut down expenses all of a sudden. Well, here's a good chance to retrench, to keep the family going, if we don't want to become a laughing-stock. You expected me to be worried to death on hearing that we're bankrupt. But in fact I was upset because, recalling the honours conferred on our ancestors for their splendid services to the state, I kept wishing that you might do even better, or at least manage to keep what you'd inherited. Who knows what dirty business they got up to, uncle and nephew!"

As she was haranguing them like this, a flustered Fenger ran in to tell Lady Wang, "This morning our mistress cried and cried when she learned



夫人道：“今早我们奶奶听见外头的事，哭了一场，如今气都接不上了，平儿叫我来回太太。”丰儿没有说完，贾母听见，便问：“到底怎么样？”王夫人便代回道：“如今说是不大好。”贾母起身道：“嗳！这些冤家，竟要磨死我了！”说着，叫人扶着，要亲自看去。贾政急忙拦住，劝道：“老太太伤了好一会子心，又分派了好些事，这会子该歇歇儿了。就是孙子媳妇有什么事，叫媳妇瞧去就是了，何必老太太亲身过去呢？倘或再伤感起来，老太太身上要有一点儿不好，叫做儿子的怎么处呢？”贾母道：“你们各自出去，等一会子再进来，我还有话说。”贾政不敢多言，只得出来料理兄侄起身的事，又叫贾琏挑人跟去。

这里贾母才叫鸳鸯等派人拿了给凤姐的东西，跟着过来。凤姐正在气厥。平儿哭的眼肿腮红，听见贾母带着王夫人等过来，疾忙出来迎接。贾母便问：“这会子怎么样了？”平儿恐惊了贾母，便说：“这会子好些儿。”说着，跟了贾母等进来，赶忙先走过去，轻轻的揭开帐子。凤姐开眼瞧着，只见贾母进来，满心惭愧。先前原打量贾母等恼他，不疼他了，是死活由他的，不料贾母亲自来瞧，心里一宽，觉那拥塞的气略松动些，便要挣扎坐起。贾母叫平儿接着：“不用动。你好些么？”凤姐含泪道：“我好些了。只是从小儿过来，老太太、太太怎么样疼我！那知我福气薄，叫神鬼支使的失魂落魄，不能够在老太太、太太跟前尽点儿孝心，讨个好儿。还这样把我当人，叫我帮着料理家务，被我闹的七颠

红楼梦 鸳鸯 PDG



about our trouble. Now she's at her last gasp. Pinger sent me to report this to you, madam."

Before she could finish the old lady asked, "Just how is she?"

"Not too well, they say," Lady Wang replied for Fenger,

"Ah!" exclaimed the old lady rising to her feet. "These wretched children won't give me a moment's peace!" She told maids to help her over to see Xifeng, but Jia Zheng barred the way.

"Madam, you've been so upset and attended to so much business, you ought to rest now. If your grandson's wife is unwell, your daughter-in-law can go and see to her; there's no need to go yourself. If you were to be upset again and fall ill, how could your sons bear it?"

"You're all to leave now and come back presently — I've more to say to you."

Not venturing to raise any further objections, Jia Zheng went to help prepare for his brother's and nephew's journeys, instructing Jia Lian to choose servants to accompany them.

Meanwhile the old lady made Yuanyang and the others go over with her to see Xifeng, taking her gifts for her. Xifeng's breath was coming in gasps, and Pinger's eyes and cheeks were red from weeping. When Their Ladyships were announced, Pinger hurried out to meet them.

"How is she now?" asked the old lady.

Not wanting to alarm her Pinger said, "She's a little better. Since you're here, madam, please step in and see for yourself."

She followed them inside, then darted over and quietly raised the bed-curtains. Xifeng, opening her eyes, was overcome with shame at sight of the old lady, for she had assumed that the Lady Dowager must be angry with her erstwhile favourite and would leave her to die — she had never expected this visit. Relief eased her choking sensation and she struggled to sit up; but the old lady made Pinger hold her down.

"Don't move," she said. "Are you feeling a bit better?"

"Yes, madam," answered Xifeng with tears in her eyes. "Since I came here as a girl, Your Ladyships have been so good to me! But it was my misfortune to be driven out of my mind by evil spirits so that I couldn't serve you dutifully and win my father- and mother-in-law's approval. You treated me so well, letting me help run the household; and after





八倒，我还有什么脸见老太太、太太呢？今日老太太、太太亲自过来，我更担不起了！恐怕该活三天的又折了两天去了！”说着悲咽。

贾母道：“那些事原是外头闹起来的，与你什么相干？就是你的东西被人拿去，这也算不了什么呀！我带了好些东西给你，你瞧瞧。”说着，叫人拿上来给他瞧。凤姐本是贪得无厌的人，如今被抄净尽，自然愁苦，又恐人埋怨，正是几不欲生的时候。今见贾母仍旧疼他，王夫人也不嗔怪，过来安慰他，又想贾琏无事，心下安放好些。便在枕上与贾母磕头，说道：“请老太太放心。若是我的病托着老太太的福好了，我情愿自己当个粗使的丫头，尽心竭力的伏侍老太太、太太罢！”贾母听他说的伤心，不免掉下泪来。宝玉是从来没有经过这大风浪的，心下只知安乐、不知忧患的人，如今碰来碰去，都是哭泣的事，所以他竟比傻子尤甚，见人哭他就哭。

凤姐看见众人忧闷，反倒勉强说几句宽慰贾母的话，求着：“请老太太、太太回去，我略好些，过来磕头。”说着，将头仰起。贾母叫平儿：“好生服侍。短什么，到我那里要去。”说着，带了王夫人将要回到自己房中，只听见两三处哭声。贾母听着，实在不忍，便叫王夫人散去，叫宝玉：“去见你大爷大哥，送一送就回来。”自己躺在榻上下泪。幸喜鸳鸯等能用百样言语劝解，贾母暂且安歇。

不言贾赦等分离悲痛。那些跟去的人，谁是愿意的？不



turning everything upside-down how can I look you in the face again?" Here she broke down and sobbed, "Now Your Ladyships have come in person to see me, quite overwhelming me! Even if I had another three days to live, I deserve to have two days docked!"

"That trouble started outside," said the old lady. "It had nothing to do with you. And even though you were robbed it doesn't matter. I've brought you a whole lot of things, to do just as you like with." She told the maids to show Xifeng her gifts.

Xifeng was insatiably acquisitive. The loss of all her possessions had naturally cut her to the quick, in addition to which she had dreaded being held to blame and felt life was not worth living. Now it seemed she was still in the old lady's good books, and Lady Wang instead of reproaching her had come to comfort her, while she knew that Jia Lian had kept out of trouble too. In relief she kowtowed to the old lady from her pillow.

"Please don't worry, madam," she said. "If I recover thanks to your good fortune, I'll gladly be your menial and serve Your Ladyships with all my heart!"

Her obvious distress made the Lady Dowager give way to tears. Baoyu was accustomed to comfort and enjoyment, and had never known genuine anxiety. This was his first experience of disaster. Now that sobbing and wailing assailed him wherever he turned, his mind became more unhinged and when others wept he joined in.

All of them seemed so upset that Xifeng raised her head from the pillow and made an effort to comfort the old lady. "Please go back, Your Ladyships," she urged. "When I'm a bit better I'll come to kowtow my thanks."

The old lady told Pinger, "Mind you look after her well. If you're short of anything, come to me for it."

On her way back with Lady Wang, they heard weeping in several apartments. Once home, unable to check her grief any longer, the old lady dismissed Lady Wang and sent Baoyu to see off his uncle and cousin. She then lay down on her couch and burst into tears. Luckily Yuanyang and the other maids finally succeeded in consoling her, so that she fell asleep.

Jia She and Jia Zhen were by no means the only ones to be distressed



免心中抱怨，叫苦连天。正是生离果胜死别，看者比受者更加伤心。好好的一个荣国府，闹到人嚎鬼哭。

贾政最循规矩，在伦常上也讲究的，执手分别后，自己先骑马赶至城外，举酒送行，又叮咛了好些“国家轸恤勋臣，力图报称”的话。贾赦等挥泪分头而别。

贾政带了宝玉回家，未及进门，只见门上有好些人在那里乱嚷，说：“今日旨意：将荣国公世职着贾政承袭。”那些人那里要喜钱，门上人和他们分争，说：“是本来的世职，我们本家袭了，有什么喜报？”那些人说道：“那世职的荣耀，比任什么还难得！你们大老爷闹掉了，想要这个，再不能的了！如今圣人的恩典比天还大，又赏给二老爷了，这是千载难逢的，怎么不给喜钱？”正闹着，贾政回家，门上回了，虽则喜欢，究竟是哥哥犯事所致，反觉感极涕零，赶着进内告诉贾母。贾母自然喜欢，拉着说了些勤屯报恩的话。王夫人正恐贾母伤心，过来安慰，听得世职复还，也是欢喜。独有邢夫人尤氏心下悲苦，只不好露出来。

且说外面这些趋炎奉势的亲戚朋友，先前贾宅有事，都远避不来；今儿贾政袭职，知圣眷尚好，大家都来贺喜。那





at leaving. None of the servants escorting them wanted to go. Simmering with resentment they cursed their fate, for separation in life is harder to bear than separation by death, and saddest of all were the people seeing them off. The once splendid Rong Mansion resounded with lamentations.

Jia Zheng, a model of propriety with a strong sense of moral obligation, clasped his brother's hand in farewell then rode ahead out of the city to offer them wine at the Pavilion of Parting and wish them a good journey. He reminded them of the government's concern for meritorious ministers, and exhorted them to work hard to repay this compassion. Shedding tears then, Jia She and Jia Zhen went their different ways.

When Jia Zheng returned with Baoyu, they found messengers outside their gate clamouring that an Imperial edict had just been issued bestowing the title of Duke of Rongguo on Jia Zheng. These men wanted largesse for bringing such good tidings.

The gatemen argued, "This is a hereditary title which our master already possesses; so how can you claim to be bringing us good tidings?"

The messengers retorted, "Hereditary titles are a great honour, harder to come by than an official appointment. Your Elder Master has lost his and will never get it back. But now His Sagacious Majesty has shown kindness greater than Heaven and restored this title to your Second Master — such a thing only happens once in a thousand years. So why don't you tip us for bringing the good news?"

Jia Zheng arrived in the middle of this dispute. When the gatemen reported the news to him he was pleased, although this reminded him of his brother's offence. Shedding tears of gratitude he hurried in to report this to the old lady. She was naturally delighted and, taking him by the hand, urged him to work diligently to repay the Emperor's kindness. Lady Wang, arriving just then to comfort the old lady, rejoiced too at this news. Lady Xing and Madam You, the only ones sick at heart, had to hide their feelings.

Those relatives and friends outside who had fawned on the Jias when they were powerful had steered clear of them since hearing of their disgrace. Now that Jia Zheng had inherited the title and apparently still enjoyed the Emperor's favour, they hurried over to offer congratulations.



知贾政纯厚性成，因他袭哥哥的职，心内反生烦恼，只知感激天恩。于第二日进内谢恩，到底将赏还府第园子，备折奏请入官。内廷降旨不必，贾政才得放心回家，以后循分供职。

但是家计萧条，入不敷出。贾政又不能在外应酬。家人们见贾政忠厚，凤姐抱病不能理家，贾琏的亏空一日重似一日，难免典房卖地。府内家人，几个有钱的，怕贾琏缠扰，都装穷躲事，甚至告假不来，各自另寻门路。独有一个包勇，虽是新投到此，恰遇荣府坏事，他倒有些真心办事，见那些人欺瞒主子，便时常不忿。奈他是个新来乍到的人，一句话也插不上，他便生气，每日吃了就睡。众人嫌他不肯随和，便在贾政前说他终日贪杯生事，并不当差。贾政道：“随他去罢。原是甄府荐来，不好意思。横竖家内添这一个人吃饭，虽说穷，也不在他一人身上。”并不叫驱逐。众人又在贾琏跟前说他怎么样不好，贾琏此时也不敢自作威福，只得由他。

忽一日，包勇耐不过，吃了几杯酒，在荣府街上闲逛，见有两个人说话。那人说道：“你瞧！这么个大府，前儿抄了家，不知如今怎么样了？”那人道：“他家怎么能败？听见说，里头有位娘娘是他家的姑娘，虽是死了，到底有根基的。况





To their surprise, Jia Zheng felt genuine embarrassment at inheriting his brother's title, despite his gratitude to the Emperor. The next day he went to court to offer thanks, and asked permission to make over to the state the houses and Garden which had been returned to him. When an edict declared this petition unwarranted, he went home in relief and continued to work steadily at his post.

But the family was now impoverished, its income falling short of its expenditure, and Jia Zheng was unable to take advantage of his social connections. The servants knew that though he was a worthy man, while Xifeng was too ill to run the household Jia Lian was piling up debts from day to day which forced him to mortgage houses and sell land. The wealthier of the stewards were afraid Jia Lian might appeal to them for help, and therefore made a pretence of poverty or kept out of his way. Some even asked for leave and did not return, for each was looking around for a new master.

The sole exception was Bao Yong, who had only recently come to the Rong Mansion just as disaster struck it. This honest fellow was filled with indignation by the way the rest cheated their masters; but being a newcomer his words carried no weight, so in anger he just went to sleep after supper each day. The other servants resented his lack of compliance, and slandered him to Jia Zheng as a drunken trouble-maker and a slacker.

"Let him be," said Jia Zheng. "He was recommended by the Zhen family; we can hardly send him away. We may be in difficulties, but feeding one extra mouth won't make any difference."

As he would not dismiss Bao Yong, the servants complained about him to Jia Lian; but the latter no longer dared act high handedly and took no action either.

One day, feeling disgruntled, Bao Yong had a few drinks then strolled out to the road outside the Rong Mansion, where he saw two fellows talking.

"See there!" said one. "That fine mansion was raided the other day. I wonder what's become of its owners."

"How could a family like theirs be ruined?" the other said. "I heard that one of their daughters was an Imperial Consort, and even though



且我常见他们来往的都是王公侯伯，那里没有照应？就是现在的府尹，前任的兵部，是他们的一家儿。难道有这些人还护庇不来么？”那人道：“你白住在这里！别人犹可，独是那个贾大人更了不得！我常见他在两府来往，前儿御史虽参了，主子还叫府尹查明实迹再办。你说他怎么样？他本沾过两府的好处，怕人说他回护一家儿，他倒狠狠的踢了一脚，所以两府里才到底抄了。你说如今的世情还了得吗！”

两人无心说闲话，岂知旁边有人跟着听的明白。包勇心下暗想：“天下有这样人！但不知是我们老爷的什么人？我若见了他，便打他一个死！闹出事来，我承当去！”那包勇正在酒后胡思乱想，忽听那边喝道而来。包勇远远站着，只见那两人轻轻的说道：“这来的就是那个贾大人了。”包勇听了，心里怀恨，趁着酒兴，便大声说道：“没良心的男女！怎么忘了我们贾家的恩了？”雨村在轿内听得一个“贾”字，便留神观看，见是一个醉汉，也不理会，过去了。

那包勇醉着，不知好歹，便得意洋洋回到府中，问起同伴，知是方才见的那位大人是这府里提拔起来的，“他不念旧恩，反来踢弄咱们家里，见了他骂他几句，他竟不敢答言。”那荣府的人本嫌包勇，只是主人不计较他，如今他又在外头惹祸，正好趁着贾政无事，便将包勇喝酒闹事的话回了贾政。贾政此时正怕风波，听见家人回禀，便一时生气，叫进包勇来数骂了几句，也不好深沉责罚他，便派去看园，





she's dead they should be well entrenched. I've seen them hobnobbing with princes and nobles too, so they must have plenty of backing. Why, even the present prefect, the last War Minister, is related to them. Couldn't these people have protected them?"

"You live here but don't know the first thing about it! The others weren't so bad, but that Prefect Jia was the limit! I've often seen him calling on both mansions, and after the censors impeached them the Emperor ordered him to investigate before any decision was made. What do you think he did? Because he'd been helped by both mansions, for fear of being accused of shielding them he gave them a vicious kick — that's why they were raided. Friendship doesn't mean a thing nowadays."

Bao Yong beside them overheard this idle gossip. "Are there such people in the world with no sense of gratitude?" he thought. "I wonder what relation he is to our master. If I meet the scoundrel I'll knock him off — and to hell with the consequences!"

He was letting his drunken fancy run wild when he heard runners shouting, "Clear the way!" Although some distance off, he stood still and heard one fellow whisper, "It's Prefect Jia coming."

Bao Yong was furious. Emboldened by drink he yelled, "Heartless slave! How could you forget our Jia family's goodness to you?"

Jia Yucun peered out from his chair at the sound of the name Jia, but seeing a drunkard he ignored him and went on.

Bao Yong, being drunk and reckless, swaggered back to the house to question his fellow servants, who confirmed that Jia Yucun owed his promotion to the Jia family.

"Instead of remembering their kindness, he kicked them down," Bao Yong fumed. "When I cursed him just now he dared not answer back."

The servants in the Rong Mansion had always disliked Bao Yong, but their masters would not take any action against him. Now that he had made this row outside, they seized the chance when Jia Zheng was free to report that Bao Yong had been drunk and disorderly. This news angered Jia Zheng, who was afraid of fresh trouble. He summoned Bao Yong and reprimanded him; but not liking to punish him ordered him to keep watch in the Garden and not to leave the place. Bao Yong was a



不许他在外行走。那包勇本是个直爽的脾气，投了主子，他便赤心护主，那知贾政反倒听了别人的话骂他。他也不敢再辩，只得收拾行李，往园中看守浇灌去了。未知后事如何，且听下回分解。





loyal, straightforward fellow who safeguarded his master's interests. Jia Zheng had berated him on the basis of hearsay, but not venturing to justify himself he packed up his things and moved into the Garden to keep watch there and water the plants.

To know what happened later, read the next chapter.



## 第一百八回

强欢笑蘅芜庆生辰 死缠绵潇湘闻鬼哭

却说贾政先前曾将房产并大观园奏请入官，内廷不收，又无人居住，只好封锁。因园子接连尤氏惜春住宅，太觉旷阔无人，遂将包勇罚看荒园。此时贾政理家，奉了贾母之命，将人口渐次减少，诸凡省俭，尚且不能支持。幸喜凤姐是贾母心爱的人，王夫人等虽不大喜欢，若说治家办事，尚能出力，所以内事仍交凤姐办理。但近来因被抄以后，诸事运用不来，也是每形拮据。那些房头上下人等，原是宽裕惯了的，如今较往日十去其七，怎能周到？不免怨言不绝。凤姐也不敢推辞，在贾母前扶病承欢。

过了些时，贾赦贾珍各到当差地方，恃有用度，暂且自安。写书回家，都言安逸，家中不必挂念。于是贾母放心，邢夫人尤氏也略略宽怀。

一日，史湘云出嫁回门，来贾母这边请安。贾母提起他女婿甚好，史湘云也将那里家中平安的话说了，请老太太放心。又提起黛玉去世，不免大家落泪。贾母又想起迎春苦楚，越觉悲伤起来。史湘云解劝一回，又到各家请安问好





## Chapter 108

### Baochai's Birthday Is Celebrated with Forced Mirth Baoyu, Longing for the Dead, Hears Ghosts Weeping in Bamboo Lodge

When Jia Zheng's petition to make over to the state his mansion and Grand View Garden was rejected by the court, as there was no one staying in the Garden he had the place locked up. Later, as it adjoined the quarters of Madam You and Xichun and its vast grounds were deserted, to punish Bao Yong he sent him there to keep watch.

Jia Zheng was regulating the household now in accordance with his mother's instructions, gradually cutting down the staff and economizing in all possible ways; but still he could not manage. Luckily for him, Xifeng was the old lady's favourite — although no love was lost between her and Lady Wang and the rest — and as she was an able manager the household affairs were once more entrusted to her. Since the raid, however, for lack of funds she had no scope to manoeuvre and because the mistresses and maids of the different apartments were used to luxury, with their income less than a third of what it had been she found it impossible to satisfy them. Inevitably there were endless complaints. But Xifeng, in spite of her illness, dared not relinquish her task and did her best to please the Lady Dowager.

After Jia She and Jia Zhen reached their destinations, having money they settled down there for the time being, writing home that they were comfortably off and the family need not worry. This relieved the old lady's mind, and Lady Xing and Madam You took comfort too.

One day, Shi Xiangyun arrived on her first visit after her marriage. The old lady, to whom she paid her respects, complimented her on her husband; and Xiangyun told her that her whole family was well and she need have no anxiety on that score. Then, speaking of Daiyu's death, they both shed tears; and the thought of Yingchun's hard lot made the old lady even sadder. After trying to console her, Xiangyun paid a round of



毕，仍到贾母房中安歇。言及薛家这样人家，被薛大哥闹的家破人亡，今年虽是缓决人犯，明年不知可能减等。贾母道：“你还不知道呢：昨儿蟠儿媳妇死的不明白，几乎又闹出一场事来。还幸亏老佛爷有眼，叫他带来的丫头自己供出来了，那夏奶奶没的闹了，自家拦住相验，你姨妈这里才将皮裹肉的打发出去了。如今守着蝌儿过日子。这孩子却有良心，他说哥哥在监里尚没完事，不肯娶亲。你邢妹妹在大太太那边，也就很苦。琴姑娘为他公公死了还没满服，梅家尚未娶去。你说说，真真是‘六亲同运’：薛家是这么着；二太太的娘家大舅太爷一死，凤丫头的哥哥也不成人；那二舅太爷是个小气的，又是官项不清，也是打饥荒；甄家自从抄家以后，别无信息。”

湘云道：“三姐姐去了，曾有书字回来么？”贾母道：“自从出了嫁，二老爷回来说，你三姐姐在海疆很好。只是没有书信，我也是日夜惦记。为我们家连连的出些不好事，所以我也顾不来。如今四丫头也没有给他提亲。环儿呢，谁有功夫提起他来？如今我们家的日子比你从前在这里的时候更苦了。只可怜你宝姐姐，自过了门，没过一天舒服日子。你二哥哥还是那么疯疯颠颠，这怎么好呢？”

湘云道：“我从小儿在这里长大的，这里那些人的脾气，我都知道的。这一回来了，竟敢改了样子了。我打量我隔了好些时没来，他们生疏我；我细想起来，竟不是的。就是见了我，瞧他们的意思，原要像先一样的热闹，不知道怎么说说就伤起心来了，所以我坐了坐儿就到老太太这里来了。”



calls on the others, returning to rest in the old lady's room. And now they spoke of the Xue family and how it had been ruined by Xue Pan; for though this year he had been granted a reprieve, there was no knowing whether his sentence would be commuted next year or not.

"You haven't heard the latest," said the old lady. "The other day Pan's wife died in mysterious circumstances, nearly causing another scandal. Thanks to the mercy of Buddha, the maid she had brought with her made a clean breast of the business, so that old Mrs. Xia couldn't raise a row and stopped them from holding an inquest. The trouble your aunt had getting rid of the Xias! So you see the truth of the saying 'All kinsmen share the same fate.' The Xues are in a bad way. Now the only one she has staying with her is Ke. He's a good-hearted lad who says he won't marry while Pan is still in jail, his case not settled; that's why your Cousin Xiuyan is staying with the Elder Mistress and having a thin time. Baoqin hasn't married yet either, because Academician Mei's son is still in mourning for him. The Second Mistress' elder brother has died, Xifeng's elder brother is a nincompoop, and that niggardly Second Uncle of theirs has embezzled public funds; so they're in hot water as well. As for the Zhen family, we've had no news of them since their house was raided."

"Has Cousin Tanchun written home since she left?" asked Xiangyun.

"After her marriage your uncle came back with the news that she was happily settled at the coast. We've had no letter from her, though, and I miss her the whole time; but what with all the troubles our family's had, there's nothing I can do. Now Xichun's marriage still has to be fixed. As for Huan, who has time for him? We're harder up now than we used to be when you stayed here. Poor Baochai hasn't passed a single day in comfort since she came to our family. And your Cousin Bao's still so crazy — what can we do?"

"I grew up here so I know all my cousins well," Xiangyun replied. "They've all changed since last I was here. I thought at first they were holding aloof because I'd stayed away so long; but on thinking it over I realize it isn't that. When we met, I could see they meant to be as free-and-easy as in the old days; but, somehow, once we got talking they grew depressed. That's why after sitting with them for a bit I came back



贾母道：“如今的日子，在我也罢了；他们年轻轻儿的人，还了得！我正要想个法儿，叫他们还热闹一天才好，只是打不起这个精神来。”湘云道：“我想起来了：宝姐姐不是后儿的生日吗？我多住一天，给他拜个寿，大家热闹一天。不知老太太怎么样？”贾母道：“我真正气糊涂了。你不提，我竟忘了。后日可不是他的生日吗！我明日拿出钱来，给他办个生日。他没有定亲的时候，倒做过好几次，如今过了门，倒没有做。宝玉这孩子，头里很伶俐，很淘气；如今因为家里的事不好，把这孩子越发弄的话都没有了。倒是珠儿媳妇还好。他有的时候是这么着，没的时候他也是这么着，带着兰儿静静儿的过日子，倒难为他。”

湘云道：“别人还不离，独有琏二嫂子，连模样儿都改了，说话也不伶俐了。明日等我来引逗他们，看他们怎么样。但只他们嘴里不说，心里要抱怨我，说我有了一——”刚说到这里，却把个脸飞红了。贾母会意道：“这怕什么？当初姊妹们都是在一处乐惯了的，说说笑笑，再别留这些心。大凡一个人，有也罢，没也罢，总要受得富贵、耐得贫贱才好呢。你宝姐姐生来是个大方的人。头里他家这样好，他也一点儿不骄傲；后来他家坏了事，他也是舒舒坦坦的。如今在我家里，宝玉待他好，他也是那样安顿；一时待他不好，也不见他有什么烦恼。我看这孩子倒是个有福的。你林姐姐，他就最小性儿，又多心，所以到底儿不长命的。凤丫头也见过些事，很不该略见些风波就改了样子。他若这样没见识，也就是小器了。后儿宝丫头的生日，我另拿出银子来，热热闹闹的给他做个生日，也叫他喜欢这么一天。”湘云答应道：“老太太说的很是。索性把那些姐妹们都请了来，大家叙



here to you, madam.”

“The way we’re living now is all right with me, but how can those young people stand it? I’ve been wondering how to give them a day’s fun, but I haven’t the energy for it.”

“I have an idea!” cried Xiangyun. “It’s Baochai’s birthday, isn’t it, the day after tomorrow? I can stay an extra day to congratulate her, and we’ll all have a day’s fun. What do you think, madam?”

“Anger must have addled my wits. If you hadn’t reminded me, I’d have forgotten. Of course, the day after tomorrow is her birthday. I’ll get out some money to celebrate it tomorrow. We had several parties for her in the past, but not since she married into the family. Baoyu used to be such a clever, mischievous boy, but our family misfortunes have left him speechless. Zhu’s wife is still a good daughter-in-law, quietly bringing Lan up and behaving the same whether things go well or badly — it’s hard on her.”

“The one who’s changed most is Cousin Xifeng,” put in Xiangyun. “She’s lost her good looks and her old gift of the gab. Wait till I tease them tomorrow and see how they react. But I’m afraid, though they won’t say so, they’ll secretly resent the fact that now I have... ” She broke off at this point blushing.

“Don’t worry,” said the old lady seeing her embarrassment. “You and your cousins used to have a good time chaffing each other. You mustn’t have such scruples. People should make the best of what they’ve got, able to enjoy rank and riches or to put up with poverty. Your Cousin Baochai has always been broadminded. When her family was well-off she wasn’t the least bit conceited; later, when they got into trouble, she kept cheerful. Now that she’s one of our family, when Baoyu treats her well she takes it calmly, and if he’s bad to her it doesn’t provoke her. I think that’s her good fortune. Your Cousin Daiyu, on the other hand, was narrow-minded and hyper-sensitive; that’s why she didn’t live long. Xifeng, being more experienced, shouldn’t let upsets influence her behaviour. If she’s so foolish, that’s rather petty too. Well, as the day after tomorrow is Baochai’s birthday, I’ll get out some silver for a lively celebration, to give her a happy day.”

“You’re quite right, madam. And while you’re about it, why not



一叙。”贾母道：“自然要请的。”一时高兴，遂叫鸳鸯：“拿出一百银子来，交给外头，叫他明日起，预备两天的酒饭。”鸳鸯领命，叫婆子交了出去。一宿无话。

次日，传话出去，打发人去接迎春。又请了薛姨妈宝琴，叫带了香菱来。又请李婶娘；不多半日，李纹李绮都来了。

宝钗本不知道，听见老太太的丫头来请，说：“薛姨太太来了，请二奶奶过去呢。”宝钗心里喜欢，便是随身衣服过去，要见他母亲。只见他妹子宝琴并香菱都在这里，又见李婶娘等人也都来了。心想那些人必是知道我们家的事情完了，所以来问候的，便去问了李婶娘好，见了贾母，然后与他母亲说了几句话，和李家姐妹们问好。

湘云在旁说道：“太太们请都坐下，让我们姐妹们给姐姐拜寿。”宝钗听了，倒呆了一呆，回来一想，“可不是明日是我的生日吗？”便说：“姐妹们过来瞧老太太是该的，若说为我的生日，是断断不敢的。”正推让着，宝玉也来请薛姨妈李婶娘的安。听见宝钗自己推让，他心里本早打算过宝钗生日，因家中闹得七颠八倒，也不敢在贾母处提起。今儿湘云等众人要拜寿，便喜欢道：“明日才是生日，我正要告诉老太太来。”湘云笑道：“扯臊！老太太还等你告诉？你打量这些人为什么来？是老太太请的！”宝钗听了，心下未信，只听贾母合他母亲道：“可怜宝丫头做了一年新媳妇，家里接二连三



invite all her girl cousins too? Then we can have a good chat.”

“I certainly will.” More cheerful now, the old lady told Yuanyang to get out a hundred taels and order the servants to prepare two days’ feasts, starting from the next day.

Yuanyang sent one of the matrons off with the money, after which the night passed uneventfully.

The next day, servants were sent to fetch Yingchun home. Aunt Xue and Baoqin were invited too, and asked to bring Xiangling. Aunt Li was also invited, and Li Wen and Li Qi with her.

Baochai was still in the dark when one of the old lady’s maids arrived with the message, “Aunt Xue has come, and you’re asked to go over, madam.”

Without stopping to change her clothes, she went over happily to see her mother. She found assembled there her cousin Baoqin and Xiangling, as well as Aunt Li and others. Ascribing their visit to the news that the Jia family was no longer in trouble, she paid her respects to Aunt Li and to the old lady, said a few words to her mother, then greeted the Li sisters.

“Please take seats, ladies,” urged Xiangyun, “while we girls wish Cousin Baochai a long life.”

Baochai stood amazed, then thought, “Yes, of course tomorrow is my birthday.”

“It’s right and proper for you girls to come and see the old lady,” she protested. “I can’t have you saying that it’s on my account.”

Baoyu, come to greet Aunt Xue and Aunt Li, arrived in time to hear her modest rejoinder. He had been wanting to celebrate his wife’s birthday, but had not ventured to suggest it to his grandmother because the household was at sixes and sevens. Now that Xiangyun and the rest were about to congratulate Baochai, he was delighted.

“It’s tomorrow, her birthday,” he said. “I was meaning to remind the old lady.”

“For shame!” retorted Xiangyun playfully. “The old lady doesn’t need any reminding. Do you suppose these visitors would have come if she hadn’t invited them?”

Baochai could hardly believe this, but now she heard the old lady tell her mother, “Poor Baochai has been married for a year, but with one



的有事，总没有给他做过生日。今日我给他做个生日，请姨太太、太太们来，大家说说话儿。”薛姨妈道：“老太太这些时心里才安，他小人儿家，还没有孝敬老太太，倒要老太太操心！”湘云道：“老太太最疼的孙子是二哥哥，难道二嫂子就不疼了么？况且宝姐姐也配老太太给他做生日。”宝钗低头不语。

宝玉心里想道：“我只说史妹妹出了阁必换了一个人了，我所以不敢亲近他，他也不来理我；如今听他的话，竟和先前是一样的。为什么我们那个过了门，更觉的腼腆了，话都说不出来了呢？”正想着，小丫头进来说：“二姑奶奶回来了。”随后李纨凤姐都进来，大家厮见一番。

迎春提起他父亲出门，说：“本要赶来见见，只是他拦着不许来，说是咱们家正是晦气时候，不要沾染在身上。我扭不过，没有来，直哭了两三天。”凤姐道：“今儿为什么肯放你回来？”迎春道：“他又说咱们家二老爷又袭了职，还可以走走，不妨事的，所以才放我来。”说着又哭起来。贾母道：“我原为闷的慌，今日接你们来给孙子媳妇过生日，说说笑笑，解个闷儿，你们又提起这些烦事来，又招起我的烦恼来了。”迎春等都不敢作声了。

凤姐虽勉强说了几句有兴的话，终不似先前爽利、招人发笑。贾母心里要宝钗喜欢，故意的怙凤姐儿说话。凤姐也知贾母之意，便竭力张罗，说道：“今儿老太太喜欢些了。你





thing after another cropping up here we've not celebrated her birthday. I'm giving this party for her today, and have asked you ladies over for a good chat."

"You shouldn't have put yourself out, madam," said Aunt Xue. "You've been having such an anxious time, and the child hasn't been dutiful enough."

"The old lady's favourite grandchild is Cousin Bao," quipped Xiangyun. "So why shouldn't his wife be a favourite too? Besides, Baochai deserves a birthday party."

Baochai lowered her head and said nothing.

Baoyu told himself, "I thought marriage was bound to turn Cousin Shi into a different person, so I was afraid to approach her and she ignored me too; but it seems from the way she talks that she hasn't changed. In that case, why has Baochai grown so bashful since we married? She can hardly get a word out."

As he was wondering about this, a young maid came in to report Yingchun's return. Then Li Wan and Xifeng arrived too, and greetings were exchanged.

Yingchun mentioned that at the time of her father's departure she had wanted to see him off, but her husband had forbidden her. "He said that our family was having a run of bad luck and I mustn't be tainted by it," she explained. "I couldn't talk him round so I didn't come, just cried for days on end."

"Then why did he let you come today?" asked Xifeng.

"He says it's all right to keep up the connection now that our Second Master has inherited the title." She wept again.

"I was feeling very depressed," complained the old lady. "That's why I invited you all here today to celebrate my granddaughter-in-law's birthday. I thought some fun and laughter would cheer us up, but here you are provoking me by bringing up those tiresome things again."

Then Yingchun and the others dropped the subject.

Though Xifeng forced herself to crack a joke or two, she was less witty and amusing than before; but the old lady egged her on, in the hope of diverting Baochai. And Xifeng, understanding this, did her best.

She said, "Today the old lady's feeling more cheerful. And look at all



看这些人好几时没有聚在一处，今儿齐全！”说着，回过头去，看见婆婆、尤氏不在这里，又缩住了口。贾母为着“齐全”两字，也想邢夫人等，叫人请去。邢夫人、尤氏、惜春等听见老太太叫，不敢不来，心内也十分不愿意，想着家业零败，偏又高兴给宝钗做生日，到底老太太偏心，便来了也是无精打彩的。贾母问起岫烟来，邢夫人假说病着不来。贾母会意，知薛姨妈在这里有些不便，也不提了。

一时，摆下果酒。贾母说：“也不送到外头，今日只许咱们娘儿们乐一乐。”宝玉虽然娶过亲的人，因贾母疼爱，仍在里头打混，但不与湘云宝琴等同席，便在贾母身旁设着一个坐儿，他替宝钗轮流敬酒。贾母道：“如今且坐下，大家喝酒。到挨晚儿再到各处行礼去。若如今行起礼来，大家又闹规矩，把我的兴头打回去，就没趣了。”宝钗便依言坐下。

贾母又向众人道：“咱们今儿索性洒脱些，各留一两个人伺候。我叫鸳鸯带了彩云、莺儿、袭人、平儿等在后间去也喝一钟酒。”鸳鸯等说：“我们还没有给二奶奶磕头，怎么就好喝酒去呢？”贾母道：“我说了，你们只管去。用的着你们再来。”鸳鸯等去了。

这里贾母才让薛姨妈等喝酒。见他们都不是往常的样子，贾母着急道：“你们到底是怎么着？大家高兴些才好！”湘





these people who haven't foregathered for so long, here today all together." There she broke off for, glancing round, she realized that her mother-in-law and Madam You were absent.

The two words "all together" reminded the old lady of them too, and she sent to invite them. Lady Xing, Madam You and Xichun had perforce to come, although much against their wishes, reflecting that if the Lady Dowager was in the mood to celebrate Baochai's birthday — with the family half ruined — it showed her favouritism. Hence they arrived looking listless and apathetic. When asked about Xiuyan, Lady Xing made the excuse that she was unwell and the old lady said no more, knowing that Aunt Xue's presence made it embarrassing for Xiuyan to come.

Soon sweetmeats and wine were served. "We won't send any to the gentlemen outside," said the Lady Dowager. "Today's party is just for us womenfolk."

Baoyu, though a married man now, still had the freedom of the inner quarters because he was his grandmother's favourite. Being unable to sit with Xiangyun and Baoqin, he took a seat by the old lady and started toasting the guests one by one on Baochai's behalf.

"Sit down now and let's all drink," proposed the old lady. "You can go round and pay your respects to them later. If you do that now, everyone will be formal and that would spoil my fun."

Baochai complied and sat down.

"Today we may as well let ourselves go," continued the old lady. "We'll just keep one or two maids to wait on us, and I'll tell Yuanyang to take Caiyun, Yinger, Xiren and Pinger to the back to drink by themselves."

The maids protested, "We haven't yet kowtowed to Madam Bao. How can we go off to drink?"

"Just do as I say," she answered. "We'll call you when we need you."

After Yuanyang had gone off with the other maids, the old lady urged Aunt Xue and the others to drink. But none of them behaved as they had in the old days.

"What's wrong with you?" she demanded frantically. "I want every-



云道：“我们又吃又喝，还要怎么着呢？”凤姐道：“他们小的时候都高兴，如今碍着脸不敢混说，所以老太太瞧着冷净了。”宝玉轻轻的告诉贾母道：“话是没有什么说的，再说就说到不好的上头去了。不如老太太出个主意，叫他们行个令儿罢。”贾母侧着耳朵听了，笑道：“若是行令，又得叫鸳鸯去。”宝玉听了，不待再说，就出席到后间去找鸳鸯，说：“老太太要行令，叫姐姐去呢。”鸳鸯道：“小爷，让我们舒舒服服的喝一钟罢。何苦来，又来搅什么？”宝玉道：“当真老太太说的，叫你去呢。与我什么相干？”鸳鸯没法，说道：“你们只管喝，我去了就来。”便到贾母那边。

老太太道：“你来了么？这里要行令呢！”鸳鸯道：“听见宝二爷说老太太叫我，才来的。不知老太太要行什么令儿？”贾母道：“那文的怪闷的慌，武的又不好，你倒是想个新鲜玩意儿才好。”鸳鸯想了想道：“如今姨太太有了年纪，不肯费心，倒不如拿出令盆骰子来，大家掷个曲牌名儿赌输赢酒罢。”贾母道：“这也使得。”便命人取骰盆放在案上。鸳鸯说：“如今用四个骰子掷去，掷不出名儿来的罚一杯；掷出名儿来，每人喝酒的杯数儿，掷出来再定。”众人听了道：“这是容易的，我们都随着。”鸳鸯便打点儿，众人叫鸳鸯喝了一杯，就在他身上数起，恰是薛姨妈先掷。薛姨妈便掷了一





one to have fun!"

"We're eating and drinking — what more should we do?" asked Xiangyun.

"They used to be young and gay," explained Xifeng. "Now they're standing too much on their dignity to talk wildly; that's why you find them rather quiet, madam."

Baoyu whispered, "There's nothing we can talk about, madam, because any talk's bound to lead to something depressing. Why don't you get them to play a drinking game?"

The old lady had inclined her head to listen. Now she remarked with a smile, "If we're to play drinking games we must call Yuanyang back."

Needing no further instructions, Baoyu went to the back to give her this message.

"Won't you let us drink a cup in peace, young master?" she protested. "Why come and disturb us?"

"It's true," he insisted. "The old lady wants you there. This isn't *my* doing."

Yuanyang had to tell the others, "Just go on drinking, I'll be back before long." With that she rejoined the old lady.

"So here you are, eh?" said the Lady Dowager. "We want to play drinking games."

"I came because Master Bao told me you wanted me, madam. What game would you like to play?"

"Those literary games are terribly dull, but rowdy ones are no good either. You must think of something fresh."

After a moment's reflection Yuanyang said, "Aunt Xue at her age doesn't like to cudgel her brains, so why don't we fetch the dice-pot and toss for the names of melodies, making the losers drink?"

"Very well." The old lady sent for the dice-pot and had it put on the table.

"We'll throw four dice," Yuanyang announced, "Anyone who fails to produce a name must drink one cup as forfeit. If a name is thrown, the others will have to drink according to the pips."

"That sounds simple," said the rest. "We'll do as you say."

They made Yuanyang drink a cup and toss to see who should start,





下，却是四个“么”。鸳鸯道：“这是有名的，叫做‘商山四皓’。有年纪的喝一杯。”于是贾母、李婶娘、邢、王两夫人都该喝。

贾母举酒要喝，鸳鸯道：“这是姨太太掷的，还该姨太太说个曲牌名儿，下家接一句‘千家诗’。说不出来的罚一杯。”薛姨妈道：“你又来算计我了，我那里说的上来？”贾母道：“不说到底寂寞，还是说一句的好。下家儿就是我了，若说不出来，我陪姨太太喝一钟就是了。”薛姨妈便道：“我说个‘临老人花丛’。”贾母点点头儿道：“‘将谓偷闲学少年’。”

说完，骰盆过到李纹，便掷了两个“四”，两个“二”。鸳鸯说：“也有名儿了，这叫‘刘阮入天台’。”李纹便接着说了个“二士入桃源”。下手儿便是李纨，说道：“‘寻得桃花好避秦’。”大家又喝了一口。

骰盆又过到贾母跟前，便掷了两个“二”，两个“三”。贾母道：“这要喝酒了。”鸳鸯道：“有名儿的，这是‘江燕引雏’。众人都该喝一杯。”凤姐道：“雏是雏，倒飞了好些了。”众人瞅了他一眼，凤姐便不言语。贾母道：“我说什么呢？‘公领孙’罢。”下手是李纨，便说道：“‘闲看





counting from herself — and it happened to be Aunt Xue, who threw four ones.

“The name for this,” said Yuanyang, “is ‘The Four Elders of Shangshan.’ Those getting on in years should drink.” This meant the old lady, Aunt Li, Lady Xing and Lady Wang. But as the old lady raised her cup Yuanyang continued, “Since Aunt Xue threw this, she must give the name of a melody corresponding to it, and the one whose turn is next must follow with a line of poetry. The forfeit if either of them fails is one cup.”

“You’re having me on!” objected Aunt Xue. “How can I possibly answer?”

“It’s too tame if you don’t,” said the Lady Dowager. “so better make a try. It’s my turn next, and if I can’t think of a line I’ll drink with you.”

Then Aunt Xue said, “The melody’s called *Retreating into Flowers as Old Age Approaches*.”

The old lady nodded and quoted:

“Men may say that in idle moments I ape children.”

Then the dice-pot was passed to Li Wen, who tossed two fours and two twos.

Yuanyang said, “This has a name too. It’s ‘Liu Zhen and Yuan Zhao Go to Mount Tiantai.’ ”

Li Wen named the melody *Two Scholars Go to Peach-blossom Stream*, and Li Wan who was next to her quoted:

“Finding Peach-blossom Stream to escape from Qin.”

All took a sip of wine, after which the dice-pot went to the old lady, who tossed two twos and two threes. “I suppose I shall have to drink,” she said.

But Yuanyang told her, “There’s a name for this: ‘The Swallow on the River Leads Its Fledgelings.’ Everybody has to drink.”

“Many of the fledgelings have flown,” began Xifeng, when glances from the others silenced her.

“Well, what shall I say?” the old lady went on. “*The Grandfather Leads His Grandchildren*.”



儿童捉柳花’。”众人都说好。

宝玉巴不得要说，只是令盆轮不到，正想着，恰好到了跟前，便掷了一个“二”，两个“三”，一个“么”，便说道：“这是什么？”鸳鸯笑道：“这是个‘臭’！先喝一钟再掷罢。”宝玉只得喝了又掷。这一掷掷了两个“三”，两个“四”。鸳鸯道：“有了，这叫做‘张敞画眉’。”宝玉知是打趣他。宝钗的脸也飞红了。凤姐不大懂得，还说：“二兄弟快说了，再找下家儿是谁。”宝玉难说，自认：“罚了罢。我也没下家儿。”

过了令盆，轮到李纨，便掷了一下。鸳鸯道：“大奶奶掷的是‘十二金钗’。”宝玉听了，赶到李纨身旁看时，只见红禄对开，便说：“这一个好看的很！”忽然想起“十二钗”的梦来，便呆呆的退到自己座上，心里想：“这‘十二钗’说是金陵的，怎么我家这些人，如今七大八小的就剩了这几个？”复又看看湘云宝钗，虽说都在，只是不见了黛玉。一时按捺不住，眼泪便要下来，恐人看见，便说身上燥的很，脱脱衣裳去，挂了筹，出席去了。史湘云看见宝玉这般光景，打量宝玉掷不出好的来，被别人掷了去，心里不喜欢，才去的；又嫌那个令儿没趣，便有些烦。只见李纨道：“我不说了。席间的人也不齐，不如罚我一杯。”贾母道：“这个令儿也不热闹，不如蠲了罢。让鸳鸯掷一下，看掷出个什么来。”

小丫头便把令盆放在鸳鸯跟前。鸳鸯依命，便掷了两个



Li Qi, the next, quoted:

“Idly watching children catching willow-catkins.”

And this won general approval.

Baoyu was eager to try his hand but had to wait for his turn. While he was thinking the pot was set before him and he threw one two, two threes and a single one. He asked, “What is this called?”

Yuanyang smiled and replied, “It’s no good. Drink up and throw again.”

This time he threw two threes and two fours.

“This is called ‘Zhang Chang Paints His Wife’s Eyebrows,’” Yuanyang announced.

Baoyu knew that she was teasing, and Baochai blushed scarlet. But Xifeng, not catching on, urged him, “Answer quickly, Cousin Bao, so that we can pass on to the next.”

He gave up then, saying sheepishly, “I’ll pay the forfeit. There’s no one after me either.”

Then the dice-pot went to Li Wan who made her toss.

Yuanyang said, “You’ve thrown ‘The Twelve Girls with Golden Hairpins.’”

Baoyu at once hurried over to have a look and saw that half the pips were red, half green. “Very pretty!” he exclaimed. Suddenly recalling his dream of twelve girls he went back to his seat in a daze. “Those twelve girls were supposed to be from Jinling,” he mused. “How is it that of all those in our family only these few are left?” Seeing Xiangyun and Baochai there but not Daiyu, he felt tears well up in his eyes and, to escape detection, excused himself on the pretext that he was hot and wanted to take off some clothes. Xiangyun, who noticed him slip away, supposed that he was sulking because he had tossed less successfully than the rest. She was rather vexed herself too because the game was so dull.

Then Li Wan said, “I’m stumped. There are people missing too. I’d better pay the forfeit.”

“This game isn’t much fun, let’s give it up,” suggested the old lady. “Let Yuanyang have a try. See what she gets.”

A young maid put the dice-pot before Yuanyang, who did as she was



“二”，一个“五”，那一个骰子在盆里只管转。鸳鸯叫道：“不要‘五’！”那骰子单单转出一个“五”来。鸳鸯道：“了不得！我输了。”贾母道：“这是不算什么的吗？”鸳鸯道：“名儿倒有，只是我说不上曲牌名来。”贾母道：“你说名儿，我给你诌。”鸳鸯道：“这是‘浪扫浮萍’。”贾母道：“这也不难，我替你说个‘秋鱼入菱窠’。”鸳鸯下手的就是湘云，便道：“‘白萍吟尽楚江秋’。”众人都道：“这句很确。”

贾母道：“这令完了，咱们喝两杯，吃饭罢。”回头一看，见宝玉还没进来，便问道：“宝玉那里去了？还不来？”鸳鸯道：“换衣裳去了。”贾母道：“谁跟了去的？”那莺儿便上来回道：“我看见二爷出去，我叫袭人姐姐跟了去了。”贾母王夫人才放心。等了一回，王夫人叫人去找。小丫头到了新房子里，只见五儿在那里插蜡。小丫头便问：“宝二爷那里去了？”五儿道：“在老太太那边喝酒呢。”小丫头道：“我打老太太那里来，太太叫我来找，岂有在那里倒叫我来找的呢？”五儿道：“这就知道了，你到别处找去罢。”小丫头没法，只得回来，遇见秋纹，问道：“你见二爷那里去了？”秋纹道：“我也找他，太太们等他吃饭。这会子那里去了呢？你快去回老太太去，不必说不在家，只说喝了酒不大受用，不吃饭了，略躺一躺再来，请老太太、太太们吃饭罢。”小



told, throwing two twos and one five. While the fourth dice was still rolling in the pot she cried. "Not a five!" But a five it was. "Too bad!" she exclaimed. "I've lost."

"Doesn't this count as anything?" asked the old lady.

"Well, it has a name, but I can't think what melody goes with it."

"Tell me its name and I'll think up something for you."

"It's 'Water-weeds Swept by Waves.' "

"That's not difficult. Here you are: *Autumn Fish Amid Caltrops.*"

Xiangyun who came next recited:

"I sang white water-weeds on the southern river in autumn."

"Very apt," approved the others.

"This game's finished. Let's drink a few cups, then have rice," proposed the Lady Dowager, then noticed that the place beside her was empty. "Where has Baoyu gone? Why isn't he back yet?" she asked.

Yuanyang told her he had gone to change his clothes.

"Who went with him?"

Yinger stepped forward to report, "When I saw Master Bao going out I told Sister Xiren to go with him."

Their Ladyships felt reassured, but after waiting for a while Lady Wang sent a young maid in search of him. She went to the bridal chamber where Wuer was setting out candles.

"Where is Master Bao?" asked the maid.

"Over with the old lady, drinking."

"I've just come from there, sent by Her Ladyship to find him. If he were there, why should she send me?"

"In that case I don't know where he is," said Wuer. "You'd better try somewhere else."

On her way back the maid met Qiuwen. "Have you seen Master Bao?" she asked her.

"I'm looking for him too," was the reply. "The mistresses are waiting for him to start dinner. Wherever can he have got to? Hurry back and tell the old lady, not that he's not at home but that he's feeling out of sorts after drinking and doesn't want any food. After resting for a little he'll rejoin them. He hopes Their Ladyships will start without him."

丫头依言回去，告诉珍珠，珍珠回了贾母。贾母道：“他本来吃不多，不吃也罢，叫他歇歇罢。告诉他今儿不必过来，有他媳妇在这里就是了。”珍珠便向小丫头道：“你听见了？”小丫头答应着，不便说明，只得在别处转了一转，说：“告诉了。”众人也不理会，吃毕饭，大家散坐闲话，不提。

且说宝玉一时伤心，走出来，正无主意，只见袭人赶来，问是怎么了。宝玉道：“不怎么，只是心里怪烦的。要不趁他们喝酒，咱们两个到珍大奶奶那里逛逛去。”袭人道：“珍大奶奶在这里，去找谁？”宝玉道：“不找谁，瞧瞧他，既在这里，住的房屋怎么样。”袭人只得跟着，一面走，一面说。走到尤氏那边，又一个小门儿半开半掩，宝玉也不进去。只见看园门的两个婆子坐在门槛上说话儿，宝玉问道：“这小门儿开着么？”婆子道：“天天不开。今儿有人出来说，今日预备老太太要用园里的果子，才开着门等着呢。”

宝玉便慢慢的走到那边，果见腰门半开。宝玉才要进去，袭人忙拉住道：“不用去。园里不干净，常没有人去，别再撞见什么。”宝玉仗着酒气，说道：“我不怕那些！”袭人苦苦的拉住，不容他去。婆子们上来说道：“如今这园子安静的了。自从那日道士拿了妖去，我们摘花儿，打果子，一个人常走的。二爷要去，咱们都跟着。有这些人，怕什么！”



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The young maid ran meekly off to give this message to Zhenzhu, who reported it to the Lady Dowager.

“He never eats much,” the old lady said. “So missing a meal doesn’t matter. Tell him to have a good rest and not to trouble to come back today as we have his wife here instead.”

Zhenzhu asked the younger maid, “Did you hear that?”

Replying in the affirmative and not liking to tell them the truth, the girl went out for a stroll then came back to report that she had delivered this message. The others paid no attention and after their meal broke up into groups to chat. But enough of this.

Baoyu who had left the feast in a fit of distress was at a loss what to do. Xiren overtook him to ask what was amiss.

“Nothing,” he answered. “I’m just bored. While they’re drinking, suppose we stroll over to Madam You’s place.”

“She’s with the old lady,” Xiren pointed out. “How can you call on her?”

“I’m not thinking of calling on anyone, just of seeing what her place is like.”

Xiren had to follow him, chatting as they made their way to Madam You’s lodge, near which they saw a small gate left ajar. Instead of going in, Baoyu accosted two matrons in charge of the Garden who were sitting on the threshold gossiping.

“Is this small gate always open?” he asked.

“No, it’s usually kept shut,” they answered. “Today, hearing that the old lady might be wanting fruit from the Garden, we opened it in readiness.”

He strolled over and looked at the half open gate. Before he could step through it Xiren stopped him.

“Don’t go in there,” she warned. “The Garden’s unclean after being deserted for so long, and you might see another apparition.”

Rather tipsily he boasted, “I’m not afraid of such things!”

Xiren tried hard to restrain him, but the old women butted in, “This Garden’s been quiet ever since the priests haled off the evil spirits that day, and we often go in alone to pick flowers or fruit. If Master Bao





宝玉喜欢。袭人也不便相强，只得跟着。

宝玉进得园来，只见满目凄凉。那些花木枯萎，更有几处亭馆，彩色久经剥落。远远望见一丛翠竹，倒还茂盛。宝玉一想，说：“我自病时出园，住在后边，一连几个月不准我到这里，瞬息荒凉。你看独有那几竿翠竹菁葱，这不是潇湘馆么？”袭人道：“你几个月没来，连方向儿都忘了。咱们只管说话儿，不觉将怡红院走过了。”回头用手指着道：“这才是潇湘馆呢。”宝玉顺着袭人的手一瞧，道：“可不是过了吗？咱们回去瞧瞧。”袭人道：“天晚了，老太太必是等着吃饭，该回去了。”宝玉不言，找着旧路，竟往前走。你道宝玉虽离了大观园将及一载，岂遂忘了路径？只因袭人怕他见了潇湘馆，想起黛玉，又要伤心，所以要用言混过。后来见宝玉只望里走，又怕他招了邪气，所以哄着他，只说已经走过了。那里知道宝玉的心全在潇湘馆上。

此时宝玉往前急走，袭人只得赶上。见他站着，似有所见，如有所闻，便道：“你听什么？”宝玉道：“潇湘馆倒有人住么？”袭人道：“大约没有人罢。”宝玉道：“我明明听见有人在内啼哭，怎么没有人？”袭人道：“是你疑心。素常你到这里，常听见林姑娘伤心，所以如今还是那样。”宝玉不





wants to go in we'll keep him company. There's safety in numbers!"

Baoyu was pleased and Xiren, unable to stop him, had to go along with them.

When Baoyu stepped into the Garden, it struck him as a scene of desolation. The plants were withering, and the paint was flaking off the lodges in various places. In the distance, however, he saw a clump of bamboo which was still luxuriant. After a second's thought he said, "Since moving out of the Garden because of my illness, I've been living in the back and haven't been allowed to come here for months. How quickly the place has run wild! Look, the only green things left are those bamboos. Isn't that Bamboo Lodge?"

"After a few months away, you've even lost your bearings," Xiren told him. "We were so busy chatting, you didn't notice passing Happy Red Court." She turned and pointed behind. "Bamboo Lodge is over there."

He looked in the direction in which she was pointing. "Have we really passed it?" he asked dubiously. "Let's go back and have a look."

"It's getting late, time to go home. The old lady must be waiting for you to start dinner."

Baoyu made no answer but found the path and walked on. You may wonder, Reader, how he could possibly have forgotten the way, even after an absence of nearly a year. The fact is that Xiren had tried to fob him off for fear that the sight of Bamboo Lodge, reminding him of Daiyu, would distress him again. When she saw him heading straight there and was afraid that he might be bewitched, she had pretended that they had passed the place. But Baoyu had set his heart on visiting Bamboo Lodge. He strode swiftly ahead and she had to follow him, till he froze in his tracks as if watching or listening to something.

"Do you hear anything?" she asked.

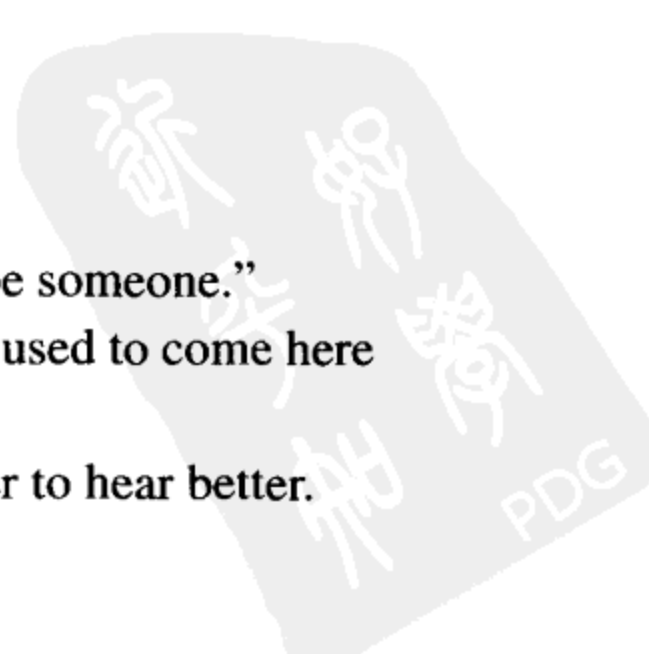
"Is there anybody staying in Bamboo Lodge?"

"I shouldn't think so."

"I distinctly heard sobbing inside, so there must be someone."

"That's just your imagination. Because you often used to come here before and find Miss Lin weeping."

Baoyu did not believe her and wanted to go closer to hear better.





信，还要听去。婆子们赶上说道：“二爷快回去罢，天已晚了。别处我们还敢走走；这里的路儿隐僻，又听见人说，这里打林姑娘死后，常听见有哭声，所以人都不敢走的。”宝玉袭人听说，都吃了一惊。宝玉道：“可不是？”说着，便滴下泪来，说：“林妹妹，林妹妹！好好儿的，是我害了你了！你别怨我，只是父母作主，并不是我负心！”愈说愈痛，便大哭起来。

袭人正在没法，只见秋纹带着些人赶来，对袭人道：“你好大胆子！怎么和二爷到这里来？老太太、太太急的打发人各处都找到了！刚才腰门上有人说是你和二爷到这里来了，唬的老太太、太太们了不得，骂着我，叫我带人赶来。还不快回去呢！”宝玉犹自痛哭，袭人也不顾他哭，两个人拉着就走，一面替他拭眼泪，告诉他老太太着急。宝玉没法，只得回来。

袭人知老太太不放心，将宝玉仍送到贾母那边，众人都等着未散。贾母便说：“袭人！我素常因你明白，才把宝玉交给你，怎么今儿带他园里去？他的病才好，倘或撞着什么，又闹起来，那可怎么好？”袭人也不敢分辨，只得低头不语。宝钗看宝玉颜色不好，心里着实的吃惊。倒还是宝玉恐袭人受委屈，说道：“青天白日怕什么？我因为好些时没到园里逛逛，今儿趁着酒兴走走，那里就撞着什么了呢？”凤姐在园里吃过大亏的，听到那里，寒毛直竖，说：“宝兄弟胆子忒大了！”湘云道：“不是胆大，倒是心实。不知是会芙蓉神去了，还是寻什么仙去了！”宝玉听着，也不答言。独有王



The matrons overtaking them urged, "Better go back, Master Bao. It's growing dark. Other places aren't scary, but this is out of the way and they say that since Miss Lin's death weeping has often been heard here, so everybody gives the place a wide berth."

Baoyu and Xiren were startled.

"So it's true!" he exclaimed, shedding tears. "Cousin Lin! Cousin Lin! There was nothing the matter with you, but I killed you! Don't hold it against me — my parents made the decision. It's not that I was untrue!" Feeling broken-hearted he burst into loud sobbing.

Xiren was at her wit's end when Qiuwen and some others hurried towards them.

"Whatever possessed you?" Qiuwen asked Xiren. "Why bring Master Bao *here* of all places? Their Ladyships are so frantic, they've sent out search parties. Just now someone at the side-gate said the two of you had come here, so frightening Their Ladyships that they lashed out at me and ordered me to bring people here at once. Hurry up and go back!"

Baoyu was still weeping bitterly. Ignoring his sobs, Xiren and Qiuwen dragged him off, wiping his tears as they told him how worried his grandmother was. He had no choice but to go back.

To allay the old lady's anxiety Xiren took him straight to her room, where the others were still waiting.

"Xiren!" stormed the Lady Dowager. "I entrusted Baoyu to you thinking you had some sense. How could you take him to the Garden today, with him just over his illness? If something had given him a turn and brought on another fit, what should we have done?"

Not venturing to justify herself, the maid hung her head in silence. Baochai was appalled too by Baoyu's unhealthy colour, thus it was left to him to exonerate Xiren.

"What does it matter in broad daylight?" he asked. "It's so long since I've had a stroll in the Garden that I went there after drinking to clear my head. How could anything there possibly give me a turn?"

Xifeng, who had been so terrified in the Garden, shivered with fright at this. "Cousin Bao's too reckless!" she cried.

"Not reckless but loyal," put in Xiangyun. "He must have gone to find the Hibiscus Spirit, or in search of some other goddess!"

夫人急的一言不发。贾母问道：“你到园里没有唬着呀？不用说了。以后要逛，到底多带几个人才好。不是你闹的，大家早散了。去罢，好好的睡一夜，明儿一早过来，我要找补，叫你们再乐一天呢。别为他又闹出什么原故来。”

众人听说，遂辞了贾母出来。薛姨妈便到王夫人那里住下，史湘云仍在贾母房中，迎春便往惜春那里去了。余者各自回去不提。

独有宝玉回到房中，嗟声叹气。宝钗明知其故，也不理他，只是怕他忧闷，勾出旧病来，便进里间，叫袭人来，细问他宝玉到园怎么样的光景。未知袭人怎生回说，下回分解。





Baoyu made no reply, and Lady Wang was too worried to get a word out.

“Did anything frighten you in the Garden?” the old lady asked him. “Well, don’t talk about it now. If you want to stroll there in future, you must take more people with you. If not for this rumpus you made, our party would have broken up long ago. Go and have a good night’s sleep now, everyone, and mind you come early tomorrow. I want to make it up to you all by giving you another day of fun. Don’t let this rumpus he kicked up upset you.”

Then they all took their leave, Aunt Xue going to spend the night with Lady Wang while Xiangyun stayed with the Lady Dowager, and Yingchun went with Xichun. The others all returned to their own quarters.

Baoyu, back in his room, heaved sigh after sigh but Baochai, knowing the reason for this, ignored him. However, for fear that his grief might bring back his old illness, she called Xiren into the inner room to ask her just what had happened in the Garden. If you want to know Xiren’s answer, read the next chapter.



## 第一百九回

候芳魂五儿承错爱 还孽债迎女返真元

说话宝钗叫袭人问出原故，恐宝玉悲伤成疾，便将黛玉临死的话与袭人假作闲谈，说是：“人在世上，有意有情，到了死后，各自干各自的去了，并不是生前那样的人死后还是那样。活人虽有痴心，死的竟不知道。况且林姑娘既说仙去，他看凡人是个不堪的浊物，那里还肯混在世上？只是人自己疑心，所以招出些邪魔外祟来缠扰。”宝钗虽是与袭人说话，原说给宝玉听的。袭人会意，也说是：“没有的事。若说林姑娘的魂灵儿还在园里，我们也算相好，怎么没有梦见过一次？”

宝玉在外面听着，细细的想道：“果然也奇！我知道林妹妹死了，那一日不想几遍，怎么从没梦见？想必他到天上去了，瞧我这凡夫俗子，不能交通神明，所以梦都没有一个儿。我如今就在外间睡，或者我从园里回来，他知道我的心，肯与我梦里一见。我必要问他实在那里去了，我也时常祭奠。若是果然不理我这浊物，竟无一梦，我便也不想他了。”主意已定，便说：“我今夜就在外间睡，你们也不用管我。”宝钗也不强他，只说：“你不用胡思乱想。你没瞧见太



## Chapter 109

### Baoyu Waits for a Fragrant Spirit and Wuer Is Loved by Default Yingchun Pays Her Mortal Debt and Returns to the Primal Void

After Baochai had heard Xiren's story, for fear lest Baoyu should fall ill from grief she spoke to her, as if casually, of Daiyu's death.

"People feel for each other while on earth," she said. "But after death they go their separate ways, no longer the same as in life. Even if the one still living remains fond, the one who is dead can't know it. Besides, Miss Lin is said to have become an immortal, so to her all men on earth must be unbearably vulgar and she'd never stoop to coming back. To imagine otherwise is to invite evil spirits to take possession of you."

Aware that these remarks were intended for Baoyu's ears, Xiren chimed in, "That's true, her coming back is out of the question. I was on good terms with her too, so if her spirit were still in the Garden how is it I've never seen her once in my dreams?"

Baoyu eavesdropping outside thought to himself, "Yes, this *is* strange! Though I've thought of her time and again each day since her death, why has she never appeared to me in dreams? She must have gone up to Heaven, I suppose, and because I'm too vulgar to have any communication with the divine I've not once dreamed of her. Well, tonight I'll sleep in the outer room and maybe, now that I've visited the Garden, she'll know my heart and let me dream of her. I must ask her where she's actually gone and offer regular sacrifices to her. If she'll really have nothing to do with a lout like me and won't let me dream of her, then I'll stop thinking about her."

His mind made up, he announced, "Tonight I'm going to sleep in the outer room, and you can just let me be."

Baochai made no attempt to dissuade him, only saying, "Don't go imagining all sorts of things. Didn't you see how worried your mother was — too worried to speak — because you went to the Garden? If you





太因你园里去了，急的话都说不出来？你这会子还不保养身子，倘或老太太知道了，又说我们不用心。”宝玉道：“白这么说罢咧，我坐一会子就进来。你也乏了，先睡罢。”宝钗料他必进来的，假意说道：“我睡了，叫袭姑娘伺候你罢。”

宝玉听了，正合机宜。等宝钗睡下，他便叫袭人麝月另铺设下一副被褥，常叫人进来瞧二奶奶睡着了没有。宝钗故意装睡，也是一夜不宁。那宝玉只当宝钗睡着，便与袭人道：“你们各自睡罢，我又不伤感。你若不信，你就伏侍我睡了再进去，只要不惊动我就是了。”袭人果然伏侍他睡下，预备下了茶水，关好了门，进里间去照应了一回，各自假寐，等着宝玉若有动静，再出来。

宝玉见袭人进去了，便将坐更的两个婆子支到外头。他轻轻的坐起来，暗暗的祝赞了几句，方才睡下。起初再睡不着，以后把心一静，谁知竟睡着了，却倒一夜安眠。直到天亮，方才醒来，拭了拭眼，坐着想了一回，并无有梦。便叹口气道：“正是‘悠悠生死别经年，魂魄不曾来入梦’！”宝钗反是一夜没有睡着，听见宝玉在外边念这两句，便接口道：“这话你说莽撞了。若林妹妹在时，又该生气了。”宝玉听了，自觉不好意思，只得起来，搭趣着进里间来，说：“我原要进来，不知怎么一个盹儿就打着了。”宝钗道：“你进来不进来，与我什么相干？”

袭人也本没有睡，听见他们两个说话，即忙上来倒茶。只见老太太那边打发小丫头来问：“宝二爷昨夜睡的安顿么？”



don't look after your health and the old lady hears of it, she'll blame us for not taking better care of you."

"I just said that for fun," he answered. "I'll join you after sitting here awhile. You must be tired; you'd better turn in first."

Believing him, Baochai prevaricated, "I'll go to bed and let Xiren wait on you."

This was just what Baoyu wanted. After Baochai had retired he told Xiren and Sheyue to make up a bed for him outside, then sent them in several times to see whether she was sleeping yet or not. She pretended that she was, but in fact stayed awake all night.

When he thought Baochai was asleep he told Xiren, "I want you all to turn in. I've stopped feeling upset. If you don't believe me you can wait till I've dropped off before going inside, but mind you don't disturb me."

Xiren helped him to bed, made his tea then went inside, closing the door behind her, to attend to other things, after which she lay down fully dressed, ready to go out if summoned.

As soon as she had gone, Baoyu dismissed the two matrons who were sitting up to keep watch. Then he quietly sat up to pray below his breath before lying down once more. At first he could not sleep; but once he had calmed himself he dozed off and slept soundly all night, not waking until dawn. He sat up, rubbing his eyes, and thought back — no, he'd had no dream. With a sigh he recited the lines:

One living and one dead, sundered for years,  
Her spirit never appeared to him in his dreams.<sup>1</sup>

Baochai who had passed a sleepless night herself heard this from the inner room. "That's a wild way to talk!" she called out. "If Cousin Lin were alive she'd take offence again."

Baoyu got up in embarrassment and went sheepishly in to tell her, "I meant to come in but somehow or other I happened to fall asleep."

"What's it to me whether you come in or not?" she retorted.

Xiren had not slept either. At the sound of their voices she promptly came in to pour tea. Then a young maid arrived, sent by the old lady, to inquire whether Baoyu had passed a good night or not and to tell him that,

若安顿，早早的同二奶奶梳洗了就过去。”袭人道：“你去回老太太，说：‘宝玉昨夜很安顿，回来就过来。’”小丫头去了。

宝钗连忙梳洗了，莺儿袭人等跟着，先到贾母那里行了礼，便到王夫人那边起，至凤姐，都让过了，仍到贾母处，见他母亲也过来了。大家问起：“宝玉晚上好么？”宝钗便说：“回去就睡了，没有什么。”众人放心，又说些闲话。

只见小丫头进来，说：“二姑奶奶要回去了。听见说，孙姑爷那边人来，到大太太那里说了些话，大太太叫人到四姑娘那边说，不必留了，让他去罢。如今二姑奶奶在大太太那边哭呢，大约就过来辞老太太。”贾母众人听了，心中好不自在，都说：“二姑娘这么一个人，为什么命里遭着这样的人！一辈子不能出头，这可怎么好呢？”说着，迎春进来，泪痕满面，因是宝钗的好日子，只得含着泪，辞了众人要回去。贾母知道他的苦处，也不便强留，只说道：“你回去也罢了，但只不用伤心。碰着这样人，也是没法儿的。过几天我再打发人接你去罢。”迎春道：“老太太始终疼我，如今也疼不来了。可怜我没有再来的时候儿了！”说着，眼泪直流。众人都劝道：“这有什么不能回来的呢？比不得你三妹妹，隔得远，要见面就难了。”贾母等想起探春，不觉也大家落泪。为是宝钗的生日，只得转悲作喜说：“这也不难。只要海疆平静，那边亲家调进京来，就见的着了。”大家说：“可不是这么着么？”说着，迎春只得含悲而别。大家送了出来，

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if he had, he should go over with Madam Bao as soon as they were dressed.

Xiren sent her back with the message that Baoyu had slept well and would soon be going over.

After a hasty toilet, Baochai went ahead with Yinger and Xiren to pay her respects to the Lady Dowager, then to Lady Wang and Xifeng. By the time she rejoined the old lady Aunt Xue had arrived.

When asked if Baoyu had slept well, Baochai told them, "He's quite all right. He went to sleep as soon as we got back." Then, their minds relieved, they chatted.

And now a young maid came in to report, "Miss Yingchun has to go home. They say Mr. Sun sent servants to complain to the Elder Mistress, who sent word to Miss Xifeng to let her go back. Miss Yingchun's weeping in the Elder Mistress' room. She should be coming soon to say goodbye."

The others, sad to hear this, deplored Yingchun's fate.

"Such a brute of a husband has ruined her life," the old lady sighed.

Then Yingchun, her face tear-stained, came in to take her leave. As this was Baochai's birthday she had to choke back her grief, and knowing how strictly she was controlled her grandmother could not detain her.

"All right, you'd better go back," she said. "But don't be so upset. It's no use crying over spilt milk. I'll send for you again in a few days' time."

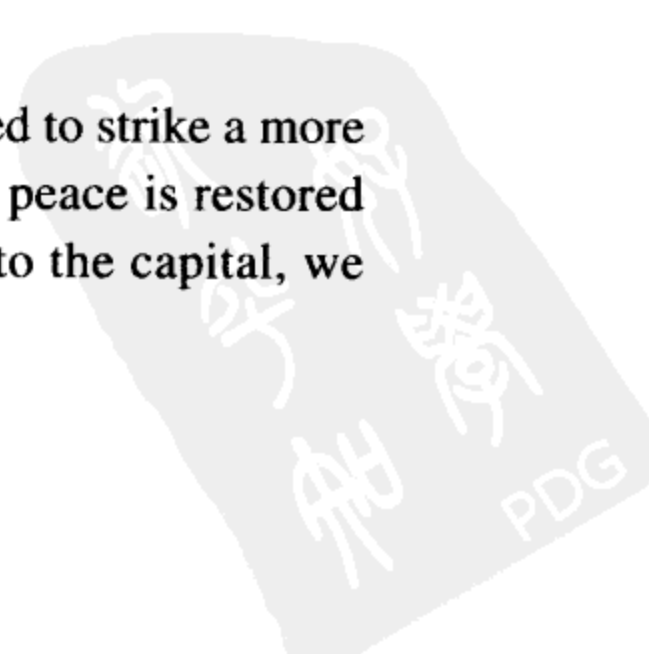
"You've always been goodness itself to me, madam," sobbed Yingchun. "But now there's nothing you can do. And I'm afraid this is the last time I shall see you!"

"What's to stop you from coming again?" the others remonstrated. "Your third sister's worse off, so far away that she's hardly any chance of coming home."

The thought of Tanchun reduced them all to tears.

But as this was Baochai's birthday, the old lady tried to strike a more cheerful note. "It's not impossible," she said. "Once peace is restored along the coast and her father-in-law is transferred to the capital, we shall see each other again."

"That's true," the rest agreed.





仍回贾母那里，从早至暮，又闹了一天，众人见贾母劳乏，各自散了。

独有薛姨妈辞了贾母，到宝钗那里，说道：“你哥哥是今年过了，直要等到皇恩大赦的时候，减了等，才好赎罪。这几年叫我孤苦伶仃，怎么处！我想要给你二哥哥完婚，你想想好不好？”宝钗道：“妈妈是因为大哥哥娶了亲，唬怕了的，所以把二哥哥的事也疑惑起来。据我说，很该办。邢姑娘是妈妈知道的，如今在这里也很苦。娶了去，虽说咱们穷，究竟比他傍人门户好多着呢。”薛姨妈道：“你得便的时候，就去回明老太太，说我家没人，就要择日子了。”宝钗道：“妈妈只管和二哥哥商量，挑个好日子，过来和老太太、大太太说了，娶过去，就完了一宗事。这里大太太也巴不得娶了去才好。”薛姨妈道：“今日听见史姑娘也就回去了，老太太心里要留你妹妹在这里住几天，所以他住下了。我想他也是不定多早晚就走的人了，你们姐妹们也多叙几天话儿。”宝钗道：“正是呢。”于是薛姨妈又坐了一坐，出来辞了众人，回去了。

却说宝玉晚间归房，因想：昨夜黛玉竟不入梦，或者他已经成仙，所以不肯来见我这种浊人，也是有的；不然，就是我的性儿太急了，也未可知。便想了个主意，向宝钗说道：“我昨夜偶然在外头睡着，似乎比在屋里睡的安稳些，今日起来，心里也觉清静。我的意思，还要在外头睡两夜，只怕你们又来拦我。”宝钗听了，明知早晨他嘴里念诗自然是

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Then Yingchun had to leave disconsolately. Having seen her out the others rejoined the old lady, who entertained them till the evening when as she looked tired they dispersed.

Aunt Xue went back with Baochai to whom she said, "Your brother's got by this year. When there's an Imperial amnesty and his sentence is commuted, we can try to ransom him. But how am I to manage these next few years on my own? I'd like to get Xue Ke married. Do you think that a good idea?"

"You had doubts about it before, mother, because you were horrified by my sister-in-law," Baochai answered. "I think it's high time that you saw to this. You know Xiuyan and what a thin time she's having here. Once she marries into our family, though we're poor, at least she'll be much better off than staying here as a dependent."

"Then find a chance to mention it to the old lady. Tell her I need someone to help out, and so I want to fix the wedding day."

"Why not just discuss it with Cousin Ke? When you've chosen a good day you can come and tell the old lady and Elder Mistress, then take her over and be done with it. The Elder Mistress here is eager to get her married off."

"I heard today that your Cousin Shi's going back too. The old lady wanted to keep Baoqin for a few days and she's staying. As I think that sooner or later she'll be leaving home to get married, you'd better take this chance to have some good talks."

"Yes, mother, I will."

After sitting there for a while Aunt Xue said goodbye to the others and went home.

When Baoyu returned to his quarters that evening he thought, "The fact that I didn't dream of Daiyu last night may be because she has become an immortal and doesn't want to meet vulgar oafs like me; or it may be because I'm too impatient."

That gave him an idea and he told Baochai, "Last night I happened to doze off outside, and slept so much more soundly than in here that I woke up this morning feeling refreshed. So — if you've no objection — I'd like to sleep outside for a couple more nights."

Baochai knew from the poetry he had recited that morning that he



为黛玉的事了，想来他那个呆性是不能劝的，倒好叫他睡两夜，索性自己死了心也罢了，况兼昨夜听他睡的倒也安静，便道：“好没来由。你只管睡去，我们拦你作什么？但只别胡思乱想的招出些邪魔外祟来。”宝玉笑道：“谁想什么？”袭人道：“依我劝，二爷竟还是屋里睡罢。外边一时照应不到，着了凉，倒不好。”宝玉未及答言，宝钗却向袭人使了个眼色儿。袭人会意，道：“也罢，叫个人跟着你罢，夜里好倒茶倒水的。”宝玉便笑道：“这么说，你就跟了我来。”袭人听了，倒没意思起来，登时飞红了脸，一声也不言语。宝钗素知袭人稳重，便说道：“他是跟惯了我的，还叫他跟着我罢。叫麝月五儿照料着也罢了。况且今日他跟着我闹了一天，也乏了，该叫他歇歇了。”宝玉只得笑着出来。

宝钗因命麝月五儿给宝玉仍在外间铺设了，又嘱咐两个人：“醒睡些；要茶要水，都留点神儿。”两个答应着。出来看见宝玉端然坐在床上，闭目合掌，居然像个和尚一般，两个也不敢言语，只管瞅着他笑。宝钗又命袭人出来照应。袭人看见这般，却也好笑，便轻轻的说道：“该睡了。怎么又打起坐来了？”宝玉睁开眼看见袭人，便道：“你们只管睡罢，我坐一坐就睡。”袭人道：“因为你昨日那个光景，闹的二奶奶一夜没睡。你再这么着，成什么事？”宝玉料着自己不睡，都不肯睡，便收拾睡下。袭人又嘱咐了麝月等几句，才进去关门睡了。

这里麝月五儿两个人也收拾了被褥，伺候宝玉睡着，各自歇下。那知宝玉要睡越睡不着，见他两个人在那里打铺，



was thinking of Daiyu, and that there was no reasoning with such a simpleton. She decided she might as well let him have his own way until he himself lost hope, especially as he had slept well the previous night.

“What’s that got to do with me?” she asked. “You can sleep wherever you like; why should we stop you? But don’t let your fancy run wild or put a jinx on yourself.”

“What an idea!” he chuckled.

“Take my advice, Master Bao, and sleep inside,” put in Xiren. “If you’re not well looked after outside and catch cold, that will be bad.” Before he could answer, Baochai tipped Xiren a wink and she continued, “Very well then. We’ll get somebody to keep you company, to pour you tea during the night.”

“In that case, *you* stay with me,” he said with a smile.

Xiren flushed crimson with embarrassment and did not answer him.

Knowing how staid she was Baochai proposed, “She’s used to staying with me, so let her do that. Sheyue and Wuer can look after you. Besides, she’s tired out after dancing attendance on me all day; we should let her have a good rest.”

Baoyu went out gleefully.

Baochai told Sheyue and Wuer to make a bed for him in the outer room and to sleep lightly themselves and see to his tea. Assenting to this, they went out and found Baoyu seated bolt upright on the bed, his eyes closed and his hands folded just like a monk. Not daring to speak, they stared at him in amusement. Xiren, sent out by Baochai to see that he had all he wanted, was amused by this sight too.

“It’s time to sleep,” she said softly. “Why are you practising yoga?”

Baoyu opened his eyes and seeing who it was replied, “You all go to bed. I’ll sit here a bit then sleep.”

“The way you behaved yesterday kept Madam Bao awake all night. Are you starting all over again?”

Knowing that none of them would sleep if he stayed up, Baoyu lay down. Xiren gave the two other girls some final instructions then went inside, closing the door, and retired for the night.

Sheyue and Wuer spread out their quilts too, and when Baoyu had lain down they went to bed. But Baoyu could not sleep. As he watched them





忽然想起那年袭人不在家时，晴雯麝月两个人服事，夜间麝月出去，晴雯要唬他，因为没穿衣服，着了凉，后来还是从这个病上死的。想到这里，一心移在晴雯身上去了。忽又想起凤姐说五儿给晴雯脱了个影儿，因将想晴雯的心又移在五儿身上。自己假装睡着，偷偷儿的看那五儿，越瞧越像晴雯，不觉呆性复发。听了听里间已无声息，知是睡了；但不知麝月睡了没有，便故意叫了两声：却不答应。

五儿听见了宝玉叫人，便问道：“二爷要什么？”宝玉道：“我要漱漱口。”五儿见麝月已睡，只得起来，重新剪了蜡花，倒了一钟茶来，一手托着漱盂。却因赶忙起来的，身上只穿着一件桃红绫子小袄儿，松松的挽着一个鬃儿。宝玉看时，居然晴雯复生。忽又想起晴雯说的“早知担了虚名，也就打个正经主意了”。不觉呆呆的呆看，也不接茶。

那五儿自从芳官去后，也无心进来了。后来听说凤姐叫他进来伏侍宝玉，竟比宝玉盼他进来的心还急。不想进来以后，见宝钗袭人一般尊贵稳重，看着心里实在敬慕；又见宝玉疯疯傻傻，不似先前的丰致；又听见王夫人为女孩子们和宝玉玩笑都撵了，所以把那女儿的柔情和素日的痴心，一概搁起。怎奈这位呆爷今晚把他当作晴雯，只管爱惜起来。那五儿早已羞得两颊红潮，又不敢大声说话，只得轻轻的说道：“二爷，漱口啊。”宝玉笑着接了茶在手中，也不知道漱了没有，便笑嘻嘻的问道：“你和晴雯姐姐好不是啊？”五儿听了，摸不着头脑，便道：“都是姐妹，也没有什么不好的。”宝玉又悄悄的问道：“晴雯病重了，我看他去，不是你



unfolding their quilts he had recalled the time during Xiren's absence when Qingwen and Sheyue had waited on him. Sheyue had gone out in the night and Qingwen, to frighten her, had slipped out in her night clothes and caught cold — it was that illness that later carried her off. At this memory his heart went out to Qingwen. And mindful, suddenly, of Xifeng describing Wuer as the image of her, he shifted his longing for Qingwen to her double. While shamming sleep he peeped at Wuer, and more and more she looked to him like Qingwen, making him quite enraptured. There was no sound now from the inner room and he assumed that the occupants were asleep. Not knowing whether Sheyue was awake or not, he called her a couple of times but received no answer.

Wuer hearing him asked, "Do you want something, Master Bao?"

"I want to rinse my mouth."

Since Sheyue was asleep, Wuer had to get up. Having trimmed the candle she poured him a cup of tea, holding ready the spittoon in her other hand. She had got up in a hurry wearing only a peach-red silk shift, her hair loosely knotted. To Baoyu she appeared the reincarnation of Qingwen. He bethought himself abruptly of Qingwen's saying, "If I'd known I was going to get a bad name, I'd have committed myself." He gaped at Wuer, neglecting to take the cup.

Now after Fangguan's dismissal, Wuer had lost interest in coming into service here. But when later she heard that Xifeng was sending her to work for Baoyu, she was more eager for this than Baoyu himself. After her arrival, however, she was overawed by Baochai and Xiren and found Baoyu deranged and less handsome than before; moreover she heard that Lady Wang had dismissed certain maids for playing around with him, and so she gave up her girlish infatuation. Yet tonight her witless master, taking her for Qingwen, was attracted to her. Wuer blushed all over her face. Not venturing to raise her voice she said softly:

"Rinse your mouth, Master Bao."

He took the tea with a smile, but forgetting to rinse his mouth asked with a grin, "You and Sister Qingwen were on good terms, weren't you?"

In bewilderment she answered, "We were like sisters; of course we were on good terms."

"When Qingwen was dying and I went to see her, weren't you there



也去了么？”五儿微微笑着点头儿。宝玉道：“你听见他说什么了没有？”五儿摇着头儿道：“没有。”

宝玉已经忘神，便把五儿的手一拉。五儿急的红了脸，心里乱跳，便悄悄说道：“二爷，有什么话只管说，别拉拉扯扯的。”宝玉才撒了手，说道：“他和我说来着：‘早知担了个虚名，也就打正经主意了！’你怎么没听见么？”五儿听了这话明明是撩拨自己的意思，又不敢怎么样，便说道：“那是他自己没脸。这也是我们女孩儿家说得得的吗？”宝玉着急道：“你怎么也是这么个道学先生！我看你长的和他一模一样，我才肯和你说这个话，你怎么倒拿这些话遭塌他？”

此时五儿心中也不知宝玉是怎么个意思，便说道：“夜深了，二爷睡罢，别紧着坐着，看凉着了。刚才奶奶和袭人姐姐怎么嘱咐来？”宝玉道：“我不凉。”说到这里，忽然想起五儿没穿着大衣裳，就怕他也像晴雯着了凉，便问道：“你为什么不穿上衣裳就过来？”五儿道：“爷叫的紧，那里有尽着穿衣裳的空儿？要知道说这半天话儿时，我也穿上了。”宝玉听了，连忙把自己盖的一件月白绫子绵袄儿揭起来递给五儿，叫他披上。五儿只不肯接，说：“二爷盖着罢，我不凉。我凉，我有我的衣裳。”说着，回到自己铺边，拉了一件长袄披上。又听了听，麝月睡的正浓，才慢慢过来说：“二爷今晚不是要养神呢吗？”宝玉笑道：“实告诉你罢：什么是养神！我倒是要遇仙的意思。”五儿听了，越发动了疑心，便问道：“遇什么仙？”宝玉道：“你要知道，这话长着呢。你挨着



too?" he asked softly.

She smiled and nodded.

"Did you hear her say anything?"

"No." She shook her head.

Forgetting himself, he took her hand. Wuer blushed furiously, her heart beating fast.

"Master Bao!" she whispered. "Say what you have to say, but keep your hands to yourself."

He dropped her hand then and told her, "She said to me, 'If I'd known I was going to get a bad name, I'd have committed myself.' Did you hear that?"

Wuer felt this was a challenge, yet dared not rise to it. "That was a shameless thing to say," she answered. "How can young girls talk like that?"

"Are you such a moralist?" he cried frantically. "It's because you look just like her that I confided this to you. Why run her down in that way?"

Not knowing what was in his mind she said, "It's late. You'd better sleep, Master Bao. If you keep sitting up you may catch cold. What did Madam Bao and Sister Xiren tell you?"

"I'm not cold." Suddenly remembering that she was in her night clothes, he was afraid she might catch cold like Qingwen. "Why didn't you put more on before bringing my tea?" he asked.

"You sounded in such a hurry, what time did I have for that? If I'd known you'd keep talking so long, I'd have put on something warmer."

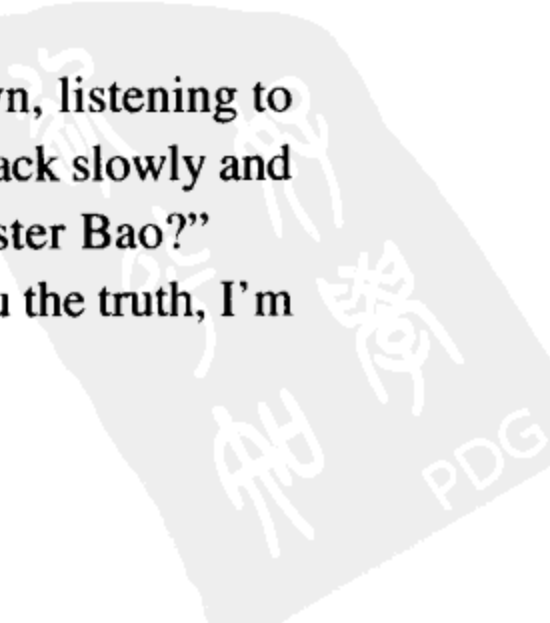
At once he offered her the pale grey silk padded jacket which was lying over his quilt, and urged her to put it on.

She refused, saying, "Keep it yourself, Master Bao. I'm not cold. Anyway, I have clothes of my own."

She went back to her bed and slipped into a long gown, listening to make sure that Sheyue was still sound asleep, then came back slowly and asked, "Don't you want to have a good rest tonight, Master Bao?"

"Not a bit of it!" he answered with a smile. "To tell you the truth, I'm hoping to meet a goddess."

"What goddess?" she asked, even more bewildered.





我来坐下，我告诉你。”五儿红了脸，笑道：“你在那里躺着，我怎么坐呢？”宝玉道：“这个何妨？那一年冷天，也是你晴雯姐姐和麝月姐姐玩，我怕冻着他，还把他揽在一个被窝儿里呢。这有什么？大凡一个人，总别酸文假醋的才好。”

五儿听了，句句都是宝玉调戏之意，那知这位呆爷却是实心实意的话。五儿此时走开不好，站着不好，坐下不好，倒没了主意。因拿眼一溜，抿着嘴儿笑道：“你别混说了。看人家听见，什么意思？怨不得人家说你专在女孩儿身上用工夫！你自己放着二奶奶和袭人姐姐，都是仙人儿似的，只爱和别人混搅。明儿再说这些话，我回了二奶奶，看你什么脸见人！”

正说着，只听外面“咕咚”一声，把两个人吓了一跳。里间宝钗咳嗽了一声，宝玉听见连忙掀嘴儿，五儿也就忙忙的息了灯，悄悄的躺下了。原来宝钗袭人因昨夜不曾睡，又兼日间劳乏了一天，所以睡去，都不曾听见他们说话，此时院中一响，猛然惊醒，听了听，也无动静。宝玉此时躺在床上，心里疑惑：“莫非林妹妹来了，听见我和五儿说话，故意吓我们的？”翻来复去，胡思乱想，五更以后，才朦胧睡去。

却说五儿被宝玉鬼混了半夜，又兼宝钗咳嗽，自己怀着鬼胎，生怕宝钗听见了，也是思前想后，一夜无眠。次日一早起来，见宝玉尚自昏昏睡着，便轻轻儿的收拾了屋子。那时麝月已醒，便道：“你怎么这么早起来了？你难道一夜没睡吗？”五儿听这话又似麝月知道了的光景，便只是讪笑，也不答言。一时，宝钗袭人也都起来。开了门，见宝玉尚睡，却也纳闷：怎么在外头两夜睡的倒这么安稳呢？



“If you want to know, it’s a long story. Sit down next to me and I’ll tell you.”

“How can I sit down with you lying there?” she asked blushing.

“Why shouldn’t you? It was very cold that year when Qingwen played a trick on Sheyue, and for fear she might catch cold I tucked her under my quilt. What does it matter? It’s hypocritical to be so prudish.”

It sounded to Wuer as if he were flirting with her. Little did she know that this foolish master of hers was speaking from his heart. She was at a loss, equally averse to leaving, standing there or sitting down.

“Don’t talk such nonsense,” she said playfully. “Suppose someone was to hear? No wonder people say you waste all your time on girls! You have Madam Bao and Sister Xiren, both as pretty as goddesses, yet you insist on fooling around with others. If you go on talking that way I’ll report it to Madam Bao — then what face will you have left?”

Just then they were startled by a sound outside. Baochai in the inner room coughed. Baoyu at once pursed his lips, and at this signal Wuer put out the light and tiptoed back to bed. Actually, because Baochai and Xiren had not slept the night before and today had been a busy day for them both, they had slept through the conversation. The sound in the courtyard made them wake with a start and prick up their ears, but nothing more could they hear. Baoyu in bed wondered, “Could Cousin Lin have come? Maybe hearing me talk she decided to give us a fright.” He tossed and turned, giving way to foolish fancies, not falling into a troubled sleep till dawn.

Because Baoyu had fooled about with her half the night and then Baochai had coughed, Wuer had a guilty conscience and was afraid her mistress had overheard them. Filled with misgivings she could not sleep all night. When she got up the next morning, as Baoyu was still dead to the world she tidied the room.

“Why get up so early?” Sheyue asked. “Couldn’t you sleep last night?”

Suspecting from this that Sheyue knew what had happened, Wuer smiled sheepishly and made no reply. Presently Baochai and Xiren got up too. When they opened the door and saw Baoyu still slumbering, they wondered how he had managed to sleep so soundly the last two nights



及宝玉醒来，见众人都起来了，自己连忙爬起，揉着眼睛，细想昨夜又不曾梦见，可是“仙凡路隔”了。慢慢的下了床，又想昨夜五儿说的“宝钗袭人都是天仙一般”，这话却也不错，便怔怔的瞅着宝钗。宝钗见他发怔，虽知他为黛玉之事，却也定不得梦不梦，只是瞅的自己倒不好意思的，便道：“你昨夜可遇见仙了么？”宝玉听了，只道昨晚的话宝钗听见了，笑着勉强说道：“这是那里的话？”那五儿听了这一句，越发心虚起来，又不好说的，只得且看宝钗的光景。

只见宝钗又笑着问五儿道：“你听见二爷睡梦里和人说话来着么？”宝玉听了，自己坐不住，搭趣着走开了。五儿把脸飞红，只得含糊道：“前半夜倒说了几句，我也没听真。什么‘担了虚名’，又什么‘没打正经主意’，我也不懂，劝着二爷睡了。后来我也睡了，不知二爷还说来着没有。”宝钗低头一想：“这话明是为黛玉了。但尽着叫他在外头，恐怕心邪了，招出些花妖柳怪来。况兼他的旧病，原在姐妹上情重。只好设法将他的心意挪移过来，然后能免无事。”想到这里，不免面红耳热起来，也就趣趣的进房梳洗去了。

且说贾母两日高兴，略吃多了些，这晚有些不受用；第二天，便觉着胸口饱闷。鸳鸯等要回贾政，贾母不叫言语，说：“我这两日嘴馋些，吃多了点子。我饿一顿就好了，你们快别吵嚷。”于是鸳鸯等并没有告诉人。



outside.

Baoyu woke to find them all up. He sat up quickly, rubbing his eyes, and thought back. No, he had not dreamed last night either. So it must be true that “The ways of immortals and mortals never meet.” Getting slowly out of bed he recalled Wuer’s remark during the night that both Baochai and Xiren were as pretty as goddesses. Indeed they were! He stared at Baochai as if stunned. She assumed he was thinking of Daiyu, but could not tell whether he had dreamed of her or not. Put out by his stare she asked:

“Did you meet a goddess last night?”

Imagining that she must have overheard them he faltered, “What do you mean?”

Wuer, too conscience-stricken to speak, waited for Baochai to go on.

“Did you hear Master Bao talk with someone in his sleep?” Baochai asked her with a smile, making Baoyu beat a discomfited retreat.

Red in the face, Wuer mumbled, “He did say something — I couldn’t catch it clearly — in the first part of the night. Something about ‘getting a bad name’ and ‘not committing herself.’ I couldn’t make it out and begged Master Bao to sleep. Then I fell asleep myself, so I don’t know whether he said anything more.”

Baochai lowered her head and thought, “He obviously had Daiyu in mind. If we let him stay outside, he may get more deranged and some flower fairy or tree spirit may take possession of him. Besides, his illness was brought on by his strong feeling for her. If only there were some way to divert his affection to me, he’d get over it.” At this idea, she blushed up to her ears and went sheepishly back to her room to do her hair.

The old lady’s improved spirits these last two days had made her overeat, and that evening she was out of sorts. The next day her chest felt constricted; however, she would not let Yuanyang report this to Jia Zheng.

“I’ve been rather greedy these two days and had too much to eat,” she said. “Missing a meal will set me right. Don’t make a fuss about it.” So Yuanyang and the others kept quiet.





这日晚间，宝玉回到自己屋里，见宝钗自贾母王夫人处才请了晚安回来，宝玉想着早起之事，未免赧颜抱惭。宝钗看他这样的，也晓得是没意思的光景。因想着他是个痴情人，要治他的这个病，少不得仍以痴情治之。想了想，便问宝玉道：“你今夜还在外头睡去罢咧？”宝玉自觉没趣，便道：“里头外头都是一样的。”宝钗意欲再说，反觉得难出口。袭人道：“罢呀，这倒是个什么道理呢？我不信睡的那么安顿！”五儿听见这话，连忙接口道：“二爷在外头睡，别的倒没有什么，只爱说梦话，叫人摸不着头脑儿，又不敢驳他的回。”袭人便道：“我今日挪出床上睡睡，看说梦话不说。你们只管把二爷的铺盖铺在里间就完了。”宝钗听了，也不作声。宝玉自己惭愧，那里还有强嘴的分儿，便依着搬进来。一则宝玉抱歉，欲安宝钗之心；二则宝钗恐宝玉思郁成疾，不如稍示柔情，使得亲近，以为“移花接木”之计。于是当晚袭人果然挪出去。这宝玉固然是有意负荆，那宝钗自然也无心拒客，从过门至今日，方才是雨腻云香，氤氲调畅。从此“二五之精，妙合而凝”。此是后话不提。

且说次日宝玉宝钗同起，宝玉梳洗了，先过贾母这边来。这里贾母疼宝玉，又想宝钗孝顺，忽然想起一件东西来，便叫鸳鸯开了箱子，取出祖上所遗的一个汉玉玦，虽不及宝玉他那块玉石，挂在身上却也希罕。鸳鸯找出来递与贾母，便说道：“这件东西，我好像从没见的。老太太这些年还记得这样清楚，说是那一箱什么匣子里装着。我按着老太太的话一拿就拿出来了。老太太这会子叫拿出来做什么？”贾



When Baoyu went home that evening, Baochai had just come back from paying her respects to the old lady and Lady Wang. The sight of her reminded him of her remarks that morning, making him rather ashamed. Seeing how put out he looked and knowing what a sentimentalist he was, she decided to use his infatuation to cure him.

“Are you going to sleep outside again tonight?” she asked.

“Outside or inside — it’s all the same to me,” he answered glumly. She wanted to say more but could not get the words out.

“Well, just what does *that* mean?” asked Xiren. “I don’t believe you slept so well outside.”

Wuer seized this chance to add, “When Master Bao sleeps outside, the only snag is that he talks in his sleep in a way we can’t understand, yet we dare not talk back.”

“I’ll move my bed outside tonight to see whether I talk in my sleep or not,” said Xiren. “You two move Master Bao’s bedding back to the inner room.”

Baochai said nothing. Baoyu, too ashamed to argue, let them move his bedding inside.

Now Baoyu in his contrition wanted to set Baochai’s mind at rest, while she, for fear lest longing might drive him distracted, thought it best to show affection to win him over — to take Daiyu’s place in his heart. So that evening when Xiren moved out, he made abject advances which Baochai naturally did not reject. And thus that night at last their marriage was consummated. Later she conceived, but that need not concern us now.

When next day husband and wife had got up together, after Baoyu had dressed he set off first to see his grandmother. As she was so fond of him and thought Baochai dutiful too, it suddenly occurred to her to make Yuanyang open a case and get out a Han-Dynasty jade, an heirloom of hers. Though less precious than Baoyu’s jade, it was a rare pendant.

Yuanyang found the jade and handing it over remarked, “I don’t believe I’ve ever seen this before. Fancy you remembering so clearly, madam, the exact case and box it was in after all these years! By looking where you told me I found it in a jiffy. But what do you want this for,



母道：“你那里知道？这块玉还是祖爷爷给我们老太爷，老太爷疼我，临出嫁的时候叫了我去，亲手递给我的。还说：‘这玉是汉朝所佩的东西，很贵重，你拿着就像见了我的一样。’我那时还小，拿了来，也不当什么，便撩在箱子里。到了这里，我见咱们家的东西也多，这算得什么！从没带过，一撩便撩了六十多年。今儿见宝玉这样孝顺，他又丢了一块玉，故此，想着拿出来给他，也像是祖上给我的意思。”

一时，宝玉请了安。贾母便喜欢道：“你过来，我给你一件东西瞧瞧。”宝玉走到床前，贾母便把那块汉玉递给宝玉。宝玉接来一瞧，那玉有三寸方圆，形似甜瓜，色有红晕，甚是精致。宝玉口口称赞。贾母道：“你爱么？这是我祖爷爷给我的，我传了你罢。”宝玉笑着，请了个安谢了，又拿了要送给他母亲瞧。贾母道：“你太太瞧了，告诉你老子，又说疼儿子不如疼孙子了。他们从没见过。”宝玉笑着去了。宝钗等又说了几句话，也辞了出来。

自此，贾母两日不进饮食，胸口仍是膨闷，觉得头晕目眩，咳嗽。邢王二夫人，凤姐等请安，见贾母精神尚好，不过叫人告诉贾政，立刻来请了安。贾政出来，即请大夫看脉。不多一时，大夫来诊了脉，说是有年纪的人，停了些饮食，感冒些风寒，略消导发散些就好了。开了方子，贾政看了，知是寻常药品，命人煎好进服。以后贾政早晚进来请

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madam?"

"I'll tell you. This jade was given by my great-grandfather to my father. Since I was my father's favourite, just before I married he sent for me and gave me this himself, saying, 'This jade is a pendant of the kind worn in the Han Dynasty; it's very precious. Keep it to remind you of me.' I was young at the time I took it and didn't set much store by it, so I left it in the case. And after I came to this house and saw how many knick-knacks we had here, this seemed nothing special so I never wore it, and there it's lain for more than sixty years. Now seeing how dutiful Baoyu is to me, as he's lost his own jade I decided to get this out and give it to him, just as my father gave it to me."

Just then Baoyu arrived to pay his respects.

The old lady said gaily, "Come here, I've something to show you."

He walked up to her bed and she handed him the Han jade. A close scrutiny revealed that it was some three inches square, shaped like a musk-melon, pinkish, and very well carved. Baoyu was loud in his praise.

"You like it?" asked the old lady. "This was given me by my great-grandfather. Now I'm passing it on to you."

Smilingly Baoyu bowed his thanks and wanted to take the jade to show his mother.

"If your mother sees it," the old lady said, "She'll tell your father and he'll say that I love my grandson more than my son! They've never even seen this."

Baoyu went off cheerfully, leaving Baochai and the others to talk a little longer before taking their leave.

After this the Lady Dowager fasted for two days, yet the congestion of her chest persisted and she had dizzy spells and fits of coughing. When Lady Xing, Lady Wang and Xifeng came to pay their respects and saw that she looked quite cheerful, they simply sent to notify Jia Zheng, who immediately came over. On leaving, he sent for a doctor to examine her. Before long the doctor arrived and felt her pulses. He diagnosed that the old lady had caught a chill as a result of not eating regularly, but some medicine to help the digestion and expel the cold would cure her. He wrote out a prescription. Jia Zheng, noting that the ingredients were ordinary medicines, told servants to prepare this for his mother. He himself



安。一连三日，不见稍减。贾政又命贾琏打听好大夫，“快去请来瞧老太太的病。咱们家常请的几个大夫，我瞧着不怎么好，所以叫你去。”贾琏想了一想，说道：“记得那年宝兄弟病的时候，倒是请了一个不行医的来瞧好了的，如今不如找他。”贾政道：“医道却是极难的，越是不兴时的大夫倒有本领。你就打发人去找来罢。”贾琏即忙答应去了，回来说道：“这刘大夫新近出城教书去了，过十来天进城一次。这时等不得，又请了一位，也就来了。”贾政听了，只得等着，不提。

且说贾母病时，合宅女眷无日不来请安。一日，众人都在那里，只见看园内腰门的老婆子进来说：“园里的栊翠庵的妙师父知道老太太病了，特来请安。”众人道：“他不常过来，今儿特来，你们快请进来。”凤姐走到床前回了贾母。岫烟是妙玉的旧相识，先走出去接他。只见妙玉头带妙常冠；身上穿一件月白素绉袄儿，外罩一件水田青缎镶边长背心，拴着秋香色的丝绦；腰下系一条淡墨画的白绫裙；手执麈尾念珠。跟着一个侍儿，飘飘拽拽的走来。岫烟见了问好，说是：“在园内住的时候儿，可以常来瞧瞧你；近来因为园内人少，一个人轻易难出来，况且咱们这里的腰门常关着，所以这些日子不得见你。今儿幸会！”妙玉道：“头里你们是热闹场中，你们虽在外园里住，我也不便常来亲近；如今知道这里的事情也不大好，又听说是老太太病着，又惦记

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came each morning and evening to inquire after her health. When three days had passed and there was no improvement, he told Jia Lian to make haste to find some better doctor.

"I don't think those doctors we usually have are much good," he explained. "That's why I want you to find one to diagnose her illness correctly."

Jia Lian reflected and said, "I remember that year when Cousin Bao fell ill, we got a man who wasn't a professional to cure him. We'd better call him in again."

"Medicine is abstruse, and the least celebrated physicians are often the best," Jia Zheng agreed. "Send to ask him over."

Jia Lian assented and left, returning to report, "That Doctor Liu has recently left town to teach. He only comes back every ten days or so. As we can't wait, I've invited another man who should be here presently." Then they had to wait.

All the ladies of the house called daily to ask after the old lady's illness. They were all assembled there one day when in came the old woman in charge of the Garden's side-gate.

She announced, "Sister Miaoyu of Green Lattice Nunnery has heard of the old lady's illness and come to pay her respects."

"She's a rare visitor," they said. "Since she's called today, hurry up and show her in."

Xifeng went to the old lady's bedside to tell her this, while Xiuyan — Miaoyu's old friend — went out to meet her. Miaoyu was wearing a nun's cap, a pale grey plain silk tunic under a long, sleeveless checked jacket with dark silk borders, a yellow silk sash and a white skirt with dark designs. Holding a whisk and her beads she swept gracefully in, attended by a maid.

Having greeted her Xiuyan said, "When I stayed in the Garden I could often drop in to see you; but now that it's so deserted I don't like to go in on my own, and the side-gate is usually closed, so I haven't seen you for ages. I'm so glad you've come!"

"You were all of you so lively in the old days that even when you were living in the Garden I didn't feel it appropriate to call too often," Miaoyu replied. "Now I know their family isn't doing too well and I hear



着你，还要瞧瞧宝姑娘。我那管你们关不关？我要来就来；我不来，你们要我来也不能啊。”岫烟笑道：“你还是这种脾气。”

一面说着，已到贾母房中。众人见了，都问了好。妙玉走到贾母床前问候，说了几句套话。贾母便道：“你是个女菩萨，你瞧瞧我的病可好的了好不了？”妙玉道：“老太太这样慈善的人，寿数正有呢。一时感冒，吃几贴药，想来也就好了。有年纪的人，只要宽心些。”贾母道：“我倒不为这些。我是极爱寻快乐的。如今这病也不觉怎么着，只是胸膈饱闷。刚才大夫说是气恼所致。你是知道的，谁敢给我气受？这不是那大夫脉理平常么？我和琏儿说了，还是头一个大夫说感冒伤食的是，明儿还请他来。”说着，叫鸳鸯：“吩咐厨房里办一桌净素菜来，请妙师父这里便饭。”妙玉道：“我吃过午饭了，我是不吃东西的。”王夫人道：“不吃也罢，咱们多坐一会，说些闲话儿罢。”妙玉道：“我久已不见你们，今日来瞧瞧。”又说了一回话，便要走。回头见惜春站着，便问道：“四姑娘为什么这样瘦？不要只管爱画劳了心。”惜春道：“我久不画了。如今住的房屋不比园里的显亮，所以没兴头画。”妙玉道：“你如今住在那一所？”惜春道：“就是你才来的那个门东边的屋子，你要来，很近。”妙玉道：“我高兴的时候来瞧你。”惜春等说着送了出去。回身过来，听见



the old lady is ill; so I've been thinking of you and would like to see Baochai too. What do I care whether you lock the gate or not? I come and go as I please. If I didn't want to come, you couldn't get me here even by invitation."

"I see you haven't changed in the least," Xiuyan chuckled.

Chatting together they entered the old lady's room. When the others had greeted Miaoyu, she approached the old lady's bed to ask after her health and exchange civilities.

"Can you, who are saintly, tell me whether I shall get over this illness or not?" asked the Lady Dowager.

"A kindly old lady like you is bound to live to a great age," Miaoyu assured her. "You've just caught cold, and a few doses of medicine should set you right. Old people shouldn't worry."

"I'm not the worrying sort," replied the old lady. "I always try to have fun. And I'm not feeling too bad, simply rather bloated. Just now the doctor said it's because I was vexed, but you know very well that nobody here would dare vex me. He can't be much good at diagnosis, can he? As I told Lian, the first doctor was right when he diagnosed a chill and indigestion. Tomorrow we're going to ask him over again." She told Yuanyang to order the kitchen to prepare Miaoyu some vegetarian dishes.

"I've had my lunch," said the nun. "I won't eat anything, thank you."

"That's all right," said Lady Wang. "But stay a little longer to chat."

"Yes, I haven't seen you all for so long, today I had to come."

They talked for a while until Miaoyu rose to leave. Turning round she saw Xichun standing there and asked, "Why are you so thin, Fourth Sister? Don't let your fondness for painting wear you out!"

"I haven't painted for ages," Xichun told her. "I don't feel like it because my present rooms aren't as light as those in the Garden."

"Where are you living?"

"In that house east of the gate you came through. It's very close if you care to drop in."

"I'll call when I'm in the mood," Miaoyu promised her.

Then Xichun and the others saw her out. On their return, hearing that





丫头们回说大夫在贾母那边呢，众人暂且散去。

那知贾母这病日重一日，延医调治不效，以后又添腹泻。贾政着急，知病难医，即命人到衙门告诉，日夜同王夫人亲侍汤药。一日，见贾母略进些饮食，心里稍宽，只见老婆子在门外探头。王夫人叫彩云看去，问问是谁。彩云看了是陪迎春到孙家去的人，便道：“你来做什么？”婆子道：“我来了半日，这里找不着一个姐姐们，我又不肯冒撞，我心里又急。”彩云道：“你急什么？又是姑爷作践姑娘不成么？”婆子道：“姑娘不好了！前儿闹了一场，姑娘哭了一夜，昨日痰堵住了。他们又不请大夫，今日更利害了！”彩云道：“老太太病着呢，别大惊小怪的。”王夫人在内已听见了，恐老太太听见不受用，忙叫彩云带他外头说去。岂知贾母病中心静，偏偏听见，便道：“迎丫头要死了么？”王夫人便道：“没有。婆子们不知轻重，说是这两日有些病，恐不能就好，到这里问大夫。”贾母道：“瞧我的大夫就好，快请了去。”王夫人便叫彩云：“叫这婆子去回大太太去。”那婆子去了。

这里贾母便悲伤起来，说是：“我三个孙女儿：一个享尽了福死了；三丫头远嫁，不得见面；迎丫头虽苦，或者熬出来，不打量他年轻轻儿的就要死了！留着我这么大年纪的人活着做什么！”王夫人鸳鸯等解劝了好半天。那时宝钗李氏





the doctor had arrived they dispersed.

The Lady Dowager's illness grew daily worse, no medicine proving effective, and later she developed diarrhoea too. Worried because she was not likely to recover, Jia Zheng sent to ask leave from his yamen and he and his wife attended her day and night. One day she took some nourishment, and they were feeling relieved when they saw an old woman peeping through the door. Caiyun, told by Lady Wang to see who she was, recognized her as one of the serving-women who had accompanied Yingchun to the Sun family.

"What brings you here?" she asked.

"I've been waiting outside for some time but couldn't find a soul, and I dared not burst in — I was frantic!"

"Why, what's wrong? Has Mr. Sun been bullying your young lady again?"

"My young lady's dying! The day before yesterday they had a row and she cried all night long. Yesterday she was choking, her throat blocked up with phlegm, yet they wouldn't get a doctor. Today she's worse!"

"The old lady's ill; don't kick up such a shindy."

Lady Wang inside had heard their conversation. Fearing that the old lady would be upset if she knew this, she ordered Caiyun to take the woman away. But the Lady Dowager lying there quietly had overheard them too.

"Is Yingchun dying?" she asked.

"No, madam," said Lady Wang. "These women are all alarmists. She says Yingchun hasn't been well the last couple of days and may take some time to recover. They want us to get her a doctor."

"My doctor's a good one. Have him fetched at once."

Lady Wang told Caiyun to send the woman to report this to Lady Xing.

When the woman had left, the old lady lamented, "Of my three granddaughters, one died after enjoying great good fortune; the third has married so far from home that I shan't be able to see her again; Yingchun had a hard time but I thought she might pull through, never dreaming she'd die so young! What is there for an old woman like me to live for?"

Lady Wang, Yuanyang and the rest consoled her at length. Baochai



等不在房中，凤姐近来有病。王夫人恐贾母生悲添病，便叫人叫了他们来陪着，自己回到房中，叫彩云来埋怨：“这婆子不懂事！以后我在老太太那里，你们有事，不用来回。”丫头们依命不言。岂知那婆子刚到邢夫人那里，外头的人已传进来，说：“二姑奶奶死了。”邢夫人听了，也便哭了一场。现今他父亲不在家中，只得叫贾琏快去瞧看。知贾母病重，众人都不敢回。可怜一位如花似月之女，结缡年余，不料被孙家揉搓，以致身亡，又值贾母病笃，众人不便离开，竟容孙家草草完结。

贾母病势日增，只想这些孙女儿。一时想起湘云，便打发人去瞧他。回来的人悄悄的找鸳鸯。因鸳鸯在老太太身旁，王夫人等都在那里，不便上去，到了后头，找了琥珀，告诉他道：“老太太想史姑娘，叫我们去打听。那里知道史姑娘哭的了不得，说是姑爷得了暴病，大夫都瞧了，说这病只怕不能好，若是变了痲病，还可捱个四五年。所以史姑娘心里着急。又知道老太太病，只是不能过来请安。还叫我别在老太太跟前提起来，倘或老太太问起来，务必托你们变个法儿回老太太才好。”琥珀听了，“咳”了一声，也就不言语了，半日说道：“你去罢。”琥珀也不便回，心里打算告诉鸳鸯叫他撒谎去，所以来到贾母床前。见贾母神色大变，地下站着一屋子的人，噉噉喳喳的说：“瞧着是不好。”也不敢言语了。

这里贾政悄悄的叫贾琏到身旁，向耳边说了几句话。贾琏轻轻的答应，出去了，便传齐了现在家里的一千人，说：



and Li Wan were absent at the time and Xifeng had recently fallen ill again. Now Lady Wang sent for them to keep the old lady company, for fear lest grief should aggravate her illness. Returning then to her own quarters, she sent for Caiyun.

“What a fool that woman is!” she scolded. “In future when I’m with the old lady and you have something to report, it can wait.” The maids agreed to this.

Just as the serving-woman reached Lady Xing’s apartments, word came that Yingchun was dead. Her mother wept. In Jia She’s absence, she had to send Jia Lian to the Sun family to find out the situation. Since the old lady was so ill, nobody dared tell her the news. Alas, that this girl fair as a flower or the moon should be hounded to death by the Sun family after little more than a year of marriage! As the old lady was at death’s door the others could not leave her, but had to let the Sun family arrange the funeral in perfunctory fashion.

The Lady Dowager, failing from day to day, longed to see her granddaughters and nieces. Her thoughts turned to Xiangyun and she sent to fetch her. The servant on her return slipped in to find Yuanyang, but could not enter the old lady’s room where Yuanyang happened to be with Lady Wang and others. Instead she went to the back where she found Hupo.

“The old lady wanted to see Miss Shi and sent us to ask her to come,” she told her. “But we found her crying her heart out, because her husband’s desperately ill, and the doctors say he’s not likely to recover unless it turns into consumption — in which case he may drag on for another four or five years. So Miss Shi is frantic. She knows the old lady is ill, but she can’t come. She told me, too, not to mention this to her grand-aunt. If the old lady asks, she hopes you’ll make up some excuse for her.” Hupo exclaimed in dismay but did not answer. After some time she told the other to go. Not liking to report this, she decided to tell Yuanyang and ask her to make up some story. She went to the old lady’s bedside then and found her in a critical condition. As there were many people standing round murmuring that it seemed there was no hope, Hupo had to hold her tongue.

Jia Zheng quietly drew Jia Lian aside and whispered some instructions to which he assented softly. He then went out to summon all the



“老太太的事，待好出来了，你们快快分头派人办去。头一件，先请出板来瞧瞧，好挂里子。快到各处将各人的衣服量了尺寸，都开明了，便叫裁缝去做孝衣。那棚杠执事都讲定了。厨房里还该多派几个人。”赖大等回道：“二爷，这些事不用爷费心，我们早打算好了，只是这项银子在那里领呢？”贾琏道：“这种银子不用外头去，老太太自己早留下了。刚才老爷的主意，只要办的好，我想外面也要好看。”赖大等答应，派人分头办去。

贾琏复回到自己房中，便问平儿：“你奶奶今儿怎么样？”平儿把嘴往里一努，说：“你瞧去。”贾琏进内，见凤姐正要穿衣，一时动不得，暂且靠在炕桌儿上。贾琏道：“你只怕养不住了，老太太的事，今儿明儿就要出来了，你还脱得过么？快叫人将屋里收拾收拾，就该扎挣上去了。若有了事，你我还能回来么？”凤姐道：“咱们这里还有什么收拾的？不过就是这点子东西，还怕什么？你先去罢，看老爷叫你。我换件衣裳就来。”

贾琏先回到贾母房里，向贾政悄悄的回道：“诸事已交派明白了。”贾政点头。外面又报：“太医来了。”贾琏接入，诊了一回。大夫出来，悄悄的告诉贾琏：“老太太的脉气不好，防着些。”贾琏会意，与王夫人等说知。王夫人即忙使眼色叫鸳鸯过来，叫他把老太太的装裹衣服预备出来。鸳鸯自去料理。

贾母睁眼要茶喝，邢夫人便进了一杯参汤。贾母刚用嘴接着喝，便道：“不要这个，倒一钟茶来我喝。”众人不敢违



stewards at home.

“The old lady’s sinking fast,” he said. “You’re to send at once to make the necessary preparations. First, get out the coffin and have it lined. Then get the measurements of the whole household and order tailors to make mourning for them. The funeral retinue must be arranged too, and more hands will be needed to help in the kitchen.”

Lai Da told him, “You needn’t worry, Second Master. We’ve got it all figured out. But where is the money to come from?”

“You needn’t raise money outside,” replied Jia Lian. “The old lady has kept a sum in readiness. Just now the master told me that it must be handsomely done — we want a good show.”

The stewards assented and went off to see to these matters while he returned to his own quarters.

“How is your mistress today?” he asked Pinger.

Pinger pouted towards the inner room. “Go in and see her.”

He did so and found Xifeng, exhausted by dressing, leaning against the small table on the *kang*.

“I’m afraid you can’t rest now,” he told her. “The old lady will be gone by tomorrow at the latest, so you can’t keep out of it. Hurry up and get somebody to clear up here, then make the effort to go over there. If it comes to the worst, we shan’t be able to come back today.”

“What is there here to clear up?” retorted Xifeng. “We’ve only these few things left, so what does it matter? You go first; the master may want you. I’ll come when I’ve changed my clothes.”

Jia Lian went ahead to the old lady’s place and whispered to Jia Zheng that all the preparations had been made. Jia Zheng nodded. Then the doctor was announced. Jia Lian invited him in to feel the old lady’s pulse. After some time he withdrew and quietly told Jia Lian, “The old lady’s pulse is very weak. Be prepared....”

Jia Lian understood and told Lady Wang, who signalled to Yuanyang and, when she came over, sent her off to make ready the garments in which to lay out the old lady. At this point the Lady Dowager opened her eyes and asked for some tea. Lady Xing gave her a cup of ginseng broth but after tasting it she said:

“Not this. Give me a cup of tea.”



拗，即忙送上来。一口喝了，还要，又喝一口，便说：“我要坐起来。”贾政等道：“老太太要什么，只管说，可以不必坐起来才好。”贾母道：“我喝了口水，心里好些儿，略靠着和你们说说话儿。”珍珠等用手轻轻的扶起，看见贾母这会子精神好了些。未知生死，下回分解。





Forced to humour her, they brought it immediately. She took two sips, then said, "I want to sit up."

"If you want something, madam, just tell us," urged Jia Zheng. "There is no need to sit up."

"After a little drink I feel better," she answered. "Prop me up on the pillow so that I can talk to you."

Zhenzhu gently propped her up, and they saw that she did look better. To know whether she lived or died, read the next chapter.









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## 第一百十回

史太君寿终归地府 王凤姐力诘失人心

却说贾母坐起说道：“我到你们家已经六十多年了，从年轻的时候到老来，福也享尽了。自你们老爷起，儿子孙子也都算是好的了。就是宝玉呢，我疼了他一场——”说到这里，拿眼满地下瞅着。王夫人便推宝玉走到床前。

贾母从被窝里伸出手来拉着宝玉，道：“我的儿，你要争气才好！”宝玉嘴里答应，心里一酸，那眼泪便要流下来，又不敢哭，只得站着。听贾母说道：“我想再见一个重孙子，我就安心了。我的兰儿在那里呢？”李纨也推贾兰上去。

贾母放了宝玉，拉着贾兰，道：“你母亲是要孝顺的。将来你成了人，也叫你母亲风光风光！凤丫头呢？”

凤姐本来站在贾母旁边，赶忙走到跟前，说：“在这里呢。”贾母道：“我的儿，你是太聪明了，将来修修福罢！我也没有修什么，不过心实吃亏。那些吃斋念佛的事我也不大干，就是旧年叫人写了些‘金刚经’送送人，不知送完了没有？”凤姐道：“没有呢。”贾母道：“早该施舍完了才好。我们大老爷和珍儿是在外头乐了；最可恶的是史丫头没良心，怎么总不来瞧我！”鸳鸯等明知其故，都不言语。

贾母又瞧了一瞧宝钗，叹了口气，只见脸上发红。贾政知是回光返照，即忙进上参汤。贾母的牙关已经紧了，合了



## Chapter 110

### The Lady Dowager Passes Away Peacefully Xifeng Is Powerless and Loses Support

Sitting up the old lady said, "I've lived in your family sixty years and more, from girlhood to old age, and had more than my share of good fortune. Reckoning from your father down, all my sons and grandsons are good. But Baoyu whom I've been so fond of..." She broke off here and looked round. Lady Wang pushed Baoyu to her bedside and the old lady reaching out one hand from the quilt took his hand.

"You must make good, child!" she exhorted him.

"Yes, madam." He felt a pang but dared not cry, simply standing there while his grandmother continued, "I shall be content if I can see another great-grandson born. Where is my Lan?"

As Li Wan pushed him forward, the old lady let go of Baoyu and took Lan's hand.

"You must be a dutiful son," she said. "Make your mother feel proud of you when you grow up! Where is Xifeng?"

Xifeng, standing near the bed, stepped forward saying, "Here I am."

"You're too clever, child; you must do more good works. I haven't done many myself, simply letting others take advantage of me. I never went in much for fasting or chanting Buddhist scriptures, except that year when I had all those copies of the *Diamond Sutra* made. Have they all been distributed?"

"Not yet," was Xifeng's reply.

"Then hurry up and have them all given away. Our Elder Master and Zhen are enjoying themselves outside, but the most heartless one of all is that little wretch Xiangyun who still hasn't come to see me!"

Yuanyang and those who knew the reason said nothing. Next the old lady looked at Baochai and sighed. Her face was flushed now, a sign as Jia Zheng knew that the end was near. He offered her some ginseng



一回眼，又睁着满屋里瞧了一瞧。王夫人宝钗上去，轻轻扶着，邢夫人凤姐等便忙穿衣。地下婆子们已将床安设停当，铺了被褥。听见贾母喉间略一响动，脸变笑容，竟是去了。享年八十三岁。众婆子疾忙停床。

于是贾政等在外一边跪着，邢夫人等在内一边跪着，一齐举起哀来。外面家人各样预备齐全，只听里头信儿一传出来，从荣府大门起至内宅门，扇扇大开，一色净白纸糊了；孝棚高起，大门前的牌楼立时竖起。上下人等登时成服。

贾政报了丁忧，礼部奏闻。主上深仁厚泽，念及世代功勋，又系元妃祖母，赏银一千两，谕礼部主祭。家人们各处报丧。众亲友虽知贾家势败，今见圣恩隆重，都来探丧。择了吉时成殓，停灵正寝。

贾赦不在家，贾政为长；宝玉、贾环、贾兰是亲孙，年纪又小，都应守灵。贾琏虽也是亲孙，带着贾蓉，尚可分派家人办事。虽请了些男女外亲来照应，内里邢王二夫人、李纨、凤姐、宝钗等是应灵旁哭泣的；尤氏虽可照应，他自贾珍外出，依住荣府，一向总不上前，且又荣府的事不甚谙练；贾蓉的媳妇更不必说；惜春年小，虽在这里长的，他于家事全不知道：所以内里竟无一人支持。





broth, but already her jaws were locked and her eyes closed. She opened them, however, for a last look round the room. Lady Wang and Baochai stepped forward and gently propped her up, while Lady Xing and Xifeng changed her clothes. Meanwhile serving-women had prepared the bier and spread bedding over it. Now they heard a rattling in her throat, and a smile overspread her face as she breathed her last — at the age of eighty-three. The women hastily laid her on the bier.

Jia Zheng and the other men knelt down in the outer room, Lady Xing and the other ladies inside, and together they lamented. The stewards' preparations outside were complete. As soon as they heard the news, all the gates of the Rong Mansion were thrown wide open and pasted with white paper. Funeral sheds were erected as well as an archway in front of the main gate. The family and the domestics lost no time in putting on mourning.

Jia Zheng reported his mother's death, and the Ministry of Rites petitioned the Emperor for leave for him. The Most High in deep compassion, in view of the Jia family's past achievements and the fact that the old lady was the Imperial Consort's grandmother, bestowed on Jia Zheng one thousand taels of silver and ordered the Ministry of Rites to take charge of the sacrifice. The stewards spread word of the old lady's death and, though the Jia family had declined, when their relatives and friends saw the favour shown them by the Emperor they all came to offer their condolences. An auspicious day was chosen for confining the dead and the coffin was deposited in the hall.

In the absence of Jia She, Jia Zheng was the head of the house. Baoyu, Jia Huan and Jia Lan, as young descendants, had to keep watch by the coffin. Jia Lian, though a grandson too, undertook with Jia Rong's assistance to assign the menservants' tasks. Certain kinsmen were also invited to help out.

As for the ladies, Lady Xing, Lady Wang, Li Wan, Xifeng and Baochai were to lament by the coffin. Madam You should by rights have helped organize the household, as since Jia Zhen's departure she had been staying in the Rong Mansion; but she had never shown any initiative and had little knowledge of its management. Jia Rong's wife, it goes without saying, was even less competent while young Xichun although she had grown up in the Rong Mansion knew nothing about its domestic affairs. So none



只有凤姐可以照管里头的事，况又贾琏在外作主，里外他二人，倒也相宜。凤姐先前仗着自己的才干，原打量老太太死了，他大有一番作用。邢王二夫人等本知他曾办过秦氏的事，必是妥当，于是仍叫凤姐总理里头的事。凤姐本不应辞，自然应了，心想：“这里的事本是我管的。那些家人更是我手下的人。太太和珍大嫂子的人本来难使唤，如今他们都去了。银项虽没有对牌，这种银子却是现成的。外头的事又是我们那个办。虽说我现今身子不好，想来也不致落褒贬，必比宁府里还得办些。”心下已定，且待明日接了三，后日一早分派。便叫周瑞家的传出话去，将花名册取上来。凤姐一一的瞧了，统共男仆只有二十一人，女仆只有十九人，余者俱是些丫头，连各房算上，也不过三十多人，难以派差。心里想道：“这回老太太的事倒没有东府里的人多。”又将庄上的弄出几个，也不敷差遣。

正在思算，只见一个小丫头过来说：“鸳鸯姐姐请奶奶。”凤姐只得过去。只见鸳鸯哭得泪人一般，一把拉着凤姐儿，说道：“二奶奶请坐，我给二奶奶磕个头。虽说服中不行礼，这个头是要磕的！”鸳鸯说着跪下，慌的凤姐赶忙拉住，说道：“这是什么礼？有话好好的说！”鸳鸯跪着，凤姐便拉起来。鸳鸯说道：“老太太的事，一应内外，都是二爷和二奶奶办。这种银子是老太太留下的。老太太这一辈子也没有遭塌过什么银钱，如今临了这件大事，必得求二奶奶体体面面的办一办才好！我方才听见老爷说什么‘诗云’‘子曰’，

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of these could take charge.

Xifeng was the only one capable of undertaking the task, and indeed with Jia Lian in charge outside it seemed appropriate to have her helping him inside. Emboldened by her previous experience of superintending Qin Keqing's funeral, she was confident that here was another chance to display her ability; and Their Ladyships both thought her the best choice. When, therefore, she was asked to superintend, she accepted readily.

"I ran this household before and the staff here obey me," she thought. "The servants of Lady Xing and Madam You used to be troublesome, but now they've gone. Though we haven't used a tally to get money from the treasury, we have ready cash in hand for this purpose which is even better; and my husband is in charge of affairs outside. So even if my health isn't what it was, I don't think I'll fall down on the job as it's bound to be simpler than that time in the Ning Mansion."

She decided to wait another day till the first three days had passed, then assign the servants tasks first thing in the morning. She told Zhou Rui's wife to announce this to the staff and to bring her the register. Looking through this she found twenty one men-servants in all and only nineteen women, not counting the maids in the various apartments. As this made a total of barely forty people, they were going to be short-handed. "We've fewer hands now for the old lady's funeral than that time in the East Mansion," she reflected. Even if she transferred a few servants from their farm, they still would not have enough.

As she was mulling this over a young maid came to report, "Sister Yuanyang would like you to go over, madam."

Xifeng went and found Yuanyang weeping bitterly. She caught hold of Xifeng and cried, "Please sit down, madam, and let me kowtow to you. Mourners can dispense with ceremony, they say, but I must kowtow to you now!" She fell on her knees.

Xifeng hastily stopped her. "What does this mean? Just tell me what you want," she said, pulling her up.

"All the arrangements, inside and outside, for the old lady's funeral are being made by Msater Lian and you, madam. The silver for this was put aside by the old lady, who never squandered money in her whole life; so now I beg you, madam, to give her a fine, handsome send-off. Just





我也不懂；又说什么‘丧与其易，宁戚’，我更不明白。我问宝二奶奶，说是，老爷的意思：老太太的丧事，只要悲切才是真孝，不必糜费、图好看的念头。我想老太太这样一个人，怎么不该体面些？我虽是奴才丫头，敢说什么？只是老太太疼二奶奶和我这一场，临死了还不叫他风光风光？我想二奶奶是能办大事的，故此我请二奶奶来，作个主意。我生是跟老太太的人，老太太死了，我也是跟老太太的！若是瞧不见老太太的事怎么办，将来怎么见老太太呢？”

凤姐听了这话来的古怪，便说：“你放心，要体面是不难的。虽是老爷口说要省，那势派也错不得。便拿这项银子都花在老太太身上，也是该当的。”鸳鸯道：“老太太的遗言说，所有剩下的东西是给我们的，二奶奶倘或用着不够，只管拿这个去折变补上。就是老爷说什么，也不好违了老太太的遗言。况且老太太分派的时候，不是老爷在这里听见的么？”凤姐道：“你素来最明白的，怎么这会子这样的着急起来了？”鸳鸯道：“不是我着急，为的是大太太是不管事的，老爷是怕招摇的。若是二奶奶心里也是老爷的想头，说抄过家的人家，丧事还是这么好，将来又要抄起来，也就不顾起老太太来，怎么样呢？我呢，是个丫头，好歹碍不着，到底是这里的声名！”凤姐道：“我知道了。你只管放心，有我呢。”鸳鸯千恩万谢的托了凤姐。

那凤姐出来，想道：“鸳鸯这东西好古怪！不知打了什么主意？论理，老太太身上本该体面些。噯！且别管他，只按着咱们家先前的样子办去。”于是叫来旺家的来，把话传出去，请二爷进来。

不多时，贾琏进来，说道：“怎么找我？你在里头照应着



now I heard the master quote a classical tag — I didn't understand it — something like 'In mourning, grief counts for more than appearances.' I asked Madam Bao, who told me he meant that the most filial way to mourn the old lady is to show our grief, instead of wasting money to make a good show. But it seems to me that surely things should be done more impressively for someone like the old lady. I'm only a slave, though, so what can I say? But the old lady was so good to us both, won't you do the thing handsomely? I know you're an able organizer, madam; that's why I asked you here to decide. I've served the old lady all my life, and now that she's dead I mean to follow her still. If I don't see her given a good funeral, how shall I be able to face her?"

Puzzled by this outburst Xifeng replied, "Don't worry. It's not difficult to prepare a fine funeral. Though the master wants us to economize, we've a position to keep up. Even if we spend the whole sum on this, that's only right."

"The old lady's last words were that anything she had left was for us. If you don't have enough, madam, just use this to make up the deficit. Whatever the master says, he can't go against her last wishes. Besides, he was there, wasn't he, and heard how the old lady shared things out."

"You've always been a sensible girl. Why are you carrying on like this now?" Xifeng asked.

"I can't help worrying, because the Elder Mistress lets things slide and the master's afraid of being ostentatious. If *you* share his view, madam, that for a family that's been raided to have a splendid funeral may lead to another raid, and don't care about the old lady, what's to be done? I'm just a bondmaid and this doesn't concern me; but our family's reputation is at stake!"

"I understand. Don't worry. I'll see to it."

Then Yuanyang thanked Xifeng profusely for her goodness.

Xifeng left thinking, "What an odd creature Yuanyang is! I wonder what's on her mind? By rights the old lady should have a handsome funeral. Well, never mind her. We'll do it according to our family tradition." She sent for Lai Wang's wife to ask Master Lian to come in.

"What do you want me for?" inquired Jia Lian when presently he entered. "Just look after your end of things inside the house. All deci-



些就是了。横竖作主是老爷太太们：他说怎么着，我们就怎么着。”凤姐道：“你也说起这个话来了，可不是鸳鸯说的话应验了么？”贾琏道：“什么鸳鸯的话？”凤姐便将鸳鸯请进去的话述了一遍。贾琏道：“他们的话算什么！刚才二老爷叫我去，说：‘老太太的事固要认真办理，但是知道的呢，说是老太太自己结果自己；不知道的，只说咱们都隐匿起来了，如今很宽裕。老太太的这种银子用不了，谁还要么？仍旧该用在老太太身上。老太太是在南边的，虽有坟地，却没有阴宅。老太太的灵是要归到南边去的。留这银子在祖坟上盖起些房屋来，再余下的，置买几顷祭田。咱们回去也好；就是不回去，便叫那些贫穷族中住着，也好按时按节早晚上香，时常祭扫祭扫。’你想这些话可不是正经主意么？据你的话，难道都花了罢？”

凤姐道：“银子发出来了没有？”贾琏道：“谁见过银子！我听见咱们太太听见了二老爷的话，极力的撺掇二太太和二老爷说：‘这是好主意。’叫我怎么着？现在外头棚杠上要支几百银子，这会子还没有发出来。我要去，他们都说有，先叫外头办了，回来再算。你想，这些奴才，有钱的早溜了。按着册子叫去，有说告病的，有说下庄子去了的。剩下几个走不动的，只有赚钱的能耐，还有赔钱的本事么？”凤姐听了，呆了半天，说道：“这还办什么！”

正说着，见来了一个丫头，说：“大太太的话，问二奶





sions will be made anyway by the Second Master. It's up to us to do whatever we're told."

"So you take that line too?" said Xifeng. "Apparently Yuanyang guessed right."

"What did she say?"

Xifeng described how Yuanyang had asked her over and what she had said.

"What they say doesn't count," scoffed Jia Lian. "Just now the Second Master sent for me and said, 'Of course we must do things in style for the old lady. People in the know are aware that she provided for her own funeral; those not in the know may think that we kept some money tucked away and are still well-off. But if this silver of hers isn't used, who wants it? It should still all be spent on her. The old lady's from the south, where there is a graveyard but no houses for offering sacrifices. As her coffin's to go back to the south, we should keep some money to build houses in the ancestral graveyard and use the remainder to buy a few acres of fields to provide for sacrifices. Even if we don't return south ourselves we can let some poor relations live there, to sacrifice to her during festivals and to see to the upkeep of the grave.' Don't you agree that that's a sound idea? So how can we spend the whole sum on the funeral?"

"Have they issued the silver yet?"

"Who's seen any silver? All I know is that after my mother heard this she thoroughly approved, telling the Second Master and Mistress that it was a good idea. So what can I do? Now the men putting up the funeral sheds outside want several hundred taels, but no silver has been issued. When I went to draw some, they said they had the money but we should get the workmen to finish the job before settling accounts with them. Just think, all those servants with money have skedaddled. When we call the roll, some are said to be on sick leave, others to have gone to the farm. Those few left here, unable to leave, are just out to make money. Who's going to advance us any?"

Xifeng was struck speechless. Eventually she asked, "Then how are we to manage?"

Just then a maid came in and said, "The Elder Mistress wants to ask



奶：今儿第三天了，里头还很乱，供了饭，还叫亲戚们等着吗？叫了半天，上了菜，短了饭，这是什么办事的道理？”凤姐急忙进去吆喝人来伺候，将就着把早饭打发了。偏偏那日人来的多，里头的人都死眉瞪眼的。凤姐只得在那里照料了一会子，又惦记着派人，赶着出来，叫了来旺家的传齐了家下女人们，一一分派了。众人都答应着不动。凤姐道：“什么时候，还不供饭？”众人道：“传饭是容易的，只要将里头的东西发出来，我们才好照管去。”凤姐道：“糊涂东西！派定了你们，少不得有的！”众人只得勉强应着。

凤姐即往上房取发应用之物，要去请示邢王二夫人，见人多难说，看那时候已经日渐平西了，只得找了鸳鸯，说要老太太存的那一分家伙。鸳鸯道：“你还问我呢！那一年二爷当了，赎了来了么？”凤姐道：“不用银的金的，只要那一分平常使的。”鸳鸯道：“大太太珍大奶奶屋里使的是那里来的？”凤姐一想不差，转身就走，只得到王夫人那边找了玉钏彩云，才拿了一分出来，急忙叫彩明登帐，发与众人收管。

鸳鸯见凤姐这样慌张，又不好叫他回来，心想：“他头里作事，何等爽利周到，如今怎么掣肘的这个样儿！我看这两三天连一点头脑都没有，不是老太太白疼了他了吗！”那里知邢夫人一听贾政的话，正合着将来家计艰难的心，巴不得





you, madam, why everything's still topsy-turvy though today is the third day. After the sacrifice, why keep relatives waiting around? She called several times for the meal before the dishes came — without any rice. What way is this to manage?"

Xifeng at once went to expedite the servants and manage to get a meal of sorts served to the guests. As ill luck would have it, many guests had come, but all the servants were so apathetic that Xifeng had to see to things herself. Then in her concern she hurried out and made Lai Wang's wife summon all the serving-women to assign them different tasks. The women accepted these but made no move.

"What time is it?" Xifeng demanded. "Why haven't you prepared the sacrificial offerings?"

"That's easily done," they answered. "But first we have to be issued with supplies."

"You stupid creatures!" fumed Xifeng. "Of course you'll get what you need for the jobs you're given."

The women went off then reluctantly, while Xifeng hurried to the main apartment to ask Their Ladyships' permission to fetch what would be needed. She could hardly do this, however, in front of so many guests. As it was nearing sunset, she had to find Yuanyang and tell her which of the old lady's things she wanted.

"Why ask me?" replied Yuanyang. "Didn't Master Lian pawn them that year? Has he ever redeemed them?"

"We don't need gold or silver, just an ordinary dinner service."

"Hasn't that gone to Lady Xing and Madam You?"

Xifeng realized that this was so and went to Lady Wang's quarters to find Yuchuan and Caiyun. Having got what she required from them she hastily made Caiming list these things, then handed them over to the serving-women.

Xifeng had looked so flustered that Yuanyang did not like to call her back. She wondered, "Why is she bungling things like this now when she used to be such a good manager? In the last few days things have been at sixes and sevens. The old lady's love for her was thrown away!"

She was unaware that Lady Xing had concurred with Jia Zheng's proposal because she had been worrying about her family's future and



留一点子作个收局。况且老太太的事原是长房作主。贾赦虽不在家，贾政又是拘泥的人，有件事便说：“请大太太的主意。”邢夫人素知凤姐手脚大，贾琏的闹鬼，所以死拿住不放松。鸳鸯只道已将这项银两交了出去了，故见凤姐掣肘如此，却疑为不肯用心，便在贾母灵前唠唠叨叨哭个不了。

邢夫人等听了话中有话，不想到自己不令凤姐便宜行事，反说：“凤丫头果然有些不用心！”王夫人到了晚上，叫了凤姐过来，说：“咱们家虽说不济，外头的体面是要的。这两三天人来人往，我瞧着那些人都照应不到，想必你没有吩咐，——还得你替我们操点心儿才好！”凤姐听了，呆了一会，要将银两不凑手的话说出来，但只银钱是外头管的，王夫人说的是照应不到。凤姐也不敢辨，只好不言语。邢夫人在旁说道：“论理，该是我们做媳妇的操心，本不是孙子媳妇的事，但是我们动不得身，所以托你。你是打不得撒手的！”凤姐紫涨了脸，正要回说，只听外头鼓乐一奏，是烧黄昏纸的时候了，大家举起哀来，又不得说。凤姐原想回来再说，王夫人催他出去料理，说道：“这里有我们呢，你快快儿的去料理明儿的事罢。”

凤姐不敢再言，只得含悲忍泣的出来，又叫人传齐了众人，又吩咐了一会，说：“大娘婶子们可怜我罢！我上头捱了





was eager to put something by. Besides, as the old lady's funeral should have been superintended by the senior branch of the family, although Jia She was away, each time there was some decision to make punctilious Jia Zheng would say, "Ask the Elder Mistress."

Lady Xing had always considered Xifeng extravagant and Jia Lian unreliable and would therefore not let any money out of her hands. Yuanyang, assuming that the funeral expenses had already been issued, suspected Xifeng of floundering because she did not take the business seriously. Accordingly she kept weeping and wailing before the old lady's coffin.

When Lady Xing heard these implied reproaches, instead of blaming herself for not facilitating Xifeng's work she said, "It's true, Xifeng isn't putting herself out."

That evening Lady Wang summoned Xifeng and told her, "Though our family's in these straits, we must keep up appearances. I've noticed that in the last few days our visitors haven't been properly looked after. I suppose you didn't give instructions for this. You must bestir yourself a bit more for us!"

Xifeng was at a loss for words. She wanted to explain that there was no silver to meet their expenses, but the silver was not her concern while this charge against her was one of negligence. Not venturing to defend herself she remained silent.

Lady Xing put in from the side, "By rights we daughters-in-law, not you young people, should see to these things. But as we can't leave the coffin we entrusted them to you. You mustn't trifle with your task."

Xifeng flushed crimson and was about to answer when music struck up outside — it was time for the dusk burning of sacrificial paper. As everyone had to mourn now she could say nothing; and later, when she came back to explain the real situation to them, Lady Wang urged her to go and see to things.

"We'll hold the fort here," she said. "Run along to make preparations for tomorrow."

Xifeng had to withdraw then, bottling up her resentment, and summoned all the matrons to give them instructions.

"Take pity on me, nannies!" she pleaded. "I've been scolded by their





好些说，为的是你们不齐截，叫人笑话，明儿你们豁出些辛苦来罢！”那些人回道：“奶奶办事，不是今儿个一遭儿子，我们敢违拗吗？只是这回的事，上头过于累赘！只说打发这顿饭罢：有在这里吃的，有要在家里吃的；请了这位太太，又是那位奶奶不来。诸如此类，那里能齐全？还求奶奶劝劝那些姑娘们少挑饬就好了。”凤姐道：“头一层是老太太的丫头们是难缠的，太太们的也难说话，叫我说谁去呢？”众人道：“从前奶奶在东府里还是署事，要打要骂，怎么那样锋利？谁敢不依？如今这些姑娘们都压不住了？”凤姐叹道：“东府里的事，虽说托办的，太太虽在那里，不好意思说什么。如今是自己的事情，又是公中的，人人说得话。再者，外头的银钱也叫不灵：即如棚里要一件东西，传出去了，总不见拿进来，这叫我什么法儿呢？”众人道：“二爷在外头，倒怕不应付么？”凤姐道：“还提这个！他也是那里为难。第一件，银钱不在他手里，要一件得回一件，那里凑手？”众人道：“老太太这项银子不在二爷手里吗？”凤姐道：“你们回来问管事的，就知道了。”众人道：“怨不得！我们听见外头男人抱怨说：‘这么件大事，咱们一点摸不着，净当若差！’叫人怎么能齐心呢？”凤姐道：“如今不用说了。眼面前的事，大家留些神罢。倘或闹的上头有了什么说的，我可和你们不依。”众人道：“奶奶要怎么样，我们敢抱怨吗？只是上头一人一个主意，我们实在难周到。”凤姐听了也没法，只得央及道：“好大娘们！明儿且帮我一天。等我把姑娘们闹明白



Ladyships because you've not pulled together, making our family look ridiculous. You must try a bit harder tomorrow!"

"This isn't the first time you've run things, madam," they said. "We wouldn't dream of disobeying you. But this time our mistresses are too pernicky! Just take the question of meals: some want to eat here, others in their own quarters; when we fetch in one lady, another refuses to come. What with all this, how can we see to everything? Do persuade those ladies' maids, madam, not to pick so many faults."

"The most troublesome are the old lady's maids," said Xifeng. "Their Ladyships' are a difficult lot too — how can I tell them off?"

"When you took charge in the East Mansion, madam, you beat or cursed anyone you pleased," they countered. "You were so sharp, who dared to disobey you? Can't you control these minxes today?" Xifeng sighed, "When I was given that East Mansion job, though the mistress was there she didn't like to find fault. Now this business concerns the others as well as ourselves, so everyone feels free to criticize. Besides, the money outside isn't issued promptly. When something's needed, for example, for the funeral sheds and we send out for it, it isn't forthcoming — what can I do about it?"

"Isn't Master Lian in charge outside?" they countered. "Can't he attend to such things?"

"Don't tell me he's in charge! He's in a fix too. In the first place, the silver isn't in his hands and he has to put in a request for every purchase. He has no ready money."

"Isn't the sum the old lady left in his hands?"

"Go and ask the stewards presently — they'll tell you."

"No wonder then!" they said. "We've heard the men outside complain, 'A big do like this, yet there's nothing in it for us except hard work!' So how can you expect people to pull together?"

"Never mind that now but concentrate on the work in hand. Any more complaints from above and I shan't let you off!"

"How dare anyone grumble, whatever you want done, madam? But it's really hard for us to please everyone with each of the mistresses giving different orders."

At a loss, Xifeng pleaded, "Good nannies, at least help me out tomor-



了，再说罢了。”众人听命而去。

凤姐一肚子的委屈，愈想愈气，直到天亮，又得上去。要把各处的人整理整理，又恐邢夫人生气；要和王夫人说，怎奈邢夫人挑唆。这些丫头们见邢夫人等不助着凤姐的威风，更加作践起他来。幸得平儿替凤姐排解，说是：“二奶奶巴不得要好，只是老爷太太们吩咐了外头，不许糜费，所以我们二奶奶不能应付到了。”说过几次，才得安静些。

虽说僧经道忏，吊祭供饭，络绎不绝，终是银钱吝啬，谁肯踊跃，不过草草了事。连日王妃诰命也来的不少，凤姐也不能上去照应，只好在底下张罗。叫了那个，走了这个；发一回急，央及一回；支吾过了一起，又打发一起。别说鸳鸯等看去不像样，连凤姐自己心里也过不去了。

邢夫人虽说是豕妇，仗着“悲戚为孝”四个字，倒也都不理会。王夫人只得跟着邢夫人行事，余者更不必说了。独有李纨瞧出凤姐的苦处，却不敢替他说话，只自叹道：“俗语说的，‘牡丹虽好，全仗绿叶扶持’，太太们不亏了凤丫头，那些人还帮着吗？若是三姑娘在家还好，如今只有他几个自己的人瞎张罗，背前面后的也抱怨，说是一个钱摸不着，脸面也不能剩一点儿！老爷是一味的尽孝，庶务上头不大明白。这样的一件大事，不撒散几个钱就办的开了吗？可





row! We'll talk things over again after I've made the ladies' maids see sense."

Then the serving-women left.

Xifeng, seething with resentment, brooded with mounting anger till dawn, when she wanted to discipline the maids of the various apartments, yet feared that might offend Lady Xing; and she could not complain to Lady Wang, whom Lady Xing had turned against her. When the maids saw that Their Ladyships were not backing Xifeng up, they treated her with even less respect.

Pinger alone spoke up for her, explaining, "Of course Madam Lian wants to do things in style, but the master and Their Ladyships have forbidden any extravagance, which makes her unable to satisfy everybody." By stressing this she calmed them down a little.

Now they had Buddhists chanting sutras and Taoists saying masses, with endless mourning, sacrifices and meals for guests; but they were so niggardly that no one would buckle to and the service was slipshod. Although titled ladies kept arriving, Xifeng had no time to attend to them, so busy was she supervising the servants. As soon as she summoned one, another slipped away. She would first fume at them then appeal to their better nature; and in this way she managed to send off batch after batch of guests after entertaining them all anyhow. Of course Yuanyang and the others thought it disgraceful, and even Xifeng herself was mortified.

Though Lady Xing was the elder daughter-in-law, she turned a blind eye to everything else, simply displaying her filial piety by an appearance of overwhelming grief. Lady Wang had to follow suit, and naturally so did the rest. Li Wan, the only one to appreciate Xifeng's dilemma, dared not speak up for her.

She just sighed to herself, "As the saying goes, though the peony is lovely it needs the support of green leaves. With Their Ladyships letting her down, who else is going to help poor Xifeng? If Tanchun were here it wouldn't be so bad. Now she has only a few of her own servants to make shift as best they can, and they keep complaining behind her back that they're not making a cent or getting any credit! The master harps on filial piety but doesn't know much about management. How can a big affair like this be properly conducted without a certain outlay? Poor Xifeng!



怜凤丫头闹了几年，不想在老太太的事上，只怕保不住脸了！”于是抽空儿叫了他的人来，吩咐道：“你们别看着人家的样儿，也遭塌起琏二奶奶来。别打量什么穿孝守灵就算了大事了，不过混过几天就是了。看见那些人张罗不开，就插个手儿，也未为不可。这也是公事，大家都该出力的。”那些素服李纨的人都答应着说：“大奶奶说的很是，我们也不敢那么着。只听见鸳鸯姐姐们的口话儿，好像怪琏二奶奶的似的。”李纨道：“就是鸳鸯，我也告诉过他。我说琏二奶奶并不是在老太太的事上不用心，只是银子钱都不在他手里，叫他巧媳妇还作的上没米的粥来吗？如今鸳鸯也知道了，所以也不怪他了。只是鸳鸯的样子竟是不像从前了，这也奇怪。那时候有老太太疼他，倒没有作过什么威福；如今老太太死了，没有了仗腰子的了，我看他倒有些气质不大好了。我先前替他愁，这会子幸喜大老爷不在家，才躲过去了；不然，他有什么法儿？”

说着，只见贾兰走来说：“妈妈睡罢。一天到晚人来客去的也乏了，歇歇罢。我这几天总没有摸摸书本儿。今儿爷爷叫我家里睡，我喜欢的很，要理个一两本书才好，别等脱了孝再都忘了。”李纨道：“好孩子！看书呢，自然是好的，今儿且歇歇罢，等老太太送了殡再看罢。”贾兰道：“妈妈要睡，我也就睡在被窝里头想想也罢了。”众人听了，都夸道：“好哥儿！怎么这点年纪，得了空儿就想到书上？不像宝二爷，娶了亲的人还是那么孩子气。这几日跟着老爷跪着，瞧他很不受用，巴不得老爷一动身就跑过来找二奶奶，不知唧



She's been to such pains these few years to win a reputation, and now it looks as if she's going to lose it over this funeral!"

She made time to summon her own maids and told them, "Don't follow the example of those others and start plaguing Madam Lian too. You mustn't think you can get by by wearing mourning and keeping watch by the coffin for a few days. If you see them unable to cope, you should lend a hand. This is the affair of us all: it's everybody's duty to help out."

Some of the servants who had genuine respect for Li Wan agreed, "You're quite right, madam, and we'd never dream of making trouble. But Sister Yuanyang and the others seem to hold Madam Lian to blame."

"I've spoken to Yuanyang too," replied Li Wan. "I've explained to her that it's not that Madam Lian doesn't take the old lady's funeral seriously, but she doesn't control the money, and how can the smartest daughter-in-law make gruel without rice? Now that Yuanyang understands she's stopped blaming her. Still, it's extraordinary the way Yuanyang has altered. When she was the old lady's favourite, she didn't try to take advantage of it; now that the old lady's gone and she has no backing, she seems to have changed for the worse. I used to worry what would become of her. Luckily the Elder Master isn't at home now, so she's escaped his clutches. Otherwise, what could she have done?"

At this point Jia Lan came up and said, "Mother, it's time to go to bed. So many visitors all day long must have tired you; do have a rest now. I haven't touched my books these days, so I'm very glad that today grandfather told me to sleep at home — I must review one or two books, so as not to have forgotten everything by the time the mourning is over."

"Good child!" said Li Wan. "Of course it's good to study, but today you'd better rest. Wait till after the funeral."

"If you're going to sleep, mother, I'll curl up in my quilt too and think over my lessons."

The others all approved, "There's a good boy! Such a little lad, yet when he's a moment to spare he thinks of his books. How different from Master Bao who's still so childish even after his marriage. How uneasy he looks these days kneeling by his father; and the moment the master leaves he rushes off to find Madam Bao and whisper some nonsense to

唧咕咕的说些什么。甚至弄的二奶奶都不理他了，他又去找琴姑娘。琴姑娘也躲着他，邢姑娘也不很和他说话。倒是咱们本家儿的什么喜姑娘四姑娘咧，‘哥哥’长‘哥哥’短的和他亲密。我们看那宝二爷除了和奶奶姑娘们混混，只怕他心里也没有别的事，白过费了老太太的心，疼了他这么大，那里及兰哥儿一零儿呢？大奶奶将来是不愁的了！”

李纨道：“就好也还小呢。只怕到他大了，咱们家还不知怎么样了呢！环哥儿你们瞧着怎么样？”众人道：“那一个更不像样儿了！两只眼睛倒像个活猴儿似的，东溜溜，西看看。虽在那里嚎丧，见了奶奶姑娘们来了，他在孝幔子里头净偷着眼儿瞧人呢！”李纨道：“他的年纪其实也不小了。前日听见说还要给他说亲呢，如今又得等着了。噯！还有一件事：咱们家这些人，我看来也是说不清的！且不必说闲话儿，后日送殡，各房的车是怎么样了？”众人道：“琏二奶奶这几天闹的像失魂落魄的样儿了，也没见传出去。昨儿听见外头男人们说：二爷派了蔷二爷料理，说是咱们家的车也不够，赶车的也少，要到亲戚家去借去呢。”李纨笑道：“车也都是借得的么？”众人道：“奶奶说笑话儿了，车怎么借不得？只是那一日所有的亲戚都用车，只怕难借，想来还得雇呢。”李纨道：“底下人的只得雇，上头白车也有雇的么？”众人道：“现在大太太，东府里的大奶奶小蓉奶奶，都没有车了，不雇，那里来的呢？”李纨听了，叹息道：“先前见有咱们家里

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her. When she ignores him he looks for Miss Baoqin, who tries to steer clear of him too. Miss Xing hardly ever talks to him either. The only ones nice to him are his cousins Xiluan and Sijie, for ever calling him 'cousin' this and 'cousin' that. We don't believe Master Bao thinks of anything except fooling about with young ladies. He hadn't lived up to the old lady's expectations. She always doted on him, yet he can't hold a candle to our Master Lan. You won't have to worry about his future, madam!"

"It's too early to say," replied Li Wan. "And who knows what will have become of our family by the time he grows up? But what's your opinion of young Master Huan?"

"That one's even worse!" they exclaimed. "He has eyes like a real monkey, darting shiftily this way and that. Though he's supposed to wail by the coffin, when the ladies come he spends all his time peeping at them round the curtain before it."

"Actually he's no longer a child," she said. "The other day I heard they were thinking of finding him a wife, but now that will have to wait. Still, our family's too big for us to sort out everyone's problems, so let's not gossip about them. And there's something else I meant to ask. The funeral procession is to be the day after tomorrow. Are carriages ready for all the different households?"

"Madam Lian seems so distracted these days that we haven't seen her issuing instructions. Yesterday we heard from the men outside that Master Lian told Master Qiang to see to this. As our family doesn't have enough carriages or drivers, he says we'll have to borrow some from relatives."

"Can carriages be borrowed?" asked Li Wan with a smile.

"You must be joking, madam! Of course they can. But that day all our relatives will be using theirs, so borrowing may be hard and we'll probably have to hire some."

"We shall have to hire some for the servants, but how can the ladies take hired mourning carriages?"

"The Elder Mistress has no carriage now. Neither have Madam You and Master Rong's wife from the East Mansion," they reminded her. "What can they do but hire some?"

Li Wan sighed, "In the old days, when female relatives called on us in



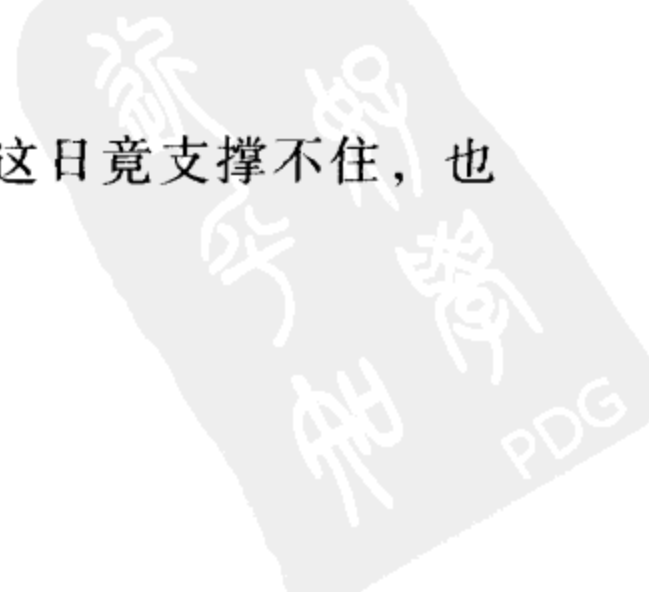


的太太奶奶们坐了雇的车来，咱们都笑话，如今轮到自己头上！你明儿去告诉你们的男人：我们的车马，早早的预备好了，省了挤。”众人答应了出去，不提。

且说史湘云因他女婿病着，贾母死后，只来了一次，屈指算是后日送殡，不能不去。又见他女婿的病已成痼症，暂且不妨，只得坐夜前一日过来。想起贾母素日疼他；又想到自己命苦，刚配了一个才貌双全的女婿，情性又好，偏偏的得了冤孽症候，不过捱日子罢了：于是更加悲痛，直哭了半夜。鸳鸯等再三劝慰不止。

宝玉瞅着也不胜悲伤，又不好上前去劝。见他淡妆素服，不敷脂粉，更比未出嫁的时候犹胜几分。回头又看宝琴等也都是淡素妆饰，丰韵嫣然。独看到宝钗浑身挂孝，那一种雅致，比寻常穿颜色时更自不同。心里想道：“古人说：千红万紫，终让梅花为魁。看来不止为梅花开的早，竟是那‘洁白清香’四字真不可及了。但只这时候若有林妹妹，也是这样打扮，更不知怎样的丰韵呢！”想到这里，不觉的心酸起来，那泪珠儿便一直的滚下来了，趁着贾母的事，不妨放声大哭。众人正劝湘云，外间忽又添出一个哭的人来。大家只道是想着贾母疼他的好处，所以悲伤，岂知他们两个人各自有各自的眼泪。这场大哭，招得满屋的人无不下泪。还是薛姨妈李婶娘等劝住。

次日乃坐夜之期，更加热闹。凤姐这日竟支撑不住，也





hired carriages, we all thought it scandalous. Now it's our turn. Tell your husbands tomorrow to get our carriages and horses ready as early as possible, to avoid a jam."

The serving-women assented and withdrew.

Since Shi Xiangyun's husband was ill, she had called only once after the old lady's death; but she felt she must attend the funeral which she reckoned would be held in two days' time. In any case, her husband's illness had proved to be consumption, so that he was in no immediate danger. She therefore came over the day before the wake, when she recalled the old lady's goodness to her, then thought of her own wretched fate. She had only just married a talented, handsome husband with a cheerful disposition, but then he had contracted this fatal illness which might any day carry him off. In distress she wept half the night, despite the attempts of Yuanyang and the others to console her.

Baoyu, seeing this, grieved for her too but was in no position to comfort her. He noticed that in her white mourning, her face bare of rouge and powder, she looked even lovelier than before her marriage. He turned then to eye Baoqin and the other girls in white and found them all very charming. Baochai, who was in deep mourning, had an air of greater distinction than in the coloured clothes she normally wore.

Baoyu told himself, "The men of old said that of all flowers the plum-blossom ranks first. That must be not only because it's the first to bloom, but because its pure white and its fine fragrance are matchless. If only Cousin Lin were here now, dressed like this, how beautiful she would be!" At this thought, he felt a pang and could not hold back his tears; and as they were mourning the Lady Dowager he did not restrain himself but sobbed aloud.

The others were trying to make Xiangyun stop crying when Baoyu suddenly burst out sobbing too. They assumed that he was upset by the memory of the old lady's kindness to him, little knowing that he and Xiangyun were weeping for different reasons. Their storm of grief brought tears to the eyes of all. It was Aunt Xue and Aunt Li who finally stopped them.

The next day, the day of the wake, was still more strenuous. Xifeng



无方法；只得用尽心力，甚至咽喉嚷哑，敷衍过了半日。到了下半天，亲友更多了，事情也更繁了，瞻前不能顾后。正在着急，只见一个小丫头跑来说：“二奶奶在这里呢！怪不得大太太说：‘里头人多，照应不过来，二奶奶是躲着受用去了！’”凤姐听了这话，一口气撞上来，往下一咽，眼泪直流，只觉得眼前一黑，嗓子里一甜，便喷出鲜红的血来，身子站不住，就蹲倒在地。幸亏平儿急忙过来扶住。只见凤姐的血一口一口的吐个不住。未知性命如何，下回分解。





felt too exhausted to bear up, yet she had no choice but to exert herself until she was hoarse from shouting. That morning she managed to cope. By the afternoon, however, more relatives and friends arrived, entailing even more work, and she could not see to everything at once. She was frantic when a young maid ran up to her.

“So here you are, madam!” she cried. “No wonder our Elder Mistress says, ‘There are too many visitors for me to look after, but Madam Lian has sneaked off to take it easy.’ ”

At this, Xifeng thought she would burst with anger. She held back her rage, but tears welled up in her eyes, everything turned dark and she tasted something sweet. Then red blood spurted from her mouth, her knees buckled and she collapsed. Pinger ran to support her as she went on vomiting whole mouthfuls of blood. To know what became of her, read the following chapter.



## 第一百十一回

鸳鸯女殉主登太虚 狗彘奴欺天招伙盗

说话凤姐听了小丫头的話，又气又急又伤心，不觉吐了一口血，便昏晕过去，坐在地下。平儿急来扶住，忙叫了人来搀扶着，慢慢的送到自己房中，将凤姐轻轻的安放在炕上，立刻叫小红斟上一杯开水送到凤姐唇边。凤姐呷了一口，昏迷仍睡。秋桐过来略瞧了一瞧，便走开了，平儿也不叫他。只见丰儿在旁站着，平儿便说：“快去回明二位太太。”于是丰儿将凤姐吐血不能照应的話回了邢王二夫人。邢夫人打量凤姐推病藏躲，因这时女亲都在内里，也不好说别的，心里却不全信，只说：“叫他歇着去罢。”众人也并无言语。自然这晚亲友来往不绝，幸得几个内亲照应。家下人等见凤姐不在，也有偷闲歇力的，乱乱吵吵，已闹的七颠八倒，不成事体了。

到二更多天，远客去后，便预备辞灵，孝幕内的女眷，大家都哭了一阵。只见鸳鸯已哭的昏晕过去了，大家扶住，捶闹了一阵，才醒过来，便说“老太太疼了一场，要跟了去”的话。众人都打量人到悲哭，俱有这些言语，也不理会。及至辞灵的时候，上上下下也有百十余人，只不见鸳鸯，众人因为忙乱，却也不曾检点。到琥珀等一干人哭奠之





## Chapter 111

### Yuanyang Dies for Her Mistress and Ascends to the Great Void A Despicable Slave Leads Robbers into the Mansion

The young maid's taunt so enraged and wounded Xifeng that she vomited blood and fainted. Pinger held her up and called for help to carry her back to her room, where they laid her gently on her bed and ordered Hongyu to give her a drink of warm water. After one sip, however, Xifeng relapsed into unconsciousness. Qitong came over to glance at her then went off, and Pinger did not call her back. Instead she told Fenger who was standing near by to take word of this at once to Their Ladyships.

When Fenger explained Xifeng's inability to entertain the guests, Lady Xing suspected her of shamming and shirking, but did not like to say this in the presence of so many relatives.

She simply replied, "All right, let her take a rest." And the others made no comment.

That evening, naturally, they had a stream of visitors. It was lucky that certain close relatives helped entertain them, for some of the staff took advantage of Xifeng's absence to play truant or slack and pandemonium reigned — it was most unseemly.

After the second watch, when the guests living at a distance had left, they prepared to farewell the dead and the women behind the mourning curtain began to wail. Yuanyang wept so bitterly that she fainted away. They raised her up and massaged her till she came round.

"The old lady was so good to me, I must follow her!" she cried.

Thinking her beside herself with grief, the others paid no attention. When the ceremony started, there were over a hundred mourners high and low present, but Yuanyang had disappeared. In the general confusion her absence passed unnoticed until it was time for Hupo and the other maids to kowtow to the dead; however, supposing that Yuanyang worn out by weeping must be resting somewhere, they let it go at that.



时，才要找鸳鸯，又恐是他哭乏了，暂在别处歇着，也不言语。

辞灵以后，外头贾政叫了贾琏问明送殡的事，便商量着派人看家。贾琏回说：“上人里头，派了芸儿在家照应，不必送殡；下人里头，派了林之孝的一家子照应拆棚等事。但不知里头派谁看家？”贾政道：“听见你母亲说是你媳妇病了，不能去，就叫他在家的；你珍大嫂子又说你媳妇病得利害，还叫四丫头陪着，带领了几个丫头婆子，照看上屋里才好。”贾琏听了，心想：“珍大嫂子与四丫头两个不合，所以撺掇着不叫他去。若是上头就是他照应，也是不中用的。我们那一个又病着，也难照应。”想了一回，回贾政道：“老爷且歇歇儿，等进去商量定了再回。”贾政点了点头，贾琏便进去了。

谁知此时鸳鸯哭了一场，想到：“自己跟着老太太一辈子，身子也没有着落。如今大老爷虽不在家，老太太的这样行为，我也瞧不上。老爷是不管事的人，以后便‘乱世为王’起来了。我们这些人不是要叫他们掇弄了么？谁收在屋子里，谁配小子，我是受不得这样折磨的，倒不如死了干净！但是一时怎么样的个死法呢？”一面想，一面走到老太太的套间屋内。刚跨进门，只见灯光惨淡，隐隐有个女人拿着汗巾子，好似要上吊的样子。鸳鸯也不惊怕，心里想道：“这一个是谁？和我的心事一样，倒比我走在头里了。”便问道：“你是谁？咱们两个人是一样的心，要死一块儿死。”那个人也不答言。鸳鸯走到跟前一看，并不是这屋子的丫头。仔细一看，觉得冷气侵人，一时就不见了。鸳鸯呆了一呆，退出



The ceremony at an end, Jia Zheng called Jia Lian outside to ask about the cortege the next day and whom he meant to leave in charge at home.

“Of the masters, I’ve told Jia Yun to stay behind,” Jia Lian reported. “Of the servants, I’ve ordered Lin Zhixiao’s family to see to the dismantling of the sheds. But which of the ladies should stay to keep an eye on the inner apartments?”

“I hear from your mother that your wife is too unwell to go. She can stay at home. And your Sister-in-law You suggests that since she is so ill, Xichun should keep her company and get a few maids to look after the mistresses’ quarters.”

Jia Lian knew that Madam You had made this proposal because she was not on good terms with Xichun, who could not take effective charge; and Xifeng was too ill to cope. After some consideration he replied, “Please have a rest, sir, while I go in to settle it with them before reporting back.”

Jia Zheng nodded and Jia Lian went to the inner quarters.

Now Yuanyang after a bout of weeping thought, “I’ve been with the old lady all my life, and I’ve found no niche for myself. Although the Elder Master isn’t at home now, I don’t think much of the Elder Mistress either. And with the Second Master letting things slide, there’ll be such chaos in future that there’s no knowing who else may take over. Then we shall be at their mercy, whether they decide to make us concubines or marry us off to some servants. I couldn’t stand that. Better die and be done with it! But how shall I kill myself?”

By now she had entered the old lady’s annex. As she stepped over the threshold in the dim lamplight, she saw the shadowy figure of a woman who appeared to be about to hang herself with the scarf in her hand. Yuanyang felt no fear but wondered, “Who is she? She has the same idea as mine, but is a step ahead of me.”

“Who are you?” she asked. “Since we’re both of the same mind, let’s die together.”

The other made no reply, and Yuanyang approaching her saw that it was not one of their household. When she tried to look closer, the air struck chill and the apparition vanished. In stupefaction she left the room





在炕沿上坐下，细细一想，道：“哦！是了。这是东府里的小蓉大奶奶啊！他早死了的了，怎么到这里来？必是来叫我来。他怎么又上吊呢？”想了一想，想：“是了，必是教给我死的法儿。”

鸳鸯这么一想，邪侵入骨，便站起来，一面哭，一面开了妆匣，取出那年较的一绺头发，揣在怀里，就在身上解下一条汗巾，按着秦氏方才比的地方拴上。自己又哭了一回，听见外头人客散去，恐有人进来，急忙关上屋门，然后端了一个脚凳，自己站上，把汗巾拴上扣儿，套在咽喉，便把脚凳蹬开。可怜咽喉气绝，香魂出窍！正无投奔，只见秦氏隐隐在前，鸳鸯的魂魄疾忙赶上，说道：“蓉大奶奶，你等等我。”那个人道：“我并不是什么蓉大奶奶，乃警幻之妹可卿是也。”鸳鸯道：“你明明是蓉大奶奶，怎么说不是呢？”那人道：“这也有个缘故，待我告诉你，你自然明白了：我在警幻宫中，原是个钟情的首坐，管的是风情月债；降临尘世，自当为第一情人，引这些痴情怨女，早早归入情司，所以我该悬梁自尽的。因我看破凡情，超出情海，归入情天，所以太虚幻境‘痴情’一司，竟自无人掌管。今警幻仙子已经将你补入，替我掌管此司，所以命我来引你前去的。”鸳鸯的魂道：“我是个最无情的，怎么算我是个有情的人呢？”那人道：“你还不知道呢。世人都把那淫欲之事当作‘情’字，所



and sat down on the *kang*.

“Ah, I know,” she murmured after a moment’s reflection. “That was Master Rong’s first wife from the East Mansion. She died so long ago, what brought her here? She must have come to summon me. But why should she hang herself?” She thought it over and decided, “That’s it. She’s showing me the way.”

This train of thought enabled an evil spirit to take possession of her and standing up, weeping, she opened her dressing-case to take out the lock of hair which she had cut off when she swore never to leave the old lady’s service. Having tucked it inside her tunic, she undid her sash and looped it over the beam indicated by Qin Keqing. Then she wept again until the sound of guests dispersing outside made her afraid that someone might come in. She made haste to close the door, moved over a footstool and stood on it, tied the sash into a noose, slipped it round her throat and kicked the stool away. Then, alas, strangled to death, her sweet spirit took flight!

Her wraith was wondering where to go when she saw Qin Keqing’s shadowy form in front. She overtook her crying, “Wait for me, Madam Rong!”

“I am not Madam Rong,” was the reply, “but the sister of the Goddess of Disenchantment.”

“I can see quite clearly that you’re Madam Rong — why should you deny it?”

“Let me tell you the reason, then you’ll understand. I was the Arbiter of True Love in the palace of the goddess, and all romantic affairs were in my charge; then I descended to the dusty world as the most amorous of mortals, to lead all lovesick maidens back betimes to the Board of Love. This is why it was my lot to hang myself. Now that I have seen through earthly love, passed over the sea of love and returned to heaven, there is no one in charge of the Board of Infatuation in the Illusory Land of Great Void. The Goddess of Disenchantment has appointed you in my place to head this Board, and has therefore ordered me to lead you there.”

“I have never known passion,” replied Yuanyang’s spirit. “How can I count as amorous?”

“You don’t understand. Mortals mistake carnal appetite for love, and



以作出伤风败化的事来，还自谓风月多情，无关紧要。不知‘情’之一字，喜怒哀乐未发之时，便是个性；喜怒哀乐已发，便是情了。至于你我这个情，正是未发之情，就如那花的含苞一样。若待发泄出来，这情就不为真情了。”鸳鸯的魂听了，点头会意，便跟了秦氏可卿而去。

这里琥珀辞了灵，听邢王二夫人分派看家的人，想着去问鸳鸯明日怎样坐车，便在贾母的那间屋里找了一遍，不见，又找到套间里头。刚到门口，见门儿掩着，从门缝里望里看时，只见灯光半明半灭的，影影绰绰，心里害怕，又不听见屋里有什么动静，便走回来说道：“这蹄子跑到那里去了？”劈头见了珍珠，说：“你见鸳鸯姐姐来着没有？”珍珠道：“我也找他，太太们等他说话呢。必在套间里睡着了罢？”琥珀道：“我瞧了，屋里没有。那灯也没人夹蜡花儿，漆黑怪怕的，我没进去。如今咱们一块儿进去，瞧瞧有没有。”琥珀等进去，正夹蜡花，珍珠说：“谁把脚凳撂在这里，几乎绊我一跤！”说着，往上一瞧，唬的“嗷哟”一声，身子往后一仰，“咕咚”的栽在琥珀身上。琥珀也看见了，便大嚷起来，只是两只脚挪不动。外头的人也都听见了，跑进来一瞧，大家嚷着，报与邢王二夫人知道。

王夫人宝钗等听了，都哭着去瞧。邢夫人道：“我不料鸳鸯倒有这样志气！——快叫人去告诉老爷。”只有宝玉听见此信，便唬的双眼直竖。袭人等慌忙扶着说道：“你要哭就哭，别憋着气。”宝玉死命的才哭出来了，心想：“鸳鸯这样一个人，偏又这样死法！”又想：“实在天地间的灵气，独钟



justify their immorality by calling themselves romantics and passing it off lightly. In fact, before the expression of joy or anger, grief or happiness, love is latent in each one's nature; once these feelings are expressed then we have passion. *Our* love is as yet unexpressed like a flower in bud. If once expressed, it would cease to be true love."

Yuanyang's wraith nodded agreement, then followed Keqing's spirit.

After Hupo had bid farewell to the dead and heard Their Ladyships designate caretakers, she decided to go and ask Yuanyang what carriage they would be taking the next day. Unable to find her in the old lady's room, she approached the smaller room which opened off it. The door was closed, but peeping through a crack she was startled by the dim lamplight and flickering shadows, though she could hear not a sound.

She went away exclaiming, "Where can the wretch have run off to?" Bumping into Zhenzhu she asked, "Have you seen Sister Yuanyang?"

"I'm looking for her too," was the answer. "Their Ladyships want her. Is she asleep in the annex?"

"I had a peep and didn't see anyone. The lamp hasn't been trimmed, and it was too dark and scary to go in. But now we can go in together, to make sure there's no one inside."

As they went in to trim the lamp Zhenzhu exclaimed, "Who put the stool here? It nearly tripped me up!"

Happening to look up, she let out a little scream and fell backward, knocking hard against Hupo, who by then had also seen the fearful sight. She shrieked, rooted to the spot. People outside hearing their cries rushed in and, after exclaiming in horror, went to report this to Their Ladyships.

At this news, Lady Wang, Baochai and the rest shed tears and went to take a look.

Lady Xing remarked, "I never imagined Yuanyang had it in her! We must send word of this at once to the master."

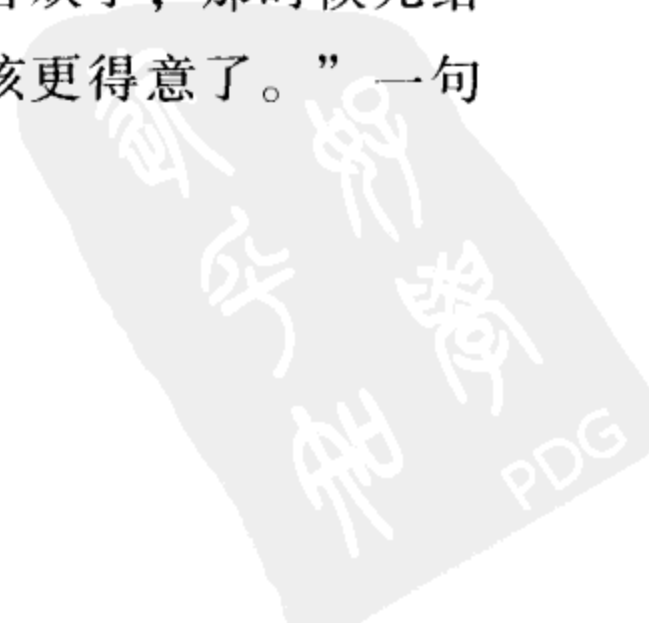
Baoyu kept silent, gaping in consternation, till Xiren anxiously took his arm and urged him, "Cry if you want to, but don't suppress your feelings."

Then Baoyu burst out wailing. "Only someone like Yuanyang would choose this way to die!" he thought. "The subtlest elements in the uni-

在这些女子身上了!他算得了死所。我们究竟是一件浊物,还是老太太的儿孙,谁能赶得上他?”复又喜欢起来。那时,宝钗听见宝玉大哭了出来,及到跟前,见他又笑。袭人等忙说:“不好了!又要疯了!”宝钗道:“不妨事,他有他的意思。”宝玉听了,更喜欢宝钗的话,“到底他还知道我的心,别人那里知道!”正在胡思乱想,贾政等进来,着实的嗟叹着说道:“好孩子!不枉老太太疼他一场!”即命贾琏:“出去吩咐人连夜买棺盛殓,明日便跟着老太太的殡送出,也停在老太太棺后,全了他的心志。”贾琏答应出去,这里命人将鸳鸯放下,停放里间屋内。

平儿也知道了,过来同袭人莺儿等一千人都哭的哀哀欲绝。内中紫鹃也想起自己终身,一无着落,恨不跟了林姑娘去,又全了主仆的恩义,又得了死所。如今空悬在宝玉屋内,虽说宝玉仍是柔情蜜意,究竟算不得什么,于是更哭得哀切。

王夫人即传了鸳鸯的嫂子进来,叫他看着人殓,遂与邢夫人商量了,在老太太项内赏了他嫂子一百两银子,还说等闲了将鸳鸯所有的东西俱赏他们。他嫂子磕了头出去,反喜欢说:“真真的我们姑娘是个有志气的,有造化的!又得了好名声,又得了好发送!”旁边一个婆子说道:“罢呀!嫂子!这会子你把一个活姑娘卖了一百银便这么喜欢了;那时候儿给了大老爷,你还不知得多少银钱呢,你该更得意了。”一句





verse are truly concentrated in such girls! She died a splendid death. Which of the old lady's sons or grandsons can compare with her, filthy creatures that we are?" This reflection raised his spirits.

Baochai had heard Baoyu wailing, but by the time she reached his side he was smiling.

"This is a bad sign!" cried Xiren. "He's losing his mind again."

"Don't worry," said Baochai. "He has his reason."

This delighted Baoyu, who thought, "After all she understands me. The others don't."

As Baoyu was letting his fancy run wild, Jia Zheng and some others came in.

"What a good girl!" declared Jia Zheng approvingly. "The old lady's love for her wasn't thrown away." He told Jia Lian, "Go and send to buy a coffin immediately and give her a good funeral. Tomorrow her coffin can go in the old lady's cortege and be left in the temple behind the old lady's coffin. This is what she wished for."

Jia Lian withdrew to attend to this, while orders were given to cut down Yuanyang's corpse and lay it out in the inner room.

Word of this brought Pinger, Xiren, Yinger and the other maids to the scene, where they mourned bitterly. Zijuan, who could see no future for herself, wished she had followed Daiyu to her grave to repay her mistress' kindness, thinking that would have been a good death. As it was, she was hanging about for nothing in Baoyu's quarters; for though he treated her affectionately, nothing would come of it. So she wept even more heart-rendingly than the rest.

Lady Wang now summoned Yuanyang's sister-in-law to attend to the coffining. After some discussion with Lady Xing, she also presented her with a hundred taels of the old lady's money, promising to give her all Yuanyang's belongings later. The sister-in-law kowtowed her thanks and withdrew.

"She really had spirit, the lucky girl!" she exulted. "Winning herself a good name like this and a fine send-off!"

"What a way to talk!" said a matron standing nearby. "You're so tickled at selling her life for a hundred taels, you'd have been even better pleased that year to have given her to the Elder Master for a still bigger

话戳了他嫂子的心，便红了脸走开了。刚走到二门上，见林之孝带了人抬进棺材来了，他只得也跟进去，帮着盛殓，假意哭嚎了几声。

贾政因他为贾母而死，要了香来，上了三炷，作了个揖，说：“他是殉葬的人，不可作丫头论，你们小一辈的都该行个礼儿。”宝玉听了，喜不自胜，走来恭恭敬敬磕了几个头。贾琏想他素日的好处，也要上来行礼，被邢夫人说道：

“有了一个爷们就是了，别折受的他不得超生。”贾琏就不便过来了。宝钗听着这话，好不自在，便说：“我原不该给他行礼，但只老太太去世，咱们都有未了之事，不敢胡为。他肯替咱们尽孝，咱们也该托托他，好好的替咱们伏侍老太太西去，也少尽一点子心哪！”说着，扶了莺儿走到灵前，一面奠酒，那眼泪早扑簌簌流下来了。奠毕，拜了几拜，狠狠的哭了他一场。众人也有说宝玉的两口子都是傻子，也有说他两个心肠儿好的，也有说他知礼的，贾政反倒合了意。一面商量定了看家的，仍是凤姐、惜春，余者都遣去伴灵。一夜谁敢安眠？

一到五更，听见外面齐人。到了辰初发引，贾政居长，衰麻哭泣，极尽孝子之礼。灵柩出了门，便有各家的路祭，一路上的风光，不必细述。走了半日，来至铁槛寺安灵，所有孝男等俱应在庙伴宿，不提。



sum.”

This home-thrust made the sister-in-law blush. She had just reached the inner gate when Lin Zhixiao led in men carrying the coffin, obliging her to return to help lay out the corpse and make a pretence of wailing.

Because Yuanyang had died for the Lady Dowager, Jia Zheng called for incense, lighted three sticks, and bowed before her coffin.

“Since she immolated herself she can’t be treated as a bondmaid,” he said. “All you youngsters should pay homage to her.”

Baoyu, only too glad to comply, came over and kowtowed respectfully. Jia Lian, mindful of her past goodness to him, wanted to follow suit but Lady Xing stopped him.

“It’s enough for one of the masters to kowtow to her,” she reasoned. “If we overdo it she’ll lose her chance of reincarnation.”

Then Jia Lian desisted.

Baochai put out by this officiousness said, “By rights I shouldn’t pay homage to her, but after the old lady’s death we dared do nothing rash because of all the business we had to attend to; and as she showed true filial piety in our place, we should entrust to her the task of serving the old lady in our stead when she enters paradise. So it’s only right for us to express our thanks.”

Then leaning on Yinger’s arm she went up to the coffin and poured a libation of wine, tears flowing down her cheeks. After that she bowed several times with clasped hands and wept bitterly. Some of those present thought Baoyu and his wife both rather crazed, others that they were compassionate yet others that they understood etiquette; and Jia Zheng approved of their conduct. They agreed to leave Xifeng and Xichun in charge of the house while the rest joined the funeral cortege. There was little sleep for anyone that night.

At the fifth watch the cortege could be heard assembling outside. At seven it set off, headed by Jia Zheng in deep mourning and weeping as befitted a filial son. Then the coffin was borne out of the gate and sacrifices were offered at the roadside by different families — we need not go into detail. Eventually they reached Iron Threshold Temple, where both coffins were deposited and all the men were required to stay. But no more of this.





且说家中林之孝带领拆了棚，将门窗上好，打扫净了院子，派了巡更的人，到晚打更上夜。只是荣府规例：一交二更，三门掩上，男人就进不去了，里头只有女人们查夜。凤姐虽隔了一夜，渐渐的神气清爽了些，只是那里动得？只有平儿同着惜春各处走了一走，吩咐了上夜的人，也便各自归房。

却说周瑞的干儿子何三，去年贾珍管事之时，因他和鲍二打架，被贾珍打了一顿，撵在外头，终日在赌场过日。近知贾母死了，必有些事情领办，岂知探了几天的信，一些也没有想头，便嗳声叹气的回到赌场中，闷闷的坐下。那些人便说道：“老三，你怎么不下来捞本儿了吗？”何三道：“倒想要捞一捞呢，就只没有钱么。”那些人道：“你到你们周大太爷那里去了几日，府里的钱，你也不知弄了多少来，又来和我们装穷儿了。”何三道：“你们还说呢！他们的金银不知有几百万，只藏着不用。明儿留着，不是火烧了，就是贼偷了，他们才死心呢！”那些人道：“你又撒谎。他家抄了家，还有多少金银？”何三道：“你们还不知道呢。抄的是撂不了的。如今老太太死后，还留了好些金银，他们一个也不使，都在老太太屋里搁着，等送了殡回来才分呢。”

内中有一个人听在心里，掷了几骰，便说：“我输了几个钱也不翻本儿了，睡去了。”说着，便走出来，拉了何三



Meanwhile in the Rong Mansion Lin Zhixiao supervised the dismantling of the sheds, refitted the doors and windows, had the courtyards swept clean and then assigned nightwatchmen. According to the rules of the house, after the second watch the three gates were closed and no man was permitted to enter the inner apartments, where only women kept watch.

Xifeng felt a little clearer in her mind after a night's rest, although too limp to get up. So Pinger and Xichun inspected the various apartments, then issued instructions to the women on watch and retired to their own quarters.

Let us turn back now to Zhou Rui's godson He San. The previous year when Jia Zhen was in charge, he had been thrashed and driven out because of his brawl with Bao Er, and he spent most of his time in a gambling-den. Recently, hearing of the old lady's death and assuming that there must be odd jobs going, he had gone there to make inquiries day after day — but all to no effect. He went back grumbling to the gambling-house and sat down dejectedly.

His cronies asked, "Why not play to recoup your losses?"

"I would if I could," said He San, "but I've no money."

"You've been with your godfather for several days and must have got pots of money from the Rong Mansion. Don't go telling us you're broke."

"Shut up!" he snapped. "They've got millions all right, but they're hanging on to it. It'll serve them right if one of these days there's a fire or thieves break in."

"You're lying again," said the others. "After their place was raided they can't have much left."

"A fat lot you know. It was only things from the palace that got confiscated. The old lady left masses of gold and silver, but they won't touch it — it's all tucked away in her room waiting to be shared out after the funeral."

One of the gamesters made a note of this and after a few more throws remarked, "I've lost quite a bit but won't try to win it back now. I'm for bed." As he left he pulled He San out too. "Come on," he said, "I want



道：“老三，我和你说句话。”何三跟他出来。那人道：“你这么个伶俐人，这么穷，我替你不服这口气！”何三道：“我命里穷，可有什么法儿呢？”那人道：“你才说荣府的银子这么多，为什么不去拿些使唤使唤？”何三道：“我的哥哥！他家的金银虽多，你我去白要一二钱，他们给咱们吗？”那人笑道：“他不给咱们，咱们就不会拿吗？”

何三听了这话里有话，忙问道：“依你说，怎么样拿呢？”那人道：“我说你没有本事，若是我，早拿了来了。”何三道：“你有什么本事？”那人便轻轻的说道：“你若要发财，你就引个头儿。我有好些朋友，都是通天的本事。别说他们送殡去了，家里只剩下几个女人，就让有多少男人也不怕！——只怕你没这么大胆子罢咧！”何三道：“什么敢不敢！你打量我怕那个干老子吗？我是瞧着干妈的情儿上头，才认他做干老子罢咧！他又算了人了？你刚才的话，就只怕弄不来，倒招了饥荒。他们那个衙门不熟？别说拿不来，倘或拿了来，也要闹出来的。”那人道：“这么说，你的运气来了！我的朋友，还有海边上的呢，现今都在这里。看个风头，等个门路，若到了手，你我在这里也无益，不如大家下海去受用，不好么？你若撂不下你干妈，咱们索性把你干妈也带了去，大家伙儿乐一乐，好不好？”何三道：“老大，你别是醉了罢？这些话混说的是什么！”说着，拉了那人走到个僻静地方，两个人商量了一回，各人分头而去，暂且不提。

且说包勇自被贾政吆喝，派去看园，贾母的事出来，也



a word with you.”

He San went out with him.

“You’re a smart fellow yet now you’re broke,” said the man. “I think it’s a shame.”

“It’s my fate to be poor. What can I do about it?”

“You just said there’s pots of silver in the Rong Mansion. Why don’t you get hold of some?”

“Brother, they may be rolling in gold and silver, yet when the likes of us ask for a cent or two will they part with it for nothing?”

“If they won’t, what’s to stop us from helping ourselves?”

Catching his implication He San demanded, “Then what do you suggest?”

“I call you pretty dumb. If I were you I’d have taken it long ago.”

“How would you go about it?”

“If you want to make a pile,” the other whispered, “all you need do is act as guide. I have plenty of friends who are dabs at this. Not to say the Jias are away at the funeral, with only a few women left in the house; no matter how many men were there we wouldn’t be afraid! All I’m afraid of is that you haven’t the guts.”

“Of course I have! Do you think I’m scared of that godfather of mine? I only put up with him for my godmother’s sake. He doesn’t count. As for your idea, I’m afraid it may be a flop and land us in trouble instead. They have connections, you know, in all the yamens. So quite apart from the fact that we may not pull it off, even if we do they’ll raise a hullabaloo.”

“If that’s all that’s worrying you, you’re in luck! I’ve palled up with some men from the coast, who are on the look-out here for some opening. If we get the loot, there’s no point in staying here — we’d better go to sea to have a good time, eh? If you don’t want to ditch your godmother, we can take her along as well to share the fun. How about it?”

“You must be drunk, old man, to talk such rubbish!” With that He San pulled him to a quiet spot to discuss the matter further. Then they went their different ways, and there we will leave them.

Let us now revert to Bao Yong, who had been berated by Jia Zheng



忙了，不曾派他差使。他也不理会，总是自做自吃，闷来睡一觉，醒时便在园里耍刀弄棍，倒也无拘无束。那日贾母一早出殡，他虽知道，因没有派他差使，他任意闲游，只见一个女尼带了一个道婆来到园内腰门那里扣门。包勇走来，说道：“女师父，那里去？”道婆道：“今日听得老太太的事完了，不见四姑娘送殡，想必是在家看家。恐他寂寞，我们师父来瞧他一瞧。”包勇道：“主子都不在家，园门是我看的，请你们回去罢。要来呢，等主子们回来了再来。”婆子道：“你是那里来的个黑炭头？也要管起我们的走动来了！”包勇道：“我嫌你们这些人，我不叫你们来，你们有什么法儿？”婆子生了气，嚷道：“这都是反了天的事了！连老太太在日还不能拦我们的来往走动呢，你是那里的这么个横强盗，这样没法没天的？我偏要打这里走！”说着，便把手在门环上狠狠的打了几下。

妙玉已气的不言语，正要回身便走，不料里头看二门的婆子听见有人拌嘴，连忙开门一看，见是妙玉，已经回身走去，明知必是包勇得罪了走了。近日婆子们都知道上头太太们四姑娘都和他亲近，恐他日后说出门上不放进他来，那时如何耽得住，赶忙走来，说：“不知师父来，我们开门迟了。我们四姑娘在家里，还正想师父呢。快请回来。看园的小子是个新来的，他不知咱们的事。回来回了太太，打他一顿，撵出去就完了。”妙玉虽是听见，总不理他。那禁得看腰门



and sent to keep watch in the Garden. After the Lady Dowager's death, although the whole household was busy while he was assigned no job that did not disturb him. He cooked his own meals, went to sleep when bored, and in his waking hours would exercise with a sword or staff in the Garden, left to his own devices. That morning he knew that the funeral cortege had left, but as no assignment had been given him he rambled round as his custom was till he saw a nun with an old deaconess go up to the side-gate and start knocking on it.

Bao Yong went over and asked, "Where are you going, reverend sister?"

The deaconess said, "We heard today that the services for the old lady have ended, but didn't see Miss Xichun with the cortege, so we think she must be at home minding the house. For fear she may feel lonely, my mistress has come to call on her."

"The family are all away and I'm the gateman here," was Bao Yong's reply. "I must ask you to go back. If you want to call, wait till the masters are back."

"What upstart scavenger are you," she asked, "that you try to interfere with our coming or going?"

"I've no use for the likes of you," was his retort. "I won't let you in, so you'll just have to lump it."

"The impertinence!" she screeched. "Even when the old lady was alive, no one ever stopped us from coming. Who are you, you lawless brigand? We're going this way, so there!" With that she beat a tattoo with the door-rapper.

Miaoyu, speechless with anger, was about to turn back when the woman in charge of the inner gate heard them quarrelling and hastily opened the gate. Seeing Miaoyu turning away, she guessed that Bao Yong must have offended her. As all the women-servants knew how fond their mistresses and Xichun were of Miaoyu, she feared that if they came to learn that she had been refused admittance there would be trouble.

She hurried over calling, "We didn't know you were here, sister, and were late in opening the gate. Miss Xichun is at home, longing to see you. Please come back. This caretaker is new here and doesn't know our ways. We'll report him later to Her Ladyship and see that he's given a

的婆子赶上，再四央求，后来才说出怕自己担不是，几乎急的跪下。妙玉无奈，只得随着那婆子过来。包勇见这般光景，自然不好再拦，气得瞪眼叹气而回。

这里妙玉带了道婆走到惜春那里，道了恼，叙些闲话。惜春说起：“在家看家，只好熬个几夜，但是二奶奶病着，一个人又闷又害怕。能有一个人在这里，我就放心，如今里头一个男人也没有。今儿你既光降，肯伴我一宵，咱们下棋说话儿，可使得么？”妙玉本来不肯，见惜春可怜，又提起下棋，一时高兴应了。打发道婆回去取了茶具衣褥，命侍儿送了过来，大家坐谈一夜。惜春欣幸异常，便命彩屏去开上年蠲的雨水，预备好茶。那妙玉自有茶具。道婆去了不多一时，又来了一个侍者，送下妙玉日用之物。惜春亲自烹茶。两人言语投机，说了半天。那时天有初更时候，彩屏放下棋枰，两人对弈。惜春连输两盘，妙玉又让了四个子儿，惜春方赢了半子。

不觉已到四更，正是天空地阔，万籁无声。妙玉道：“我到五更须得打坐，我自有人伏侍，你自去歇息。”惜春犹是不舍，见妙玉要自己养神，不便扭他。刚要歇去，猛听得东边上屋内上夜的人一片声喊起。惜春那里的老婆子们也接着声嚷道：“了不得了！有了人了！”唬得惜春彩屏等心胆俱裂，听见外头上夜的男人便声喊起来。妙玉道：“不好了！必是这里有了贼了！”说着赶忙的关上屋门，便掩了灯光，在窗户



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whipping and thrown out.”

When Miaoyu pretended not to hear, the woman chased after her and pleaded with her. Finally she voiced her own fear of punishment, all but going down on her knees, she was so frantic. So Miaoyu had to follow her through the gate. BaoYong glared but, unable to bar the way, went off fuming.

Miaoyu, attended by the old deaconess, called on Xichun and after expressing her condolences they started chatting.

Xichun told her, “I’m to stay and look after the house, and shall have to manage as best I can for a few nights; but Madam Lian is ill and I find it boring and scaring all on my own. If I had company I’d feel easier, for there isn’t a single man in the house now. As you’ve done me the honour of calling today, won’t you spend the night with me? We can play draughts and chat.”

Miaoyu had no wish to stay but gave her consent because Xichun looked so pathetic, and a game of draughts appealed to her too. When she had sent back the deaconess to get her maid to bring over her tea things, night-clothes and bedding, they settled down for a good talk; and Xichun in her delight told Caiping to fetch some rain water kept from the previous year to brew some choice tea. Miaoyu would not drink out of any cups but her own; however, before long her maid brought over her things and Xichun herself made the tea. They chatted happily until the first watch, when Caiping got out the draughts board and they played draughts. Xichun lost twice in succession, then managed to win the third game by half a point only because Miaoyu ceded her four pieces.

In no time it was the fourth watch. The night was still, with not a sound outside.

“I must meditate at the fifth watch,” Miaoyu remarked. “My maid will look after me. You’d better rest.”

Xichun felt reluctant to part with her, but could hardly interfere with her devotions. She was about to go to bed when the women keeping watch in the Lady Dowager’s quarters on the east side set up a sudden commotion. At once the matrons attending Xichun joined in.

“Help!” they screamed. “Men have broken in!”

In a panic, Xichun and Caiping heard the night-watch outside shouting





眼内往外一瞧，只见几个男人站在院内，唬得不敢作声，回身摆着手，轻轻的爬下来，说：“了不得！外头有几个大汉站着。”

说犹未了，又听得房上响声不绝，便有外头上夜的人进来吆喝拿贼。一个人说道：“上屋里的东西都丢了，并不见人。东边有人去了，咱们到西边去。”惜春的老婆子听见有自己的人，便在外间屋里说道：“这里有好些人上了房了。”上夜的都道：“你瞧！这可不是吗？”大家一齐嚷起来。只听房上飞下好些瓦来，众人都不敢上前。正在没法，只听园里腰门一声大响，打进门来。见一个稍长大汉，手执木棍，众人唬得藏躲不及。听得那人喊说道：“不要跑了他们一个！你们都跟我来！”这些家人听了这话，越发唬得骨软筋酥，连跑也跑不动了。只见这人站在当地，只管乱喊。家人中有一个眼尖些的看出来，——你道是谁？正是甄家荐来的包勇。这些家人不觉胆壮起来，便颤巍巍的说道：“有一个走了！有的在房上呢！”包勇便向地下一扑，耸身上房，追赶那贼。

这些贼人明知贾家无人，先在院内偷看惜春房内，见有个绝色尼姑，便顿起淫心，又欺上屋俱是女人，且又畏惧，正要踹进门去，因听外面有人进来追赶，所以贼众上房。见人不多，还想抵挡，猛见一人上房赶来，那些贼见是一人，越发不理论了，便用短兵抵住。那经得包勇用力一棍打去，将贼打下房来。那些贼飞奔而逃，从园墙过去。包勇也在房上追捕。岂知园内早藏下了几个在那里接赃，已经接过好些。见贼伙跑回，大家举械保护。见追的只有一人，明欺寡不敌众，反倒迎上来。包勇一见生气，道：“这些毛贼！敢来和我斗斗！”那伙贼便说：“我们有一个伙计被他们打倒了，不知死活，咱们索性抢了他出来！”这里包勇闻声即打。那伙贼便轮起器械，四五个人围住包勇，乱打起来。外头上夜



too.

“Mercy!” gasped Miaoyu. “They must be robbers!”

She promptly locked the door, shrouded the lamp and peeped out through the window. There were men standing in the yard. Too terrified to utter a sound, she turned, signalling for silence, then crept back and whispered, “What shall we do? There are some rough fellows outside.”

That same instant they heard a great clattering on the roof, and watchmen came running to their compound to catch the thieves.

One called, “The old lady’s room has been ransacked, but there’s nobody there. We have men at the east side; let’s search the west ourselves.”

When Xichun’s serving-women heard that these were their own family retainers, they called out, “There are lots of them on our roof!”

The watchmen yelled, “Look! There they are!” and raised a clamour; but as tiles were raining down from the roof they dared not clamber up. Just as they were at a loss, the side-gate of the Garden banged and through it rushed a hefty fellow wielding a staff. At sight of him they took cover in alarm.

“Don’t let one of them get away!” the newcomer yelled. “All follow me!”

The servants were too consternated to move — their bones seemed turned to water. They stared at that fellow standing there bellowing till the most keen-sighted among them identified him as Bao Yong, recommended to their house by the Zhen family. That reassured them.

“One has gone,” they faltered. “Some others are up on the roof.”

Bao Yong ran and vaulted on to the roof to give chase.

The thieves had known that there were no men in the house. While in Xichun’s courtyard they had peeped through the window and been inflamed by the sight of a ravishing nun. As there were only terrified women inside, they were about to kick down the door when they heard the night-watch rushing in after them and promptly climbed up the roof. When they saw that their pursuers were few they thought of putting up a fight, but just then someone leapt on to the roof and charged them. As he was alone the thieves were not alarmed and went for him with knives; but when Bao Yong with his staff knocked one of them off the roof, the rest



的人也都仗着胆子只顾赶了来。众贼见斗他不过，只得跑了。包勇还要赶时，被一个箱子一绊，立定看时，心想东西未丢，众贼远逃，也不追赶，便叫众人将灯照看。地下只有几个空箱，叫人收拾，他便欲跑回上房。因路径不熟，走到凤姐那边，见里面灯烛辉煌，便问：“这里有贼没有？”里头的平儿战兢兢的说道：“这里也没开门，只听上屋叫喊，说有贼呢，你到那里去罢。”包勇正摸不着路头，遥见上夜的人过来，才跟着一齐寻到上屋。见是门开户启，那些上夜的在那里啼哭。

一时，贾芸林之孝都进来了，见是失盗，大家着急。进内查点，老太太的房门大开，将灯一照，锁头拧折。进内一瞧，箱柜已开。便骂那些上夜女人道：“你们都是死人么？贼人进来，你们都不知道么？”那些上夜的人啼哭着说道：“我们几个人轮更上夜，是管二三更的。我们都没有住脚，前后走的。他们是四更五更。我们才下班儿，只听见他们喊起来，并不见一个人。赶着照看，不知什么时候把东西早已丢了。求爷们问管四更五更的！”林之孝道：“你们个个要死！回来再说，咱们先到各处看去。”上夜的男人领着走到尤氏那





fled over the Garden wall with him in hot pursuit. Accomplices hidden in the Garden to receive the loot had already carried most of it off. When they saw the thieves fleeing they drew weapons to defend them, and as Bao Yong was one against many they swarmed round him.

“You bandits!” he swore. “Dare you take me on?”

One thief reminded the rest, “He knocked down one of our mates whom, dead or alive, we’d better carry off.”

Bao Yong hit out and four or five of the ruffians, all armed, surrounded him and fought back wildly. But now the nightwatchmen plucked up courage to join in, and seeing that they could not get the upper hand the thieves had to run for it. Bao Yong, pursuing them, tripped over a case. When he regained his balance he thought: If the things are still here and the thieves have got away, there’s no point in chasing them. He told the other servants to search with their lanterns, but all they found on the ground were a few empty cases which he asked them to put away while he himself went to the mistresses’ quarters. As he did not know the way, he arrived first at Xifeng’s house which was lit up.

“Do you have thieves here?” he asked.

Pinger inside quavered, “We haven’t opened the gate. We only heard them shouting that there were thieves in the old lady’s rooms. You’d better go there.”

Bao Yong was wondering what path to take when some watchmen turned up and led the way. They found all the doors open and the women on night duty weeping and wailing.

Presently Jia Yun and Lin Zhixiao arrived, frantic at having learned of the robbery. They went in to investigate. The door to the old lady’s room was wide open, and they saw by their lanterns that the lock was broken. Going in, they found all the chests and cases empty.

They swore at the women who had been on duty, “Are you all dead? Didn’t you know when thieves broke in?”

The women sobbed, “We took turns keeping watch, and our shifts were before midnight. We never stopped making our rounds from front to back. Those thieves came well after midnight when we’d gone, so we just heard shouting but didn’t see anybody. You must ask the women in charge of the later shifts, sir.”



边，门儿关紧。有几个接音说：“唬死我们了！”林之孝问道：“这里没有丢东西呀？”里头的人方开了门，道：“这里没丢东西。”

林之孝带着人走到惜春院内，只听得里面说道：“了不得！唬死了姑娘了。醒醒儿罢！”林之孝便叫人开门，问是怎么了。里头婆子开门，说：“贼在这里打仗，把姑娘都唬坏了。亏得妙师父和彩屏才将姑娘救醒。东西是没失。”林之孝道：“贼人怎么打仗？”上夜的男人说：“幸亏包大爷上了房把贼打跑了去了，还听见打倒了一个人呢。”包勇道：“在园门那里呢，你们快瞧去罢。”

贾芸等走到那边，果然看见一个人躲在地下，死了，细细的一瞧，好像是周瑞的干儿子。众人见了诧异，派了一个人看守着，又派了两个人照看前后门。走到门前看时，那门俱仍旧关锁着。林之孝便叫人开了门，报了营官。立刻到来查勘贼踪，是从后夹道子上了房的，到了西院房上，见那瓦片破碎不堪，一直过了后园去了。众上夜的人齐声说道：“这不是贼，是强盗。”营官着急道：“并非明火执仗，怎么便算是强盗呢？”上夜的道：“我们赶贼，他在房上撒瓦，我们不能到他跟前，幸亏我们家的姓包的上房打退。赶到园里，还有好几个贼竟和姓包的打起仗来，打不过姓包的，才都跑了。”营官道：“可又来，若是强盗，难道倒打不过你们的人么？不用说了，你们快查清了东西，递了失单，我们报就是了。”

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“You all deserve to die!” fumed Lin Zhixiao. “We’ll deal with you later. Let’s go first to the different quarters to have a look.”

The watchmen took them to where Madam You lived. The gate was locked, but some women inside called out, “Oh, what a fright we had!”

“Did you lose anything here?” asked Lin Zhixiao.

They opened the door saying, “Nothing.”

Next Lin Zhixiao led the way to Xichun’s quarters.

“Mercy on us!” they heard a woman inside exclaiming. “Our young lady’s fainted for fright. Quick, bring her round!”

He told them to open the door and asked what had happened.

The woman who admitted them reported, “Thieves were fighting here, and our young lady passed out for terror. Luckily Sister Miaoyu was here, and she and Caiping revived her. We haven’t lost anything.”

“What were the thieves fighting over?”

A watchman told him, “We have to thank Bao Yong for jumping on the roof to chase them away. We heard that he knocked down one of the thieves too.”

“He’s by the Garden gate,” volunteered Bao Yong. “You’d better go quickly to have a look at him.”

Jia Yun and the others did so. They found a man lying there dead. Looking at him closely, to their surprise they recognized Zhou Rui’s godson. They assigned one man to guard the corpse and two others to watch the front and back gates, both still locked. Lin Zhixiao told men to open the gate and report this robbery to the police. At once an investigation was made, and it was discovered that the thieves had climbed up to the roof from the back passage. Following their tracks to the roof of the west courtyard, they found many broken tiles and other tracks leading to the back and the Garden.

The watchmen insisted, “They were brigands, not thieves.”

The constable protested, “If they didn’t break in openly with torches and clubs, how can you call them brigands?”

“When we gave chase, they pelted us with tiles from the roof so that we couldn’t get near them. Then one of our household, a man called Bao, managed to get on the roof and beat them off. When he chased them to the Garden, a whole bunch of them attacked him. They only ran

贾芸等又到了上屋里，已见凤姐扶病过来，惜春也来了。贾芸请了凤姐的安，问了惜春的好，大家查看失物。因鸳鸯已死，琥珀等又送灵去了，那些东西都是老太太的，并没见过数儿，只用封锁，如今打从那里查起？众人都说：“箱柜东西不少，如今一空。偷的时候儿自然不小了，那些上夜的人管做什么的？况且打死的贼是周瑞的干儿子，必是他们通同一气的！”凤姐听了，气的眼睛直瞪瞪的，便说：“把那些上夜的女人都拴起来，交给营里去审问！”众人叫苦连天，跪地哀求。不知怎生发放，并失去的物件有无着落，下回分解。





away after they started getting the worst of it.”

“That proves it,” the constable said. “If they’d been brigands, couldn’t they have beaten you people? Never mind that now. Quickly check on what has been stolen and send in a list so that we can report it to our superiors.”

Jia Yun and the others went back to the main apartments, where Xifeng had come, ill as she was, and Xichun. Jia Yun paid his respects to Xifeng and greeted Xichun, then together they tried to find out what was missing. But as Yuanyang was dead and Hupo and the old lady’s other maids had gone to the funeral, no one knew exactly how many things she had had, since they had been kept locked up. So how could they make a check?

They said, “There were many things in these cases and chests, and now they’re all empty. It must have taken quite a time to ransack them. What were those women on night duty doing? And the thief killed was Zhou Rui’s godson. So it must have been partly an inside job.”

“Have all those women locked up,” ordered Xifeng, glaring at them furiously. “Then take them to the police to be cross-examined!”

The women fell on their knees, wailing, to beg for mercy. How they were dealt with and whether or not the lost property was recovered is recorded in the next chapter.





## 第一百十二回

活冤孽妙姑遭大劫 死雠仇赵妾赴冥曹

话说凤姐命捆起上夜的女人，送营审问，众女人跪地哀求。林之孝同贾芸道：“你们求也无益。老爷派我们看家，没事是造化；如今有了事，上下都耽不是，谁救得你？若说是周瑞的干儿子，连太太起，里里外外的都不干净。”凤姐喘吁吁的说道：“这都是命里所招，和他们说什么？带了他们去就是了。那丢的东西，你告诉营里去说：‘实在是老太太的东西，问老爷们才知道。等我们报了去，请了老爷们回去，自然开了失单送来。’文官衙门里我们也是这样报。”贾芸林之孝答应出去。

惜春一句话也没有，只是哭道：“这些事，我从来没有听说过，为什么偏偏碰在咱们两个人身上！明儿老爷太太回来，叫我怎么见人？说把家里交给你们，如今闹到这个分儿，还想活着么？”凤姐道：“咱们愿意吗？现在有上夜的人在那里。”惜春道：“你还能说，况且你又病着；我是没有说的。这都是我大嫂子害了我了！他撺掇着太太派我看家的。如今我的脸搁在那里呢？”说着，又痛哭起来。凤姐道：“姑娘，你快别这么想。若说没脸，大家一样的。你若是这个糊涂想头，我更搁不住了。”



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## Chapter 112

### A Terrible Disaster Befalls Miaoyu Nursing Enmity Concubine Zhao Is Haled Off to Hell



When Xifeng ordered the women on night duty to be bound and sent to the police for interrogation, they threw themselves on their knees to beg for mercy.

"It's no use pleading," said Lin Zhixiao and Jia Yun. "The master left us in charge here. If nothing had happened, well and good; as it is, high and low alike we're all in trouble so who can get you off? If the dead man is Zhou Rui's godson, then from Her Ladyship down the whole household is involved."

"This is our fate," gasped Xifeng. "Why talk to them? Just turn them in. As for what was stolen, assure the police that it was the old lady's property and we must find out from the masters just what she had. After this is reported to them and they come back, we shall certainly send in the list of stolen goods and notify the civil authorities too."

Jia Yun and the steward assented and withdrew.

Xichun, who had given no orders simply lamented, "I've never heard of such a thing before! Why did this have to happen to *us* of all people? How can I face the master and mistress when they come back? They'll say: We entrusted the house to you, and you let this dreadful thing happen. How can I live on?"

"We didn't wish it on ourselves, did we?" said Xifeng. "Anyway, it's the night-watchers who are responsible."

"You have some justification because you're ill; but I have no excuse. It's my elder sister-in-law who did for me by getting the mistress to make me mind the house! How can I look anyone in the face again?" She broke down anew and wept.

"Don't take it so hard," said Xifeng. "We've all lost face equally. If you take this silly attitude I shall feel worse."



二人正说着，只听见外头院子里有人大嚷的说道：“我说那三姑六婆是再要不得的！我们甄府里从来是一概不许上门的。不想这府里倒不讲究这个！昨儿老太太的殡才出去，那个什么庵里的尼姑死要到咱们这里来。我吆喝着不准他进来，腰门上的老婆子们倒骂我，死央及着叫那姑子进来。那腰门子一会儿开着，一会儿关着，不知做什么。我不放心，没敢睡，听到四更，这里就嚷起来。我来叫门倒不开了。我听见声儿紧了，打开了门，见西边院子里有人站着，我便赶上打死了。我今儿才知道这是四姑奶奶的屋子，那个姑子就在里头。今儿天没亮溜出去了，可不是那姑子引进来的贼么？”

平儿等听着，都说：“这是谁这么没规矩？姑娘奶奶都在这里，敢在外头这么混嚷？”凤姐道：“你听他说甄府里，别就是甄家荐来的那个厌物罢？”惜春听得明白，更加心里受不了。凤姐接着问惜春道：“那个人混说什么姑子？你们那里弄了个姑子住下了？”惜春便将妙玉来瞧他，留着下棋守夜的话说了。凤姐道：“是他么？他怎么肯这样？是再没有的话。但是叫这讨人嫌的东西嚷出来，老爷知道了，也不好。”惜春愈想愈怕，站起来要走。凤姐虽说坐不住，又怕惜春害怕，弄出事来，只得叫他先别走：“且看着人把偷剩下的东西收起来，再派了人看着，咱们好走。”平儿道：“咱们不敢收，等衙门里来了，踏看了才好收呢。咱们只好看着。但只不知老爷那里有人去了没有？”凤姐道：“你叫老婆子问去。”一回进来说：“林之孝是走不开，家下人要伺候查验



Just then someone in the yard started bellowing, "I've always said those nuns, bawds, go-betweens and the like are no good! Our Zhen family never let such creatures cross our threshold. Who would have thought *this* house would put up with them? Yesterday, the moment the old lady's cortege left, that nun from some small temple was dead set on coming over here. When I refused to admit her, the old woman at the side-gate bawled *me* out and fairly grovelled to invite her in. The side-gate kept opening and shutting — heaven knows what they were up to! I was too worried to sleep, and at the fourth watch bedlam broke loose inside. They wouldn't let me in when I saw a fellow standing in the west courtyard I charged over and killed him. Today I've discovered that this is where Miss Xichun lives, and where that nun came. She sneaked off this morning before it was light. Stands to reason it was the nun who led the thieves in!"

"Who is this mannerless wretch?" demanded Pinger. "How dare he shout so wildly outside when there are ladies in here?"

"Didn't you hear him talk of the Zhen family?" Xifeng said. "He must be that pesky creature they recommended." She asked Xichun, now even more upset by Bao Yong's diatribe, "What nun was he ranting about? Did you have some nun staying with you?"

Xichun explained how Miaoyu had called and how she had kept her for the night to play draughts.

"So that's who it was. And she was willing? Well, wonders will never cease! But if this tiresome wretch keeps yelling about it and the master hears, there may be trouble."

Nervous about the possible consequences, Xichun stood up to leave. Xifeng urged her to stay for, although she could hardly bear up, she was afraid that Xichun in her alarm might do something desperate.

"Wait till we've seen them put away the things left by the thieves and assigned people to keep an eye on the place," she said. "Then we can go."

Pinger interposed, "How can we put anything away till officers have come to investigate? We'll just have to stay and keep watch here. But has anyone gone to report this to the master?"

Xifeng told her to send a matron to find out, and the latter came back to announce, "Lin Zhixiao can't get away, and some servants will have

的，再有的是说不清楚的，已经芸二爷去了。”凤姐点头，同惜春坐着发愁。

且说那伙贼原是何三等邀的，偷抢了好些金银财宝接运出去，见人追赶，知道都是那些不中用的人，要往西边屋内偷去，在窗外看见里面灯光底下两个美人：一个姑娘，一个姑子。那些贼那顾性命，顿起不良，就要踹进来，因见包勇来赶，才获赃而逃，只不见了何三。大家且躲入窝家，到第二天打听动静，知是何三被他们打死，已经报了文武衙门，这里是躲不住的，便商量趁早归入海洋大盗一处去；若迟了，通缉文书一行，关津上就过不去了。

内中一个人胆子极大，便说：“咱们走是走，我就只舍不得那个姑子。长的实在好看！不知是哪个庵里的雏儿呢？”一个人道：“啊呀！我想起来了！必就是贾府园里的什么栊翠庵里的姑子。不是前年外头说他和他们家什么宝二爷有原故，后来不知怎么又害起相思病来了，请大夫吃药的？就是他！”那一个人听了，说：“咱们今日躲一天，叫咱们大哥拿钱置办些买卖行头。明儿亮钟时候，陆续出关。你们在关外二十里坡等我。”众贼议定，分赃俵散不提。

且说贾政等送殡到了寺内，安厝毕，亲友散去。贾政在外厢房伴灵，邢王二夫人等在内，一宿无非哭泣。

到了第二日，重新上祭。正摆饭时，只见贾芸进来，在



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to stay to wait on the officers while the others can't take a clear message. So young Master Yun has gone."

Xifeng nodded and, with Xichun, went on sitting there anxiously.

To return to the gang of thieves roped in by He San, after they had carried off the old lady's gold, silver and other valuables and seen how feeble their pursuers were, they decided to rob the houses on the west side. Looking through a lighted window there they saw two beauties: a young lady and a nun. Then these wicked desperadoes would have broken in had not Bao Yong's arrival made them run off with their loot, although He San was missing. They hid for the time being with their fence, and the next day learned that He San had been killed and the theft reported to the authorities — which meant they could not stay in the capital. They decided to make haste to join some pirates at sea, for if they delayed until warrants were out against them they would be unable to pass the customs stations.

"Of course we must clear out," said the boldest among them. "But I can't bear to leave that nun behind. She's certainly a beauty! I wonder from which nunnery this chick comes."

"I know!" exclaimed another. "She must be from that Green Lattice Nunnery in the Jia Mansion. Wasn't there talk some years ago of an affair between her and their Master Bao? She was said to be so lovesick that a doctor was called in to give her some potion."

Thereupon the other proposed, "Let's lie low for one more day while our chief buys what we need for the journey. Tomorrow when the dawn bell strikes, you can leave the city gate separately and wait for me at *Twenty-li Slope* outside."

Having agreed to this, the thieves divided out the loot and dispersed.

Meanwhile Jia Zheng and the others had escorted the coffin to Iron Threshold Temple and deposited it there, after which the relatives and friends went back. Jia Zheng kept vigil in the outer hall of the temple, Lady Xing and Lady Wang within, lamenting the whole night long.

The next day another sacrifice was to be held and the offerings were being set out when Jia Yun arrived. Having kowtowed before the Lady

老太太灵前磕了个头，忙忙的跑到贾政跟前，跪下请了安，喘吁吁的将昨夜被盗，将老太太上房的东西都偷去，包勇赶贼，打死了一个，已经呈报文武衙门的话说了一遍。贾政听了发怔。邢王二夫人等在里头也听见了，都唬得魂不附体。并无一言，只有啼哭。贾政过了一会子，问：“失单怎样开的？”贾芸回道：“家里的人都不知道，还没有开单。”贾政道：“还好。咱们动过家的，若开出好的来，反耽罪名。快叫琏儿。”

那时贾琏领了宝玉等别处上祭未回，贾政叫人赶了回来。贾琏听了，急得直跳，一见芸儿，也不顾贾政在那里，便把贾芸狠狠的骂了一顿，说：“不配抬举的东西！我将这样重任托你，押着人上夜巡更，你是死人么？亏你还有脸来告诉！”说着，望贾芸脸上啐了几口。贾芸垂手站着，不敢回一言。贾政道：“你骂他也无益了。”贾琏然后跪下，说：“这便怎么样？”贾政道：“也没法儿，只有报官缉贼。但只是一件，老太太遗下的东西，咱们都没动。你说要银子，我想老太太死得几天，谁忍得动他那一项银子？原打量完了事，算了账，还人家；再有的，在这里和南边置坟产的。所有东西也没见数儿。如今说文武衙门要失单，若将几件好的东西开上，恐有碍；若说金银若干，衣饰若干，又没有实在数目，谎开使不得。倒可笑你如今竟换了一个人了，为什么这样料理不开？你跪在这里是怎么样呢？”



Dowager's coffin he ran over to kneel to Jia Zheng and pay his respects, then blurted out the news of last night's robbery — how everything in the old lady's rooms had been stolen, how Bao Yong had given chase and killed one of the thieves, and how they had reported this to the authorities. Jia Zheng listened dumbfounded. Their Ladyships overhearing this inside were frightened out of their wits. Speechless, they could only sob.

After a while Jia Zheng asked, "How did you draw up the list of stolen property?"

"As no one at home knew what was there, we haven't drawn it up yet," was Jia Yun's reply.

"So much the better. As our house was searched, to list any valuables would be reprehensible. Tell Lian to come here at once."

He sent for Jia Lian, who had taken Baoyu and some others to sacrifice elsewhere. And Jia Lian was so frantic when he heard the news that, regardless of Jia Zheng's presence, he cursed Jia Yun.

"You worthless wretch!" he fumed. "When I trusted you with such an important job, you should have seen to it that the place was patrolled at night. What are you — a zombie? I wonder you have the nerve to come and report it."

He spat repeatedly in Jia Yun's face while the young man stood at respectful attention, not daring to say a word.

"It's no use swearing at him," objected Jia Zheng.

Then Jia Lian knelt to ask him, "What shall we do, sir?"

"All we can do is report this to the authorities and hope they will apprehend the thieves. The trouble is that we didn't touch the old lady's legacy. When you asked for money I thought it wrong to use her silver so soon after her death, meaning to settle accounts and pay the workmen after the funeral. I intended to use what was left to buy land here and in the south near the ancestral graveyard to provide for sacrificial expenses. I don't really know how much she had left. Now that the authorities want a list of what's lost, it may cause further trouble to mention valuables. In any case, we don't know the exact amount of her gold and silver or her clothes and trinkets, and we can't fake it up. It's ridiculous, I must say, the way you've bungled affairs. What's come over you?"





贾琏也不敢答言，只得站起来就走。贾政又叫道：“你那里去？”贾琏又回来，道：“侄儿赶回家去料理清楚。”贾政哼了一声，贾琏把头低下。贾政道：“你进去回了你母亲，叫了老太太的一两个丫头去，叫他们细细的想了，开单子。”

贾琏心里明知老太太的东西都是鸳鸯经管，他死了问谁？就问珍珠，他们那里记得清楚？只不敢驳回，连连的答应了。回身走到里头，邢王二夫人又埋怨了一顿，叫贾琏快回去问他们这些看家的说：“明儿怎么见我们？”贾琏也只得答应了出来，一面命人套车，预备琥珀等进城；自己骑上骡子，跟了几个小厮，如飞的回去。贾芸也不敢再回贾政，斜签着身子慢慢的溜出来，骑上了马，来赶贾琏。一路无话。

到了家中，林之孝请了安，一直跟了进来。贾琏到了老太太上屋里，见了凤姐惜春在那里，心里又恨，又说不出来，便问林之孝道：“衙门里瞧了没有？”林之孝自知有罪，便跪下回道：“文武衙门都瞧了，来踪去迹也看了，尸也验了。”贾琏吃惊道：“又验什么尸？”林之孝又将包勇打死的伙贼似周瑞的干儿子的话回了贾琏。贾琏道：“叫芸儿！”贾芸进来，也跪着听话。贾琏道：“你见老爷时，怎么没有回周瑞的干儿子做贼被包勇打死的话？”贾芸说道：“上夜的人说像他的，恐怕不真，所以没有回。”贾琏道：“好糊涂东西！”





What use is it kneeling there?"

Not venturing to answer, Jia Lian stood up to leave.

"Where are you going?" snapped Jia Zheng.

He turned back to reply, "I'm going to hurry home to straighten things out, sir."

When Jia Zheng simply snorted, Jia Lian hung his head again.

"Go in and tell your mother first," ordered Jia Zheng. "Take one or two of the old lady's maids with you. Tell them to think carefully then make out a list."

Jia Lian knew perfectly well that all the old lady's things had been in the charge of Yuanyang who was dead; so to whom could he apply for information? Zhenzhu and the others would certainly not know. However, afraid to argue, he assented. Then he went inside where he was taken to task again by Their Ladyships, who told him to hurry back and ask the caretakers, "How will you have the face to meet us tomorrow?"

Jia Lian agreed and withdrew to order a carriage for Hupo and the maids. Mounting a mule himself he galloped home accompanied by a few pages. Jia Yun, too cowed to say any more to Jia Zheng, withdrew slowly with lowered head to mount his horse and follow. We can pass over their journey.

When Jia Lian reached home, Lin Zhixiao paid his respects and followed him in to the old lady's quarters where Xifeng and Xichun were. Though seething with anger Jia Lian could not vent it on them.

He asked Lin Zhixiao, "Have officers been sent to investigate?"

With a guilty conscience the steward knelt down and reported, "The civil authorities have investigated the tracks made by the thieves, and also examined the corpse, sir."

"What corpse!?"

Told how Bao Yong had killed one of the thieves who looked like Zhou Rui's godson, Jia Lian immediately summoned Jia Yun, who came in and knelt down too to hear his orders.

"Why didn't you report to the master that Zhou Rui's godson was one of the thieves and he was killed by Bao Yong?" Jia Lian demanded.

"The night-watchmen thought it looked like him, but as we couldn't be sure I didn't report it."



你若告诉了，我就带了周瑞来一认，可不就知道了？”林之孝回道：“如今衙门里把尸首放在市口儿招认去了。”贾琏道：“这又是个糊涂东西！谁家的人做了贼，被人打死，要偿命么？”林之孝回道：“这不用人家认，奴才就认得是他。”贾琏听了想道：“是啊！我记得珍大爷那一年要打的可不是周瑞家的么？”林之孝回说：“他和鲍二打架来着，爷还见过的呢。”

贾琏听了更生气，便要打上夜的人。林之孝哀告道：“请二爷息怒。那些上夜的人，派了他们，敢偷懒吗？只是爷府上的规矩：三门里一个男人不敢进去的，就是奴才们，里头不叫也不敢进去。奴才在外同芸哥儿刻刻查点，见三门关的严严的，外头的门一层没有开，那贼是从后夹道子来的。”贾琏道：“里头上夜的女人呢？”林之孝将上夜的人、说奉奶奶的命捆着、等爷审问的话回了。

贾琏问：“包勇呢？”林之孝说：“又往园里去了。”贾琏便说：“去叫他。”小厮们便将包勇带来，说：“还亏你在这里；若没有你，只怕所有房屋里的东西都抢了去了呢。”包勇也不言语。惜春恐他说出那话，心下着急。凤姐也不敢言语。

只见外头说：“琥珀姐姐们回来了。”大家见了，不免又哭一场。

贾琏叫人检点偷剩下的东西，只有些衣服、尺头、钱箱未动，余者都没有了。贾琏心里更加着急，想着外头的棚杠银，厨房的钱，都没有付给，明儿拿什么还呢？便呆想了一



“You idiot!” swore Jia Lian. “If you’d reported it, I would have brought Zhou Rui back to identify him, to clear the matter up.”

Lin Zhixiao informed him, “The police have taken the corpse to the market-place to see who claims it.”

“Then they’re idiots too!” cried Jia Lian. “Who’s going to ask to have justice done if one of his family has been killed as a robber?”

“Actually, they don’t have to identify him,” said the steward. “I recognized him all right.”

Jia Lian replied thoughtfully, “Yes, wasn’t it Zhou Rui’s godson whom Master Zhen wanted to punish that year?”

“He had a fight with Bao Er, and you saw him yourself, sir.”

This made Jia Lian more furious. He wanted to have all the night-watchmen beaten.

The steward begged him, “Please don’t be angry, sir. Which of those watchmen would dare shirk his duty? But the rule of our house is that none of them can enter the inner gate — even we don’t go in unless sent for. Master Yun and I kept a careful check outside and saw that the inner gate was firmly locked. None of the outer gates was opened either. The thieves came from the back passage.”

“Then how about those women inside who were watching during the night?”

He was told that on Xifeng’s orders they had been bound to await his questioning.

“Where is Bao Yong now?” he asked.

“He has gone back to the Garden.”

“Bring him here.”

When servants had fetched him Jia Lian said, “It’s a good thing you were here; otherwise most likely they’d have robbed all our houses.”

Bao Yong said nothing to this, while Xichun was on tenterhooks for fear lest he mention Miaoyu. Xifeng did not dare to speak either.

Then someone outside announced the return of Hupo and the other maids. When they came in all wept together again. Ordered by Jia Lian to ascertain what had been left by the thieves, all they could find were some clothes, some lengths of silk and a money-box — everything else had gone. He thought with desperation of the workmen and the cooks



会。只见琥珀等进去，哭了一番，见箱柜开着，所有的东西怎能记忆，便胡乱猜想，虚拟了一张失单，命人即送到文武衙门。贾琏复又派人上夜。凤姐惜春各自回房。贾琏不敢在家安歇，也不及埋怨凤姐，竟自骑马赶出城外去了。这里凤姐又恐惜春短见，打发丰儿过去安慰。

天已二更。不言这里贼去关门，众人更加小心，不敢睡觉。且说伙贼一心想着妙玉，知是孤庵女众，不难欺负。到了三更夜静，便拿了短兵器，带些闷香，跳上高墙。远远瞧见栊翠庵内灯光犹亮，便潜身溜下，藏在房头僻处。

等到四更，见里头只有一盏海灯，妙玉一人在蒲团上打坐。歇了一会，便嗳声叹气的说道：“我自玄墓到京，原想传个名的，为这里请来，不能又栖他处。昨儿好心去瞧四姑娘，反受了这蠢人的气，夜里又受了大惊。今日回来，那蒲团再坐不稳，只觉肉跳心惊。”因素常一个打坐的，今日又不肯叫人相伴。岂知到了五更，寒颤起来。正要叫人，只听见窗外一响，想起昨晚的事，更加害怕，不免叫人。岂知那些婆子都不答应。自己坐着，觉得一股香气透入凶门，便手足麻木，不能动弹，口里也说不出话来，心中更自着急。只





who had not been paid — how to settle with them all tomorrow? He was bemused.

After Hupo and the others had had their cry and discovered all the chests and cases open, unable to remember what they had contained they made up a list at random to send in to the authorities. Then Jia Lian reassigned the night-watch and Xifeng and Xichun retired to their own quarters. Jia Lian could not presume to rest at home and had no time to remonstrate with Xifeng. He mounted a horse and rode back out of the city while she, afraid Xichun might commit suicide, sent Fenger to comfort her.

At the second watch that night, all the inmates of the house were on their guard, too scared to sleep, locking the stable door after the horse had been stolen. But the thieves were set on kidnapping Miaoyu, knowing that there were only weak women in the nunnery. By the third watch when all was still, armed with daggers and narcotic incense they climbed on to the high wall and saw from the distance that there were still lights in Green Lattice Nunnery. One of them slithered down and hid himself beside it.

He waited till the fourth watch, when there was only one lamp left burning inside, and saw Miaoyu on her hassock sitting cross-legged in meditation.

After a while she sighed, "I came from Yuanmu to the capital hoping to make a name; but then I was invited here and couldn't go anywhere else. Yesterday out of kindness I called on Xichun only to be abused by that lout, and during the night I had another bad fright. Coming back today I still feel on tenterhooks, unable to concentrate."

As a rule she meditated in solitude and she was therefore reluctant to call in someone today to keep her company. But by the fifth watch, shivering with cold, she had just decided to summon her maid when a sound outside the window startled her, recalling what had happened the previous night. She called for her women, but not one of them answered. As she sat there, she smelt a whiff of scent which seemed to seep into her brain; and a numbness overcame her, making her unable to move or utter a sound. Panic-stricken then, she saw a man climb in with a gleaming



见一个人拿着明晃晃的刀进来。此时妙玉心中却是明白，只不能动，想是要杀自己，索性横了心，倒不怕他。那知那个人把刀插在背后，腾出手来，将妙玉轻轻的抱起，轻薄了一会子，便拖起背在身上。此时妙玉心中只是如醉如痴。可怜一个极洁极净的女儿，被这强盗的闷香熏住，由着他掇弄了去了。

却说这贼背了妙玉，来到园后墙边，搭了软梯，爬了墙，跳出去了，外边早有伙贼弄了车辆在园外等着。那人将妙玉放倒在车上，反打起官衔灯笼，叫开栅栏，急急行到城门，正是开门之时。门官只知是有公干出城的，也不及查诘。赶出城去，那伙贼加鞭，赶到二十里坡，和众强徒打了照面，各自分头奔南海而去。

不知妙玉被劫，或是甘受污辱，还是不屈而死，不知下落，也难妄拟。只言栊翠庵一个跟妙玉的女尼，他本住在静室后面，睡到五更，听见前面有人声响，只道妙玉打坐不安。后来听见有男人脚步，门窗响动，欲要起来瞧看，只是身子发软，懒怠开口，又不听见妙玉言语，只睁着两眼听着，到了天亮，才觉得心里清楚。披衣起来，叫了道婆预备妙玉茶水，他便往前面来看妙玉。岂知妙玉的踪迹全无，门窗大开。心里诧异，昨晚响动，甚是疑心，说：“这样早，他到哪里去了？”走出院门一看，有一个软梯靠墙立着，地下还有一把刀鞘，一条搭膊，便道：“不好了，昨晚是贼烧了闷香了！”急叫人起来查看，庵门仍是紧闭。那些婆子侍女们



dagger. Although still conscious she could not stir and thinking that he must be going to kill her, she resigned herself to her fate and her fear left her. However, the intruder tucked his knife in the back of his belt to free his hands, then quietly took her in his arms and trifled with her a while. He then picked her up and slung her on to his back. Miaoyu felt as if drunk or deranged. So, alas, this pure-minded girl was drugged by the robber and ravished!

Carrying Miaoyu to the back wall of the Garden, this thief fixed up a rope-ladder and climbed over to where his mates had a carriage waiting. They laid Miaoyu inside it, then carrying lanterns inscribed with official titles called upon the guards to open the street gates and hurried to the city gate just as it was due to open. The officers there, assuming that they were going out on official business, did not even challenge them. They whipped their horses on to *Twenty-li Slope* to join the rest of their gang, then made their way by different routes to the south coast.

Whether Miaoyu lived on in shame after being kidnapped, or whether she resisted and was killed we cannot venture to say, not knowing the sequel.

Another of Miaoyu's attendants in Green Lattice Nunnery had been sleeping in the back room at the fifth watch when she heard a call from in front and supposed that her mistress was too restless to meditate. Next, she heard what sounded like a man's footsteps and a window being opened. She wanted to get up and investigate, but felt too listless even to call out. Hearing no summons from Miaoyu she waited till dawn by which time her head had cleared. Throwing on some clothes she got up then and called the deaconess to prepare tea and water. When she went to the front, however, Miaoyu had vanished without a trace and the window was wide open. Remembering the noises during the night, she had misgivings and wondered, "Where can she have gone so early?"

Going out of the courtyard to have a look, she found a rope-ladder by the wall and on the ground a pouch and dagger sheath.

"Mercy on us!" she cried. "Some thief must have drugged us last night!" She frantically called to the others to get up and make a search. The gate of the nunnery was still locked.

"We must have been overcome by charcoal fumes so that none of us





都说：“昨夜煤气熏着了，今早都起不起来，这么早，叫我们做什么？”那女尼道：“师父不知那里去了！”众人道：“在观音堂打坐呢。”女尼道：“你们还做梦呢！你来瞧瞧！”

众人不知，也都着忙，开了庵门，满园里都找到了，想来或是到四姑娘那里去了。众人来叩腰门，又被包勇骂了一顿。众人说道：“我们妙师父昨晚不知去向，所以来找。求你老人家叫开腰门，问一问来了没来就是了。”包勇道：“你们师父引了贼来偷我们，已经偷到手了，他跟了贼去受用去了！”众人道：“阿弥陀佛！说这些话的，防着下割舌地狱！”包勇生气道：“胡说！你们再闹，我就要打了！”众人陪笑央告道：“求爷叫开门，我们瞧瞧；若没有，再不敢惊动你太爷了。”包勇道：“你不信，你去找，若没有，回来问你们！”包勇说着，叫开腰门。众人且找到惜春那里。

惜春正是愁闷，惦着：“妙玉清早去后，不知听见我们姓包的话了没有，只怕又得罪了他，以后总不肯来，我的知己是没有了。况我现在实难见人，父母早死，嫂子嫌我。头里有老太太，到底还疼我些；如今也死了，留下我孤苦伶仃，如何了局？”想到：“迎春姐姐折磨死了，史姐姐守着病人，三姐姐远去，这都是命里所招，不能自由。独有妙玉如闲云野鹤，无拘无束。我若能学他，就造化不小了！但我是世家之女，怎能遂意？这回看家，大耽不是，还有何颜？又恐太太





could get up," said the serving-women. "But what do you want us for so early in the morning?"

"Our mistress has disappeared."

"She'll be meditating in the hall."

"You're still dreaming! Come and look!"

In bewilderment they opened the nunnery gate and made a search of the whole Garden. Drawing a blank and assuming that Miaoyu had gone to see Xichun, they knocked at the inner gate and were once more roundly abused by Bao Yong.

They explained, "Sister Miaoyu disappeared last night so we've come looking for her. Please be good enough to open the gate to let us ask whether she's here or not."

"That mistress of yours brought in thieves to rob our family," he swore. "Now she's gone off with them to enjoy the loot."

"Amida Buddha! What a thing to say! Aren't you afraid of going to the Hell Where Tongues Are Cut Out?"

"Shut up!" he fumed. "If you go on making a row I'll beat you up."

"Please tell them to open the gate," they begged, "We just want to have a look. If she isn't there we won't trouble you again, sir."

"If you don't believe me, go ahead and look. But if you don't find her you'll have to answer for it."

With that he called people to open the gate and Miaoyu's attendants trooped into Xichun's compound.

Xichun was feeling anxious and depressed. She wondered, "After Miaoyu left so early, can she have heard what that fellow Bao said? If she's offended she may never come back, and I shall be left friendless. I'm really in a fix now, with my parents dead and my sister-in-law against me. The old lady used to be good to me but now she's gone too, leaving me all alone. What's to become of me?"

She mused, "Cousin Yingchun died through cruel treatment; Cousin Xiangyun's husband is dying of consumption; and Cousin Tanchun has gone so far away. This was their fate, they had no say in the matter. Miaoyu's the only one who's completely free, free as a cloud or wild crane. How I do envy her! But how can the daughter of an official family do as she pleases? I'm in disgrace now because of this robbery. How



们不知我的心事，将来的后事，更未晓如何？”想到其间，便要把自己的青丝铰去，要想出家。彩屏等听见，急忙来劝，岂知已将一半头发铰去了。彩屏愈加着忙，说道：“一事不了，又出一事，这可怎么好呢？”

正在吵闹，只见妙玉的道婆来找妙玉。彩屏问起来由，先唬了一跳，说：“是昨日一早去了没来。”里面惜春听见，急忙问道：“那里去了？”道婆将昨夜听见的响动，被煤气熏着，今早不见妙玉，庵内有软梯刀鞘的话说了一遍。惜春惊疑不定，想起昨日包勇的话来，必是那些强盗看见了他，昨晚抢去了，也未可知。但是他素来孤洁的很，岂肯惜命？便问道：“怎么你们都没听见么？”婆子道：“怎么没听见？我们都是睁着眼，连一句话也说不出。必是那贼烧了闷香。妙姑一人，想也被贼闷住，不能言语。况且贼人必多，拿刀执杖威逼着，他还敢声喊么？”

正说着，包勇又在腰门那里嚷说：“里头快把这些混账道婆子赶出来罢！快关上腰门！”彩屏听见，恐耽不是，只得催婆子出去，叫人关了腰门。惜春于是更加苦楚。无奈彩屏等再三以礼相劝，仍旧将一半青丝笼起。大家商议：“不必声张。就是妙玉被抢，也当作不知，且等老爷太太回来再说。”惜春心里从此死定一个出家的念头，暂且不提。





can I look people in the face again? And I doubt whether Their Ladyships understand me, so I've no idea what the future holds for me."

She decided to cut off her hair and become a nun. When Caiping and the others saw what she was doing they hastily intervened, but not before half of it had been snipped off.

"Before one trouble ends, another starts!" exclaimed Caiping frantically. "What shall we do?"

As they were crying out in consternation, Miaoyu's attendants arrived in search of her. When Caiping knew their errand she gave a start.

"She left first thing yesterday morning and hasn't been back," she told them.

Xichun inside asked hastily, "Where has she gone?"

Then the women described the noises during the night, the charcoal fumes which had overcome them and Miaoyu's disappearance this morning, as well as the sheath and rope-ladder they had found. Xichun was alarmed, not knowing what to make of this. Recalling what Bao Yong had said, she felt sure the thieves had seen Miaoyu and returned last night to kidnap her. If that were so, proud and chaste as she was, she would surely take her own life.

"Did none of you hear anything else?" she asked.

"We did. But though we were awake we couldn't utter a sound. Those thieves must have drugged us with narcotic incense. Most likely Sister Miaoyu was drugged too and unable to cry out. In any case, with all those thieves threatening her with swords and clubs, she wouldn't dare make a sound."

At this point Bao Yong bawled from the inner gate, "Hey, you there! Drive out those dirty nuns, quick! Hurry up and lock the gate."

Caiping, afraid she might be blamed for admitting them, urged the women to leave and ordered servants to lock the inner gate. By now Xichun was feeling more wretched than ever. However, Caiping and the rest reasoned with her and persuaded her to dress her half-shorn hair. They agreed to keep this to themselves and feign ignorance of Miaoyu's kidnapping, not taking any action till the return of the masters and mistresses. Xichun was even more determined now to enter a convent, but no more of this for the moment.



且说贾琏回到铁槛寺，将到家中查点了上夜的人，开了失单报去的话，回了贾政。贾政道：“怎么开的？”贾琏便将琥珀记得的数目单子呈出，并说：“上头元妃赐的东西，已经注明；还有那人家不大有的东西，不便开上，等侄儿脱了孝，出去托人细细的缉访，少不得弄出来的。”贾政听了合意，就点头不言。

贾琏进内见了邢王二夫人，商量着：“劝老爷早些回家才好呢；不然，都是乱麻似的。”邢夫人道：“可不是？我们在这里也是惊心吊胆。”贾琏道：“这是我们不敢说的。还是太太的主意，二老爷是依的。”邢夫人便与王夫人商议妥了。

过了一夜，贾政也不放心，打发宝玉进来说：“请太太们今日回家，过两三日再来。家人们已经派定了，里头请太太们派人罢。”邢夫人派了鹦哥等一千人伴灵，将周瑞家的等人派了总管，其余上下人等都回去。一时忙乱套车备马。贾政等在贾母灵前辞别，众人又哭了一场。

都起来正要走时，只见赵姨娘还爬在地下不起。周姨娘打量他还哭，便去拉他。岂知赵姨娘满嘴白沫，眼睛直竖，把舌头吐出，反把家人唬了一跳。贾环过来乱嚷。赵姨娘醒来说道：“我是不回去的！跟着老太太回南去！”众人道：“老太





Jia Lian on his return to Iron Threshold Temple reported how he had cross-examined the night-watch, made out a list of the lost property and notified the police.

“What did you list?” asked Jia Zheng.

Jia Lian showed him a copy of the list of things which Hupo remembered.

“Regarding the gifts from the Imperial Consort, we have noted them,” he said. “We left out certain other things which ordinary families are not supposed to have. As soon as it’s time for me to stop wearing mourning I shall go and get people to make a careful search, and we should be able to recover them.”

Jia Zheng nodded his approval but said nothing. Jia Lian went in then to see Their Ladyships.

“Better urge the master to go home early,” he suggested. “Or everything will be at sixes and sevens.”

“That’s right,” agreed Lady Xing. “Staying here we’re on tenterhooks.”

“We juniors can’t propose this,” he added. “But if you do, madam, the Second Master is bound to fall in with your wishes.”

Lady Xing and Lady Wang talked it over and decided to go back.

The next morning Jia Zheng, who was also worried, sent Baoyu to request Their Ladyships to go home that day and return a few days later. He had assigned stewards to take charge in the temple and hoped they would assign their serving women different duties. Then Lady Xing instructed Yingge and some other maids to keep watch by the coffin, and put Zhou Rui’s wife and some matrons in overall charge. All the rest of the servants were to accompany them home. Carriages and horses were hastily made ready while Jia Zheng and the others bid farewell with lamentations to the old lady’s coffin.

As they rose to leave, Concubine Zhao remained prostrate. Thinking she was still mourning, Concubine Zhou went to help her up and found that she was foaming at the mouth, her eyes staring blankly, her tongue lolling out. They were staggered by the sight and Huan started howling.

Concubine Zhao regaining consciousness cried, “I’m not going home!



“太那用你跟呢？”赵姨娘道：“我跟了老太太一辈子，大老爷还不依，弄神弄鬼的算计我！我想，仗着马道婆出出我的气，银子白花了好些，也没有弄死一个，如今我回去了，又不知谁来算计我！”

众人先只说鸳鸯附着他，后头听说马道婆的事，又不像了。邢王二夫人都不言语，只有彩云等代他央告道：“鸳鸯姐姐，你死是自己愿意，与赵姨娘什么相干？放了他罢。”见邢夫人在这里，也不敢说别的。赵姨娘道：“我不是鸳鸯。我是阎王老爷差人拿我去的，要问我为什么和马道婆用魔魔法的案件。”说着，口里又叫：“好琏二奶奶！你在这里老爷面前少顶一句儿罢！我有一千日的不好，还有一天的好呢。好二奶奶！亲二奶奶！并不是我要害你，我一时糊涂，听了那个老娼妇的话。”

正闹着，贾政打发人进来叫环儿。婆子们去回说：“赵姨娘中了邪了，三爷看着呢。”贾政道：“没有的事。我们先走了。”于是爷们等先回。这里赵姨娘还是混说，一时救不过来。邢夫人恐他又说出什么来，便说：“多派几个人在这里瞧着他，咱们先走。到了城里，打发大夫出来瞧罢。”王夫人本嫌他，也打撒手儿。宝钗本是仁厚的人，虽想着他害宝玉的事，心里究竟过不去，背地里托了周姨娘在这里照应。周姨娘也是个好人，便应承了。李纨说道：“我也在这里罢。”王夫人道：“可以不必。”于是大家都要起身。贾环着急说：“我也在这里吗？”王夫人啐道：“糊涂东西！你姨妈的死活都



I'm going south with the old lady."

"There's no need for that," the others expostulated.

"I've served the old lady all my life," she said. "The Elder Master wouldn't take no for an answer, and tried all sorts of tricks to get hold of me. So I asked the sorceress Ma to help me get my own back, spending all that silver for nothing — neither of them was killed. Now I'm going back, I don't know who'll plot against me again!"

All knew that Yuanyang's spirit must have taken possession of her. Their Ladyships stared at her speechlessly. It was Caiyun who interceded, "Sister Yuanyang, you died of your own accord and Concubine Zhao had nothing to do with it. Please let her be." In Lady Xing's presence she dared not say any more.

"I'm not Yuanyang," protested Concubine Zhao. "She's long since gone to the immortals' realm. The King of Hell has sent to arrest me, to try me for practising witchcraft with that priestess Ma." Then she screamed, "Good Madam Lian! Don't denounce me to the King of Hell! Bad as I was I must have done a bit of good as well. Dear madam, kind madam! I didn't mean to kill you. I was muddled for a while and did what that old bitch said."

While she was raving like this, Jia Zheng sent for Jia Huan. Serving-women reported to him, "Concubine Zhao is bewitched and Master Huan is looking after her."

"What nonsense!" scoffed Jia Zheng. "We shall go first then." So the gentlemen set off.

Concubine Zhao went on raving in the temple and they did not know how to bring her to her senses. For fear of further disclosures Lady Xing said, "Leave some people here to look after her. We'll go back first. When we reach the city we'll send a doctor to see her."

Lady Wang who had never liked Concubine Zhao also washed her hands of her. But Baochai was too kind-hearted to do this, despite the attempt on Baoyu's life which she remembered, and so she secretly told Concubine Zhou to stay and look after her. The latter, being a good soul, agreed. Li Wan volunteered to stay too but Lady Wang overrode her.

"Do I have to stay here?" asked Jia Huan in desperation as they were leaving.



不知，你还要走吗？”贾环就不敢言语了。宝玉道：“好兄弟！你是走不得的！我进了城，打发人来瞧你。”说毕，都上车回家。寺里只有赵姨娘、贾环、鹦哥等人。

贾政邢夫人等先后到家，到了上房，哭了一场。林之孝带了家下众人请了安，跪着。贾政喝道：“去罢！明日问你！”凤姐那日发晕了几次，竟不能出接；只有惜春见了，觉得满面羞惭。邢夫人也不理他，王夫人仍是照常，李纨、宝钗拉着手说了几句话。独有尤氏说道：“姑娘，你操心了，倒照应了好几天！”惜春一言不答，只紫涨了脸。宝钗将尤氏一拉，使了个眼色，尤氏等各自归房去了。

贾政略略的看了一眼，叹了口气，并不言语。到书房席地坐下，叫了贾琏、贾蓉、贾芸吩咐了几句话。宝玉要在书房来陪贾政。贾政道：“不必。”兰儿仍跟他母亲。一宿无话。

次日，林之孝一早进书房跪着，贾政将前后被盗的事问了一遍，并将周瑞供了出来，又说：“衙门拿住了鲍二，身边搜出了失单上的东西，现在夹讯，要在他身上要这一伙贼呢。”贾政听了，大怒道：“家奴负恩，引贼偷窃家主，真是反了！”立刻叫人到城外将周瑞捆了，送到衙门审问。林之孝只管跪着，不敢起来。贾政道：“你还跪着做什么？”林之



“Stupid creature!” snapped Lady Wang. “Your mother may be dying. How can you leave?”

This silenced Jia Huan, and Baoyu told him, “Good brother, you mustn’t leave. When I get back to town I’ll send people to see you.”

Then they all went home by carriage, leaving only Concubines Zhao and Zhou, Jia Huan, Yingge and a few others in the temple.

After Jia Zheng, Lady Xing and the others reached home, they went to the old lady’s room and wept. Lin Zhixiao led in the servants to kneel and pay their respects.

“Get out!” ordered Jia Zheng sternly. “We’ll question you tomorrow.”

Xifeng had been feeling too faint that day to come out to welcome them. Xichun met them blushing with shame. Lady Xing ignored her, while Lady Wang treated her as if nothing had happened and Li Wan and Baochai took her hand and said a few words to her.

Only Madam You sneered, “Thank you, miss, for looking after the house the last few days.”

Xichun made no answer, her face flushing crimson as Baochai pulled Madam You’s sleeve and shot her a glance. Then they all dispersed to their own quarters.

Jia Zheng after a cursory look round heaved a sigh but made no comment. He went to sit in his study and summoned Jia Lian, Jia Rong and Jia Yun to give them certain instructions. Baoyu’s offer to keep him company there he declined; and Lan remained with his mother.

After an uneventful night, Lin Zhixiao came to the study first thing in the morning to kneel before his master. Questioned about the theft, he mentioned Zhou Rui’s involvement.

“The police have arrested Bao Er,” he said. “They found on him some of the things listed as stolen. Now they are interrogating him to find out the whereabouts of that gang of thieves.”

“What ingratitude!” thundered Jia Zheng. “Family slaves bringing thieves to rob their masters! Outrageous!” He at once sent men out of the city to tie up Zhou Rui and take him to the police to be cross-examined. Lin Zhixiao remained kneeling before him in trepidation.

“Why are you still kneeling there?” Jia Zheng demanded.



孝道：“奴才该死，求老爷开恩！”正说着，赖大等一千办事家人上来请了安，呈上丧事账簿。贾政道：“交给琏二爷算明了来回。”吆喝着林之孝起来出去了。

贾琏一腿跪着，在贾政身边说了一句话。贾政把眼一瞪道：“胡说！老太太的事，银两被贼偷去，难道就该罚奴才拿出来么？”贾琏红了脸，不敢言语，站起来也不敢动。贾政道：“你媳妇怎么样了？”贾琏又跪下，说：“看来是不中用了。”贾政叹口气道：“我不料家运衰败一至如此！况且环哥儿他妈尚在庙中病着，也不知是什么症候。你们知道不知道？”贾琏也不敢言语。贾政道：“传出话去，叫人带了大夫瞧瞧去。”贾琏即忙答应着，出来，叫人带了大夫到铁槛寺去瞧赵姨娘。未知死活，下回分解。





"I deserve death. I beg you, sir, to be merciful!"

Just then Lai Da and other senior servants came in to pay their respects and present the accounts for the funeral.

"Give those to Master Lian to check and report back to me." This order given, Jia Zheng dismissed the stewards.

Jia Lian going down on one knee whispered something to him.

"Rubbish!" replied Jia Zheng sternly. "Though the money for the old lady's funeral has been stolen, how can we punish our slaves by making them pay instead?"

Jia Lian flushed but dared not argue, and stood up but dared not leave.

"How is your wife?" Jia Zheng asked.

Jia Lian knelt again to reply, "It looks as if she's past saving."

"I never guessed our family could go downhill so fast!" Jia Zheng sighed. "Huan's mother has fallen ill too in the temple, and we have no idea what the trouble is. Do you know?"

Jia Lian did not venture to answer.

"Go and send servants to take a doctor to attend her."

Jia Lian promptly assented and went off to see that a doctor was despatched to Iron Threshold Temple. To know whether Concubine Zhao lived or died, you must read the chapter which follows.







懺宿冤鳳姐  
託村媪





## 第一百十三回

忏宿冤凤姐托村妪 释旧憾情婢感痴郎

话说赵姨娘在寺内得了暴病，见人少了，更加混说起来，唬的众人发怔，就有两个女人搀着赵姨娘双膝跪在地下，说一回，哭一回。有时爬在地下叫饶说：“打杀我了！红胡子的老爷！我再不敢了！”有一时双手合着，也是叫疼。眼睛突出，嘴里鲜血直流，头发披散。人人害怕，不敢近前。

那时又将天晚，赵姨娘的声音只管阴哑起来，居然鬼嚎的一般，无人敢在他跟前，只得叫了几个有胆量的男人进来坐着。赵姨娘一时死去，隔了些时，又回过来，整整的闹了一夜。到了第二天，也不言语，只装鬼脸，自己拿手撕开衣服，露出胸膛，好像有人剥他的样子。可怜赵姨娘虽说不出来，其痛苦之状，实在难堪。

正在危急，大夫来了，也不敢诊脉，只嘱咐：“办后事罢。”说了，起身就走。那送大夫的家人再三央告，说：“请老爷看看脉，小的好回禀家主。”那大夫用手一摸，已无脉息。贾环听了，这才大哭起来。众人只顾贾环，谁管赵姨娘蓬头赤脚死在炕上。只有周姨娘心里想到：“做偏房的下场头，不过如此！况他还有儿子；我将来死的时候，还不知怎样呢！”于是反倒悲切。



## Chapter 113

### Repenting Her Sins Xifeng Seeks Help from a Village Woman Relinquishing Her Resentment Zijuan Is Touched by Her Besotted Master

Concubine Zhao, throwing a fit in the temple, babbled even more wildly once the main party had left, to the consternation of the few who remained there. When two serving-women tried to lift her up she insisted on kneeling, raving and weeping by turns. Then, grovelling, she begged for mercy.

“You’re beating me to death, Master Red Beard!” she cried. “I shall never dare do such a thing again!”

Presently, wringing her hands, she shrieked with pain, her eyes nearly starting from her head, blood trickling from her mouth, her hair dishevelled. The attendants were afraid to go near her.

By nightfall her voice was so hoarse that she sounded like a ghost wailing. The women, not daring to stay with her, called in a few bold men to keep her company. Sometimes she fainted away then after a while came round, keeping up a commotion all night. The next day she was speechless but with her face contorted kept tearing her clothes and baring her breasts, as if someone were stripping her. Though unable to utter a sound, the poor creature’s agony was painful to witness.

At this critical juncture a doctor arrived. He dared not go near her to feel her pulse but warned them to prepare for the funeral.

As he rose to leave, the steward who had brought him pleaded, “Please examine her pulse, sir, so that I can report it to our master.”

When the doctor complied the pulse had already stopped beating. Jia Huan hearing this burst out howling, and the others turned all their attention to him, ignoring Concubine Zhao as she lay there dead. Only kindly Concubine Zhou thought to herself, “So this is the end of a concubine! Though *she* at least had a son. Heaven knows what it will be like when *I* die!” This reflection pained her.



且说那人赶回家去禀知贾政，即派人去照例料理，陪着环儿住了三天，一同回来。那人去了，这里一人传十，十人传百，都知道赵姨娘使了毒心害人，被阴司里拷打死了。又说是：“琏二奶奶只怕也好不了，怎么说琏二奶奶告的呢？”

这些话传到平儿耳内，甚是着急，看着凤姐的样子，实在是不能好的了。况且贾琏近日并不似先前的恩爱，本来事也多，竟像不与他相干的。平儿在凤姐跟前只管劝慰。又兼着邢王二夫人回家几日，只打发人来问问，并不亲身来看，凤姐心里更加悲苦。贾琏回来也没有一句贴心的话。

凤姐此时只求速死，心里一想，邪魔悉至。只见尤二姐从房后走来，渐近床前，说：“姐姐，许久的不见了！做妹妹的想念的很，要见不能，如今好不容易进来见见姐姐，姐姐的心机也用尽了。咱们的二爷糊涂，也不领姐姐的情，反倒怨姐姐作事过于刻薄，把他的前程去了，叫他如今见不得人。我替姐姐气不平！”凤姐恍惚说道：“我如今也后悔我的心忒窄了。妹妹不念旧恶，还来瞧我！”平儿在旁听见，说道：“奶奶说什么？”凤姐一时苏醒，想起尤二姐已死，必是他来索命。被平儿叫醒，心里害怕，又不肯说出，只得勉强说道：“我神魂不定，想是说梦话。给我捶捶。”

平儿上去捶着，见个小丫头子进来，说是刘姥姥来了，婆子们带着来请奶奶的安。平儿急忙下来，说：“在那里



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The steward hurried back to inform Jia Zheng, who sent people to attend to Concubine Zhao's funeral and keep Huan company there for three days before bringing him back. After the steward's return the news spread like wildfire that Concubine Zhao had been tortured to death by the King of Hell because she had plotted murder.

Some predicted, "Madam Lian must be done for too, if Concubine Zhao said it was she who denounced her."

This talk reached Pinger's ears, increasing her worry, for she saw that Xifeng's illness really looked fatal. And Jia Lian had recently lost his affection for her — busy as he was, he might at least have shown some concern for her health. Pinger tried to comfort her mistress; but Their Ladyships, though they had been back several days now, merely sent servants to ask after her instead of coming themselves, adding to Xifeng's wretchedness. And Jia Lian, when he came home, never had a kind word for her.

By now Xifeng's sole wish was to die and be done with it, and in this state of mind she was assailed by spectres — she saw Second Sister You walking over from the back of the room towards her *kang*.

"How long it's been since last I saw you, Sister!" said Second Sister You. "I missed you badly but was unable to see you. Now that you've worn yourself out by all your scheming, my chance has come at last. Our husband's too foolish to feel obliged to you and blames you instead for stinginess and for ruining his career, so that now he can't hold up his head. This is so unfair that my heart bleeds for you!"

In a daze Xifeng replied, "And I'm sorry now that I was so narrow-minded. Yet instead of bearing a grudge you come to see me!"

Pinger beside her heard this and asked, "What's that you're saying, madam?"

Then Xifeng woke up and remembered that Second Sister You was dead and must have come to demand her life. She felt afraid but, not liking to disclose this, forced herself to say, "My mind was wandering. I must have been talking in my sleep. Massage my back for me."

As Pinger was doing this a young maid came in to announce the arrival of Granny Liu, whom a serving-woman had brought to pay her re-



呢？”小丫头子说：“他不敢就进来，还听奶奶的示下。”平儿听了点头，想凤姐病里必是懒怠见人，便说道：“奶奶现在养神呢，暂且叫他等着，你问他来有什么事么？”小丫头子说道：“他们问过了，没有事。说，知道老太太去世了，因没有报，才来迟了。”小丫头子说着，凤姐听见，便叫：“平儿，你来。人家好心来瞧，不可冷淡了他。你去请了刘姥姥进来，我和他说说话儿。”平儿只得出来请刘姥姥这里坐。凤姐刚要合眼，又见一个男人一个女人走向炕前，就像要上炕的。凤姐急忙便叫平儿，说：“那里来了一个男人，跑到这里来了！”连叫了两声，只见丰儿小红赶来，说：“奶奶要什么？”凤姐睁眼一瞧，不见有人，心里明白，不肯说出来，便问丰儿道：“平儿这东西那里去了？”丰儿道：“不是奶奶叫去请刘姥姥去了么？”凤姐定了一会神，也不言语。

只见平儿同刘姥姥带了一个小女孩儿进来，说：“我们姑奶奶在那里？”平儿引到炕边。刘姥姥便说：“请姑奶奶安。”凤姐睁眼一看，不觉一阵伤心，说：“姥姥，你好？怎么这时候才来？你瞧你外孙女儿也长的这么大了！”刘姥姥看着凤姐骨瘦如柴，神情恍惚，心里也就悲惨起来，说：“我的奶奶！怎么这几个月不见，就病到这个分儿？我糊涂的要死，怎么不早来请姑奶奶的安！”便叫青儿给姑奶奶请安。青儿只是笑。凤姐看了，倒也十分怜爱，便叫小红招呼着。





spects.

Pinger immediately left the *kang* asking, "Where is she?"

"She won't presume to come in unless madam sends for her."

Pinger nodded. Thinking Xifeng too ill to receive visitors she said, "Madam is resting. Tell her to wait outside. Did you ask her business?"

"The others did," answered the maid. "She's not here for anything special. She says she only heard the other day about the old lady's death, or she'd have come earlier."

Xifeng overhearing them called, "Pinger, come here! Since she's kind enough to call we mustn't cold-shoulder her. Go and ask Granny Liu in. I want to chat with her."

While Pinger went off on this errand Xifeng was about to close her eyes when she saw a man and a woman approaching as if they meant to get on to her *kang*. At once she called out to Pinger, "Where has this man burst in from?"

She called twice, and Fenger and Hongyu came running in.

"Do you want something, madam?" they inquired.

Opening her eyes she saw no strangers there and realized what had happened, though unwilling to admit it.

She asked Fenger, "Where is Pinger?"

"Didn't you tell her to go and fetch Granny Liu, madam?"

Xifeng forced herself to keep calm and said nothing as Pinger and Granny Liu came in with a little girl.

"Where is Madam Lian?" asked the old woman. And when Pinger led her to the *kang* she announced, "I've come to pay my respects, madam."

Xifeng opened her eyes and felt a pang of distress. "How are you, granny?" she responded. "Why haven't you been to see us for so long? How big your grand-daughter's grown!"

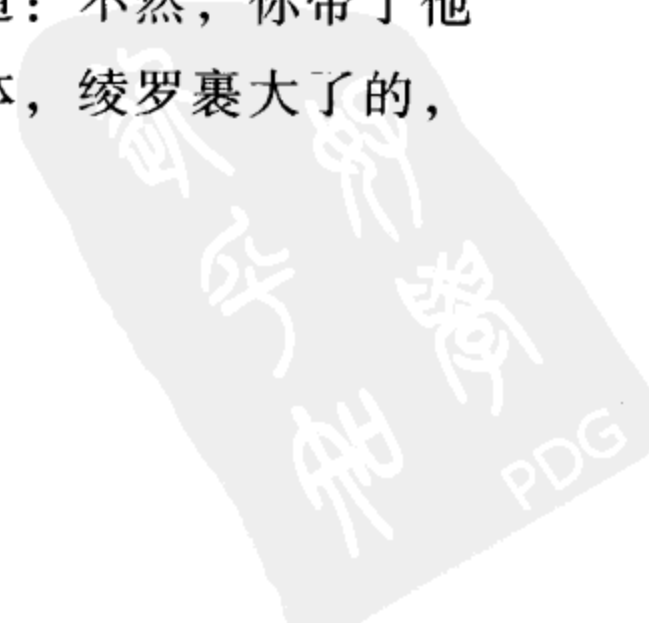
Granny Liu was grieved to see how wasted Xifeng had become, and how unclear in her mind. "Madam!" she exclaimed. "It's only a few months since last I saw you, and now you look so ill! It was very bad of me not to call earlier to pay my respects."

She told Pinger to curtsey, but she simply giggled. Xifeng took a fancy to the little girl and handed her over to the charge of Hongyu.



刘姥姥说：“我们屯乡里的人，不会病的，若一病了，就要求神许愿，从不知道吃药。我想姑奶奶的病别是撞着什么了罢？”平儿听着那话不在理，忙在背地里拉他。刘姥姥会意，便不言语了。那里知道这句话倒合了凤姐的意，挣扎着说：“姥姥！你是有年纪的人，说的不错。你见过的赵姨娘也死了，你知道么？”刘姥姥诧异道：“阿弥陀佛！好端端一个人，怎么就死了？我记得他也有一个小哥儿，这可怎么样呢？”平儿道：“那怕什么？他还有老爷太太呢。”刘姥姥道：“姑娘，你那里知道！不好死了，是亲生的；隔了肚皮子是不中用的！”这句话又招起凤姐的愁肠，呜呜咽咽的哭起来了。众人都来解劝。

巧姐儿听见他母亲悲哭，便走到炕前，用手拉着凤姐的手，也哭起来。凤姐一面哭着，道：“你见过了姥姥了没有？”巧姐儿道：“没有。”凤姐道：“你的名字还是他起的呢，就和干妈一样。你给他请个安。”巧姐儿便走到跟前。刘姥姥忙拉着道：“阿弥陀佛！不要折杀我了！巧姑娘，我一年多不来，你还认得我么？”巧姐儿道：“怎么不认得？那年在园里见的时候，我还小呢。前年你来，我和你要隔年的蝻蝻儿，你也没有给我，必是忘了。”刘姥姥道：“好姑娘，我是老糊涂了。要说蝻蝻儿，我们屯里多着呢，只是不到我们那里去。若去了，要一车也容易。”凤姐道：“不然，你带了他去罢。”刘姥姥笑道：“姑娘这样千金贵体，绫罗裹大了的，





“We villagers don’t fall ill,” said Granny Liu. “When we feel poorly we just pray and make pledges to the gods — we never take medicine. I daresay, madam, this illness of yours was brought on by evil spirits.”

At this tactless remark Pinger nudged her secretly. Granny Liu took the hint and said no more; however, this coincided with Xifeng’s own view.

“Granny,” she said with an effort. “You’re old and experienced. What you said is quite true. Did you hear of the death of Concubine Zhao whom you met here?”

“Amida Buddha!” exclaimed Granny Liu in surprise. “She was in good health — what did she die of? I remember she had a young son. What will happen to him?”

“He’ll be all right,” said Pinger. “The master and mistress will take care of him.”

“Well, miss, you never know. However bad your child may be, he’s your own flesh and blood; it’s different if he’s a stepson!”

This touched Xifeng on the raw and set her sobbing. They all tried to comfort her. Qiaojie came to the *kang* when she heard her mother weeping and took her hand, shedding tears too.

“Have you greeted granny?” sobbed Xifeng.

“Not yet,” said the child.

“She’s the one who gave you your name, so she’s your godmother in a way. You should pay your respects to her.”

Qiaojie went over to do this but the old woman hastily stopped her.

“Amida Buddha!” she cried. “You mustn’t do that to the likes of me! I haven’t been here for over a year, Miss Qiaojie. Do you still remember me?”

“Of course I do. When I saw you that year in the Garden I was still small. The year before that when you came, I asked you for some green crickets but you didn’t bring me any. You must have forgotten.”

“Ah, miss, I’m in my dotage. If it’s green crickets you want, our village is swarming with them, but you never go there. If you did, you could easily get a whole cartful.”

Xifeng suggested, “Well, take her back with you.”

Granny Liu chuckled, “A delicate young lady dressed in silks and



吃的是好东西；到了我们那里，我拿什么哄他玩，拿什么给他吃呢？这倒不是坑杀我了么？”说着，自己还笑。因说：“那么着，我给姑娘做个媒罢。我们那里虽说是屯乡里，也有大财主人家，几千顷地，几百牲口，银子钱亦不少，只是不像这里有金的，有玉的。姑奶奶自然瞧不起这样人家。我们庄稼人瞧着这样财主，也算是天上的人了！”凤姐道：“你说去，我愿意就给。”刘姥姥道：“这是玩玩话儿罢咧。放着姑奶奶这样，大官大府的人家只怕还不肯给，那里肯给庄稼人？就是姑奶奶肯了，上头太太们也不给。”巧姐因他这话不好听，便走了去和青儿说话。两个女孩儿倒说得上，渐渐的就熟起来了。

这里平儿恐刘姥姥话多搅烦了凤姐，便拉了刘姥姥说：“你提起太太来，你还没有过去呢。我出去叫人带了你去见见，也不枉来这一趟。”刘姥姥便要走。凤姐道：“忙什么？你坐下，我问你：近来的日子还过的么？”刘姥姥千恩万谢的说道：“我们若不仗着姑奶奶，”说着，指着青儿说：“他的老子娘都要饿死了。如今虽说是庄稼人苦，家里也挣了好几亩地，又打了一眼井，种些菜蔬瓜果。一年卖的钱也不少，尽够他们嚼吃的了。这两年，姑奶奶还时常给些衣服布匹，在我们村里算过得的了。阿弥陀佛！前日他老子进城，听见姑奶奶这里动了家，我就几乎唬杀了；亏得又有人说，不是这里，我才放心。后来又听见说这里老爷升了，我又喜欢，就要来道喜，为的是满地的庄稼，来不得。昨日又听见说老太太没有了。我在地里打豆子，听见了这话，唬的连豆子都



brought up on the fat of the land, how could I amuse her in our place? And what could I give her to eat? Do you want to ruin me?" Laughing at the idea she went on, "I know what: I can arrange a match for her. Though we live in the country, we have big money-bags there too who own thousands of acres of land and hundreds of cattle, not to mention pots of silver. They just don't have gold and jade knick-knacks like yours. Of course, madam, *you* look down on such families. But to us farming folk they seem to be living in heaven!"

"Go and fix a match then," said Xifeng. "I'll agree to it."

"You must be joking! Why, a lady like you would most likely turn down even big official families; how could you agree to marry her to country folk? Even if *you* did, the mistresses wouldn't agree."

Qiaojie, not liking this talk, went off to chat with Qinger. Finding each other's company congenial, they soon became good friends.

Fearful that Granny Liu might tire Xifeng out with her loquacity, Pinger tugged at her sleeve and said, "You mentioned Her Ladyship whom you haven't seen yet. I'll go and find someone to take you there, to make your trip here more worthwhile."

As the old woman rose to leave. Xifeng asked, "What's the hurry? Sit down. Let me ask you: how are you making out these days?"

Her heart brimming over with gratitude Granny Liu answered, "If not for you, madam... " She pointed at her granddaughter then went on, "Her dad and mum would have starved. Now, though life on a farm is hard, we've bought quite a few *mu* of land and sunk a well. We grow vegetables and fruit too, and make enough from them to feed ourselves. The last couple of years, besides, you've given us clothes and material from time to time so that in our village we count as quite well-off. Amida Buddha! The other day when her dad came to town and heard that your family here had been raided, I nearly died of fright! Luckily others told me it wasn't *this* house, and that set my mind at rest. We learned later that the master had been promoted, and I was so pleased I wanted to come to offer congratulations, but what with all the field work I couldn't get away.

"Then yesterday we heard that the old lady had passed away. I was getting in beans when they brought me word, and it shocked me too much





拿不起来了，就在地里狠狠的哭了一大场。我合女婿说：

‘我也顾不得你们了！不管真话谎话，我是要进城瞧瞧去的！’我女儿女婿也不是没良心的，听见了也哭了一会子。今儿天没亮，就赶着我进城来了。我也不认得一个人，没有地方打听。一径来到后门，见是门神都糊了，我这一唬又不小。进了门，找周嫂子，再找不着，撞见一个小姑娘，说：

‘周嫂子得了不是，撵出去了。’我又等了好半天，遇见个熟人，才得进来。不打量姑奶奶也是这么病！”说着，就掉下泪来。

平儿着急，也不等他说完了，拉着就走，说：“你老人家说了半天，口也干了，咱们喝茶去罢。”拉着刘姥姥到下房坐着。青儿自在巧姐那边。刘姥姥说：“茶倒不要，好姑娘，叫人带了我去请太太的安，哭哭老太太去罢。”平儿道：“你不用忙，今儿也赶不出城去了。方才我是怕你说话不防头，招的我们奶奶哭，所以催你出来。你别思量。”刘姥姥道：“阿弥陀佛！姑娘这是多心，我也知道。倒是奶奶的病怎么好呢？”平儿道：“你瞧妨碍不妨碍？”刘姥姥道：“说是罪过：我瞧着不好。”正说着，又听凤姐叫呢。平儿及到床前，凤姐又不言语了。

平儿正问丰儿，贾琏进来，向炕上一瞧，也不言语，走到里间，气哼哼的坐下。只有秋桐跟了进去，倒了茶，殷勤一回，不知噉噉喳喳的说些什么。回来，贾琏叫平儿来问道：“奶奶不吃药么？”平儿道：“不吃药怎么样呢？”贾琏道：



to go on. I broke down there in the field and cried my heart out! I told my son-in-law, 'I shall have to leave you to your own devices. Whether it's true or not, I must go to town to have a look.' My daughter and son-in-law aren't lacking in gratitude either. They both cried over the news, and this morning before dawn they sped me on my way. I didn't know anyone in town to ask, so came straight to your back gate and saw that even the door gods were pasted over. That gave me another fright! When I came in and looked for Zhou Rui's wife she was nowhere to be found, and a little girl told me she'd been driven out for doing something wrong. I had to wait around till I met someone who knew me before I could get in. I'd no idea that you were so ill too, madam." By now she was shedding tears.

Pinger, concerned for her mistress, pulled Granny Liu to her feet before she could finish.

"After talking so long you must be parched," she said. "Let's go and have some tea." She took her to the maids' quarters leaving Pinger with Qiaojie.

"I don't need any tea," Granny Liu assured her. "But please, miss, get someone to take me to pay my respects to Her Ladyship and to weep at the old lady's shrine."

"There's no hurry," Pinger replied. "You can't leave town today anyway. Just now I was afraid you might say something tactless and set our mistress weeping again: that's why I hustled you out. I hope you don't mind."

"Amida Buddha! I know how thoughtful you are, miss. But what's to be done about madam's illness?"

"Does it look serious to you?"

"Maybe it's wrong to say so, but it does."

Just then they heard Xifeng calling, yet when Pinger went to her bedside she remained silent. As Pinger was questioning Fenger, Jia Lian came in. After a cursory glance at the *kang* he entered the inner room without a word and plumped himself down, glowering. Qitong alone went in to serve him tea and wait on him, but the others could not hear what they were saying. Then Jia Lian called for Pinger.

"Isn't your mistress taking medicine?" he asked.

“我知道么？你拿柜子上的钥匙来罢。”平儿见贾琏有气，又不敢问，只得出来凤姐耳边说了一声。凤姐不言语。平儿便将一个匣子搁在贾琏那里就走。贾琏道：“有鬼叫你吗？你搁着叫谁拿呢？”平儿忍气打开，取了钥匙，开了柜子，便问道：“拿什么？”贾琏道：“咱们有什么吗？”平儿气的哭道：“有话明说，人死了也愿意！”贾琏道：“这还要说么？头里的事是你们闹的；如今老太太的还短了四五千银子，老爷叫我拿公中的地账弄银子，你说有么？外头拉的账不开发，使得么？谁叫我应这个名儿！只好把老太太给我的东西折变去罢了！你不依么？”

平儿听了，一句不言语，将柜里东西搬出。只见小红过来，说：“平姐姐快走！奶奶不好呢！”平儿也顾不得贾琏，急忙过来。见凤姐用手空抓，平儿用手攥着哭叫。贾琏也过来一瞧，把脚一跺道：“若是这样，是要我的命了！”说着掉下泪来。丰儿进来说：“外头找二爷呢。”贾琏只得出去。

这里凤姐愈加不好，丰儿等便大哭起来。巧姐听见赶来。刘姥姥也急忙走到炕前，嘴里念佛，捣了些鬼，果然凤姐好些。一时王夫人听了丫头的信，也过来了，先见凤姐安静些，心下略放心。见了刘姥姥，便说：“刘姥姥，你好？什么时候来的？”刘姥姥便说：“请太太安。”也不及说别的，只言凤姐的病，讲究了半天。彩云进来说：“老爷请太太呢。”王夫人叮咛了平儿几句话，便过去了。

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“What if she isn’t?”

“How should I know?” he retorted. “Bring me the key of the chest.”

As he was in a temper she did not venture to question him but went out and whispered something to Xifeng. When the latter said nothing, Pinger brought in a casket and put it before Jia Lian, then turned to go.

“What the devil’s your hurry?” he demanded. “Who’s going to give me the key?”

Suppressing her annoyance she took it out of the casket and opened the chest. “What do you want taken out?” she asked.

“What is there?”

“Say plainly what you want,” she sobbed angrily. “Then we can die content!”

“What is there to say? You were the ones who brought all the trouble on us. Now we’re four or five thousand taels short for the old lady’s funeral, and the master told me to raise some money from the title-deeds of the family land — but what is there left? Do you want us to default? I should never have taken on this job! All I can do is sell the things the old lady left me. Are you against that?”

Pinger was sulkily turning out the chest when Hongyu darted in.

“Quick, sister!” she cried. “Madam’s in a bad way!”

Ignoring Jia Lian, Pinger hurried out to discover Xifeng clawing the air with both hands. Restraining her, she wept and cried for help. Jia Lian coming out to have a look stamped his foot.

“Now this!” he groaned with tears. “I’m finished!”

Just then Fenger announced, “They’re asking for you outside, sir.” And Jia Lian had to leave.

Xifeng was now so delirious that her maids set up a great wailing which drew Qiaojie to the room. Granny Liu also hastened to the *kang*, to invoke Buddha and mutter incantations till Xifeng grew slightly calmer. Then Lady Wang arrived, alerted by one of the maids, and was relieved to find Xifeng quieter. Greeting Granny Liu, she asked when she had come; but after paying her respects the old woman could talk of nothing except Xifeng’s illness.

Then Caiyun came in to report, “The master wants you, madam.” So after giving Pinger a few instructions Lady Wang went away.



凤姐闹了一回，此时又觉清楚些。见刘姥姥在这里，心里信他求神祷告，便把丰儿等支开，叫刘姥姥坐在床前，告诉他心神不宁，如见鬼的样子。刘姥姥便说：我们屯里什么菩萨灵，什么庙有感应。凤姐道：“求你替我祷告。要用供献的银钱，我有。”便手腕上退下一只金镯子来交给他。刘姥姥道：“姑奶奶，不用那个。我们村庄人家许了愿，好了，花上几百钱就是了，那用这些？就是我替姑奶奶求去，也是许愿，等姑奶奶好了，要花什么，自己去花罢。”凤姐明知刘姥姥一片好心，不好勉强，只得留下，说：“姥姥，我的命交给你了！我的巧姐儿也是千灾百病的，也交给你了！”刘姥姥顺口答应，便说：“这么着，我看天气尚早，还赶的出城去，我就去了。明儿姑奶奶好了，再请还愿去。”

凤姐因被众冤魂缠绕害怕，巴不得他就去，便说：“你若肯替我用心，我能安稳睡一觉，我就感激你了。你外孙女儿，叫他在这里住下罢。”刘姥姥道：“庄稼孩子没有见过世面，没的在这里打嘴，我带他去的好。”凤姐道：“这就是多心了。既是咱们一家人，这怕什么？虽说我们穷了，多一个人吃饭也不算什么。”刘姥姥见凤姐真情，乐得叫青儿住几天，省了家里的嚼吃。只怕青儿不肯，不如叫他来问问，若是他肯，就留下。于是和青儿说了几句。青儿因与巧姐儿玩得熟了，巧姐又不愿意他去，青儿又要在这里，刘姥姥便吩咐了几句，辞了平儿，忙忙的赶出城去，不提。

且说栊翠庵原是贾府的地址，因盖省亲园子，将那庵圈在里头，向来食用香火，并不动贾府的钱粮。如今妙玉被



Xifeng had come to her senses now. At the sight of Granny Liu, whose prayers she had faith in, she sent her maids away and asked the old woman to sit beside her. Told of her qualms and the ghosts she had seen, Granny Liu assured her that the Buddhist deities in her village temple could work miracles.

“Please offer prayers for me!” begged Xifeng. “If you need money for a sacrifice, I have some.” She slipped off a golden bracelet and held it out to her.

“There’s no call for this, madam. When we villagers recover after making pledges, we just spend a few hundred coppers. What need is there for all this? I shall pray for you and make some pledge, and once you’re better you can spend as much as you like.”

Aware that she was in earnest, Xifeng could not insist. “Granny, my life is in your hands!” she said. “And my little Qiaojie is always ailing too; I entrust her to you as well.”

Granny Liu assented readily and proposed, “In this case, as it’s still early, I’ll go back now. When you recover, madam, you can go to thank the gods.”

Haunted by the ghosts of those she had wronged, Xifeng in her terror was eager for her to set off. “If you’ll do this for me so that I can have a good night’s sleep, I’ll be very grateful,” she said. “You can leave your grand-daughter here.”

“She’s a country girl with no manners, and may make trouble. I’d better take her back with me.”

“Don’t worry about that. We’re all one family, so what does it matter? Though we’re poor now, one extra mouth to feed is nothing.”

Seeing that Xifeng meant this, Granny Liu wanted to leave Qinger for a few days to save them food at home; but she did not know whether the child would be willing. She decided to sound her out and questioned her. Qinger was now on such good terms with Qiaojie that they were reluctant to part; so Granny Liu, having given her some instructions, said goodbye to Pinger and went with all speed out of town. Enough of this.

Now Green Lattice Nunnery belonged to the Jia family but had been incorporated into the Garden built for the Imperial Consort’s visit home.



劫，那女尼呈报到官，一则候官府缉盗的下落，二则是妙玉基业，不便离散，依旧住下，不过回明了贾府。

那时贾府的人虽都知道，只为贾政新丧，且又心事不宁，也不敢将这些没要紧的事回禀。只有惜春知道此事，日夜不安。渐渐传到宝玉耳边，说：“妙玉被贼劫去。”又有的说：“妙玉凡心动了，跟人而去。”宝玉听得，十分纳闷：“想来必是被强徒抢去。这个人必不肯受，一定不屈而死！”但是一无下落，心下甚不放心，每日长嘘短叹，还说：“这样一个人，自称为‘槛外人’，怎么遭此结局！”又想到：“当日园中何等热闹！自从二姐姐出阁以来，死的死，嫁的嫁，我想他一尘不染，是保得住的了，岂知风波顿起，比林妹妹死的更奇！”由是一而二，二而三，追思起来，想到《庄子》上的话，虚无缥缈，人生在世，难免风流云散！不觉的大哭起来。袭人等又道是他的疯病发作，百般的温柔解劝。

宝钗初时不知何故，也用话箴规。怎奈宝玉抑郁不解，又觉精神恍惚。宝钗想不出道理，再三打听，方知妙玉被劫，不知去向，也是伤感。只为宝玉愁烦，便用正言解释，因提起：“兰儿自送殡回来，虽不上学，闻得日夜攻苦。他是老太太的重孙。老太太素来望你成人，老爷为你日夜焦心，你为闲情痴意，遭塌自己，我们守着你，如何是个结果？”说得宝玉无言可答，过了一回，才说道：“我那管人家的闲事？只可叹咱们家的运气衰颓！”宝钗道：“可又来！老爷太太

红楼梦  
脂砚斋  
批语  
PDG



However, it had its own income and needed no allowance from the Jia Mansion. After the nuns had notified the police of Miaoyu's abduction, they did not like to leave until the thieves were arrested and they knew what had happened to their mistress. They simply reported the business to the Jia Mansion.

But though the Jia family stewards all knew of the kidnapping, they thought it too trifling a matter with which to trouble Jia Zheng now that he was in mourning and disturbed in his mind. Xichun was the only one who fretted day and night because of this. Before long, however, the news reached Baoyu's ears and it was insinuated that, tempted by desire, Miaoyu had run off with some man. "She must have been kidnapped," he told himself. "As it wasn't in her nature to submit, she must have died resisting." In the absence of news of Miaoyu he kept brooding.

"She used to call herself the 'one outside the threshold.' How could a chaste girl like that come to such an end?" he wondered. "How lively we were in the old days in the Garden! After my second sister's marriage, though, all the girls died or were married off. I thought *she* at least, unsullied by dust, would stay here; yet this sudden storm carried her off even more unexpectedly than Cousin Lin." His thoughts wandering, he recalled Zhuang Zi's saying about the illusory nature of life and felt that men were born to drift with the wind and scatter like clouds. He burst out weeping. Xiren and the rest thought he was deranged again and tried in every way to comfort him.

At first Baochai reasoned with him too, not understanding his distress. But Baoyu went on moping, his mind wandering. In her perplexity she made inquiries, and when she heard that Miaoyu had been kidnapped and vanished without a trace that upset her too. Still, to counteract Baoyu's depression she lectured him, "Though Lan hasn't gone back to school I hear he's studying hard day and night. He's the old lady's greatgrandson. The old lady always hoped that you, her grandson, would do well; and the master worries about you all the time. If because of some whimsy you ruin your health, what's to become of us all?"

Baoyu did not know how to answer. After a while he said, "Why should I worry about other people? What upsets me is the decline in our family fortune."





原为是要你成人，接续祖宗遗绪，你只是执迷不悟，如何是好？”宝玉听来，话不投机，便靠在桌上睡去。宝钗也不理他，叫麝月等伺候着，自己都去睡了。

宝玉见屋里人少，想起：“紫鹃到了这里，我从没合他说句知心的话儿，冷冷清清撂着他，我心里甚不过意。他呢，又比不得麝月秋纹我可以安放得的。想起从前我病的时候，他在我这里伴了好些时，如今他的那一面小镜子还在我这里，他的情意却也不薄了。如今不知为什么，见我就是冷冷的。若说为我们这一个呢，他是合林妹妹最好的，我看他待紫鹃也不错。我不在家的日子，紫鹃原也与他有说有笑的；到我来了，紫鹃便走开了。想来自然是为林妹妹死了，我便成了家的原故。噯！紫鹃，紫鹃！你这样一个聪明女孩儿，难道连我这点子苦处都看不出来么？”因又一想：“今晚他们睡的睡，做活的做活，不如趁着这个空儿，我找他去，看他有什么话？倘或我还有得罪之处，便赔个不是也使得。”想定主意，轻轻的走出了房门，来找紫鹃。

那紫鹃的下房也就在西厢里间。宝玉悄悄的走到窗下，只见里面尚有灯光，便用舌头舐破窗纸，往里一瞧，见紫鹃独自挑灯，又不是做什么，呆呆的坐着。宝玉便轻轻的说道：“紫鹃姐姐，还没有睡么？”紫鹃听了，唬了一跳，怔怔的半日，才说：“是谁？”宝玉道：“是我。”紫鹃听着似乎是宝玉的声音，便问：“是宝二爷么？”宝玉在外轻轻的答应了一声。紫鹃问道：“你来做什么？”宝玉道：“我有一句心里的话要和你说说，你开了门，我到你屋里坐坐。”紫鹃停了一会儿，说道：“二爷有什么话，天晚了，请回罢，明日再说罢。”宝玉听了，寒了半截。自己还要进去，恐紫鹃未必开



“There you are!” she cried. “Your parents want you to do well so as to carry on the family line. If you stick to your silly ways what good will come of it?”

Put out by this, Baoyu laid his head on his desk as if to sleep. Ignoring his sulkiness, Baochai told Sheyue and the other maids to keep an eye on him while she went to bed.

When he was alone in the room it occurred to Baoyu, “I’ve never had a heart-to-heart talk with Zijuan since she came here and feel bad the way I’ve cold-shouldered her, especially as she’s not like Sheyue and Qiuwen whom I can keep in their place. I remember how she kept me company all that time while I was ill, and I still have that little mirror of hers — she was really good to me then. But now for some reason or other she’s treating me coldly. It can hardly be because of Baochai, who was good friends with Cousin Lin and who isn’t bad to Zijuan either. When I’m out, Zijuan chats quite happily with her; but as soon as I come in she goes away. I suppose it must be because after Cousin Lin died I got married. Ah, Zijuan, Zijuan! Can’t an intelligent girl like you understand how wretched I am?” It struck him then, “They’re sleeping or doing needlework this evening: here’s my chance to go and find her. I’ll sound her out. If I’ve offended her I’ll beg her pardon.” His mind made up, he slipped out to look for Zijuan.

Zijuan’s room was on the west side of the courtyard. Tiptoeing up to her window, Baoyu saw that there was still a light inside. He licked the window-paper and, peeping through the hole made in this way, saw Zijuan sitting all alone in the lamplight. She was doing nothing, lost in thought.

“Sister Zijuan,” he called softly. “Aren’t you asleep yet?”

Zijuan gave a start then sat as if stunned. “Who is it?” she finally asked.

“It’s me.”

“Is it Master Bao?” she asked, recognizing his voice.

“Yes,” he answered softly.

“What do you want?”

“I’ve something to tell you in private. Please let me in.”

After a pause she replied, “If you’ve something to tell me, young master, please wait until tomorrow. It’s late now; you’d better go back.”



门；欲要回去，这一肚子的隐情，越发被紫鹃这一句话勾起。无奈说道：“我也没有多余的话，只问你一句。”紫鹃道：“既是一句，就请说。”宝玉半日反不言语。

紫鹃在屋里，不见宝玉言语，知他素有痴病，恐怕一时实在抢白了他，勾起他的旧病，倒也不好了，因站起来，细听了一听，又问道：“是走了，还是傻站着呢？有什么又不说，尽着在这里恼人！已经恼死了一个，难道还要恼死一个么？这是何苦来呢！”说着，也从宝玉舐破之处往外一瞧，见宝玉在那里呆听。紫鹃不便再说，回身剪了剪烛花。忽听宝玉叹了一口气道：“紫鹃姐姐！你从来不是这样铁心石肠，怎么近来连一句好好儿的话都不和我说了？我固然是个浊物，不配你们理我，但只我有什么不是，只望姐姐说明了，那怕姐姐一辈子不理我，我死了倒作个明白鬼呀！”紫鹃听了，冷笑道：“二爷就是这个话呀！还有什么？若就是这句话呢，我们姑娘在时，我也跟着听俗了；若是我们有什么不好处呢，我是太太派来的，二爷倒是回太太去。左右我们丫头们更算不得什么了！”说到这里，那声儿便哽咽起来，说着，又醒鼻涕。宝玉在外知他伤心哭了，便急的跺脚道：“这是怎么说！我的事情，你在这里几个月，还有什么不知道的？就便别人不肯替我告诉你，难道你还不叫我说，叫我憋死了不成？”说着，也呜咽起来了。

宝玉正在这里伤心，忽听背后一个人接言道：“你叫谁替你说呢？谁是谁的什么？自己得罪了人，自己央及呀！人家赏脸不赏在人家，何苦来拿我们这些没要紧的垫喘儿呢？”这



This sent a chill down Baoyu's spine. He knew Zijuan was unlikely to let him in, yet if he were to go back now he would feel even worse after her rebuff.

"I haven't much to say," he faltered. "I just want to ask you one question."

"Well then, out with it."

But for a long time he said nothing.

When he remained silent, Zijuan inside was afraid that by snubbing him she had unhinged him again. She stood up and listened carefully, then asked, "Have you gone or are you standing stupidly there? If you've something to say, fire away. You've already goaded one to death; is it *my* turn now? Isn't this futile?"

She peeped through the hole he had made in the window-paper and saw Baoyu standing there woodenly listening. In silence then she turned to trim the lamp.

Baoyu sighed, "Sister Zijuan! You used not to be so hard-hearted. How is it that nowadays you won't even say a single kind word to me? Of course I'm a lout, beneath your notice; but I do wish you'd tell me what I've done wrong so that even if you ignore me from now on I shall at least die knowing why."

"Is that all, young master?" she asked sarcastically. "Have you nothing else to say? If this is all, I tired of hearing it when my young lady was alive. If we do anything wrong, I was sent here by Her Ladyship and you can report me to her. What are we bondmaids anyway but slaves?" She broke off, choking, here and blew her nose.

Baoyu outside realized that she was weeping and stamped in desperation. "How can you say such things!" he cried. "After all these months here, surely you understand me? If no one else will tell you how I feel, won't you let *me* explain? Do you want me to die of frustration?" He started sobbing too.

As Baoyu was blubbering, someone behind him remarked, "Who do you want to tell her for you? Whose slaves are we anyway? If you've offended her, it's up to you to apologize. Whether she'll accept your apologies or not is up to her. Why shift the blame to people like us who aren't involved?"



一句话把里外两个人都吓了一跳。你道是谁？原来却是麝月。宝玉自觉脸上没趣。只见麝月又说道：“到底是怎么着？一个赔不是，一个又不理。你倒是快快儿的央及呀！噯！我们紫鹃姐姐也就太狠心了：外头这么怪冷的，人家央及了这半天，总连个活动气儿也没有！”又向宝玉道：“刚才二奶奶说了，多早晚了，打量你在那里呢，你却一个人站在这房檐底下做什么？”紫鹃里面接着说道：“这可是什么意思呢？早就请二爷进去，有话明日说罢。这是何苦来！”

宝玉还要说话，因见麝月在那里，不好再说别的，只得一面同麝月走回，一面说道：“罢了，罢了！我今生今世也难剖白这个心了！惟有老天知道罢了！”说到这里，那眼泪也不知从何处来的，滔滔不断了。麝月道：“二爷，依我劝你死了心罢。白赔眼泪，也可惜了儿的。”

宝玉也不答言，遂进了屋子，只见宝钗睡了。宝玉也知宝钗装睡。却是袭人说了一句道：“有什么话，明日说不得？巴巴儿的跑到那里去闹，闹出——”说到这里，也就不肯说，迟一迟，才接着道：“身上不觉怎么样？”宝玉也不言语，只摇摇头儿，袭人便打发宝玉睡下。一夜无眠，自不必说。

这里紫鹃被宝玉一招，越发心里难受，直直的哭了一夜。思前想后：“宝玉的事，明知他病中不能明白，所以众人弄鬼弄神的办成了；后来宝玉明白了，旧病复发，时常哭想，并非忘情负义之徒。今日这种柔情，一发叫人难受。只可怜我们林姑娘真真是无福消受他。如此看来，人生缘分，都有一定。在那未到头时，大家都是痴心妄想；及至无可如何，那糊涂的也就不理会了，那情深义重的也不过临风对月，洒泪悲啼。可怜那死的倒未必知道，这活的真真是苦恼



The two of them, one inside one outside, started. It was Sheyue. Her intervention embarrassed Baoyu.

“Well, what’s going on?” Sheyue continued. “Here’s one making apologies and one ignoring him. Hurry up and plead with her! Ai! Our sister Zijuan is too cruel. It’s freezing outside, and he’s begged you so long, yet you show no sign of relenting.” Then she told Baoyu, “Just now our mistress remarked that it’s rather late and she wondered where you were. Why are you standing here all alone under the eaves?”

“Yes, what’s the idea?” called Zijuan from her room. “I asked the young master to go back. If he has something to say it can wait till tomorrow. This is so pointless!”

Baoyu still wanted to speak, but not in front of Sheyue. So he had to go back with her, telling himself, “Confound it! I shall never as long as I live be able to bare my heart. Only Old Man Heaven understands me!” His tears fell like rain.

“Take my advice, young master, and give up,” Sheyue said. “You’re crying for nothing.”

Baoyu did not answer but went into his room where he saw that Baochai was pretending to be asleep.

Xiren however scolded, “If you have something to say, can’t you wait till tomorrow? Why rush there to make such a scene? What if ...” She left this sentence unfinished. Presently she asked, “Are you feeling all right?”

When Baoyu said nothing and simply shook his head, she helped him to bed. But naturally he passed a sleepless night.

After being provoked and further upset by Baoyu, Zijuan wept the whole night long. She thought, “It’s common knowledge that Baoyu got married when he was out of his mind, and they tricked him into it. Later he came to his senses but then fell ill again and often wept with longing — it’s not as if he were heartless. The feeling he showed today was really touching. What a pity our Miss Lin didn’t have the good fortune to marry him! This shows that everybody’s fate is predestined. Right up to the end they cherish foolish fancies; then when the blow strikes and there’s no help for it, blockheads let it go at that while sensitive souls can only shed tears and lament to the breeze or moon. The dead may have no

伤心，无休无了。算来竟不如草木石头，无知无觉，倒也心中干净！”想到此处，倒把一片酸热之心，一时冰冷了。才要收拾睡时，只听东院里吵嚷起来。未知何事，下回分解。





consciousness but, alas, there is truly no end to the anguish of the living. So it seems we are worse off than rocks or plants which can rest at peace, having no knowledge or feeling.”

This reflection eased her, chilling her fevered passions, and she was getting ready to sleep when a clamour broke out in the eastern courtyard. To know its cause, read the next chapter.





## 第一百十四回

王熙凤历幻返金陵 甄应嘉蒙恩还玉阙

却说宝玉宝钗听说凤姐病的危急，赶忙起来，丫头秉烛伺候。正要出院，只见王夫人那边打发人来说：“琏二奶奶不好了，还没有咽气，二爷二奶奶且慢些过去罢。琏二奶奶的病有些古怪，从三更天起，到四更时候，没有住嘴，说了好些胡话，要船要轿，只说赶到金陵归入什么册子去。众人不懂，他只是哭哭喊喊。琏二爷没有法儿，只得去糊船轿，还没拿来，琏二奶奶喘着气等着呢。太太叫我们过来说，等琏二奶奶去了，再过去罢。”宝玉道：“这也奇！他到金陵做什么去？”袭人轻轻的说道：“你不是那年做梦，我还记得说有多少册子？莫不琏二奶奶是到那里去罢？”宝玉听了点头道：“是呀！可惜我都不记得那上头的話了。这么说起来，人都有个定数的了。但不知林妹妹又到那里去了？我如今被你一说，我有些懂的了。若再做这个梦时，我必细细的瞧一瞧，便有未卜先知的分儿了。”袭人道：“你这样的人，可是不可合你说话！我偶然提了一句，你就认起真来了吗？就算你能先知了，又有什么法儿？”宝玉道：“只怕不能先知；若是能了，我也犯不着为你们瞎操心了。”

两人正说着，宝钗走来，问道：“你们说什么？”宝玉恐



甄应嘉蒙恩还玉阙  
PDG



## Chapter 114

### Xifeng Has Hallucinations and Goes Back to Jinling Zhen Yingjia, Pardoned by the Emperor, Returns to Court

When Baoyu and Baochai heard that Xifeng was mortally ill, they hastily got up and the maids brought in candles to wait on them. They were on the point of leaving when some of Lady Wang's servants arrived to report, "Madam Lian is in a bad way, but not yet at her last gasp. The second master and mistress had better not go there just yet. "There is something very strange about her illness, for she has been delirious since midnight, calling for a boat and sedan-chair so that she can hurry back to Jinling to fill in some register. Nobody knows what she means, and she keeps on crying and wailing. So Master Lian has had to order a paper boat and paper chair for her. They haven't been delivered yet, and Madam Lian is still waiting, panting for breath. Her Ladyship sent us to tell you not to go over till she has passed away."

"That's odd!" exclaimed Baoyu. "Why should she go to Jinling?"

Xiren reminded him softly, "I seem to remember you had a dream one year about some registers, didn't you? Perhaps that's where she's going."

He nodded. "That's right. It's a pity I can't remember what was written there. It goes to show that all mortals' fates are predestined. But where can Cousin Lin have gone, I wonder? Now that you've reminded me, I feel I have an inkling. If I ever have that dream again I must read those registers carefully so as to be able to foretell the future."

"You're impossible to talk to!" protested Xiren. "How can you take a casual remark of mine so seriously? Even if you were able to foresee the future, what could you do about it?"

"I'm afraid it's out of the question. But if I knew in advance I wouldn't have to worry about you all."

Baochai came over at this point to ask, "What are you two discuss-



他盘诘，只说：“我们谈论凤姐姐。”宝钗道：“人要死了，你们还只管议论他。旧年你还说我咒人，那个签不是应了么？”宝玉又想了一想，拍手道：“是的，是的！这么说起来，你倒能先知了。我索性问问你，你知道我将来怎么样？”宝钗笑道：“这是又胡闹起来了。我是就他求的签上的话混解的，你就认了真了。你和我们二嫂子成了一样的了。你失了玉，他去求妙玉扶乩，批出来众人不解，他背地里合我说，妙玉怎么前知，怎么参禅悟道，如今他遭此大难，如何自己都不知道？这可是算得前知吗？就是我偶然说着了二奶奶的事情，其实知道他是怎么样了？只怕我连我自己也不知道呢。这些事情，原都是虚诞的，可是信得的么？”

宝玉道：“别提他了，你只说邢妹妹罢。自从我们这里连连的有事，把他这件事竟忘记了。你们家这么一件大事，怎么就草草的完了？也没请亲唤友的。”宝钗道：“你这话又是迂了。我们家的亲戚，只有咱们这里和王家最近。王家没了什么正经人了；咱们家遭了老太太的大事，所以也没请，就是琏二哥张罗了张罗。别的亲戚虽也有一两门子，你没过去，如何知道？算起来，我们这二嫂子的命和我差不多。好好的许了我二哥哥，我妈妈原想要体体面面的给二哥哥娶这房亲事的：一则为我哥哥在监里，二哥哥也不肯大办；二则为咱们家的事；三则为我二嫂子在大太太那边忒苦，又加着抄了家，大太太是一味的苛刻，他也实在难受。所以我和妈妈说了，便将将就就的娶了过去。我看二嫂子如今倒是安心



ing?"

Not wanting her to question him Baoyu said, "We were talking about Cousin Xifeng."

"Why gossip about somebody who's dying? In the past you blamed me for putting a jinx on people, but that prediction came true, didn't it?"

Recalling the incident Baoyu clapped his hands. "Quite right, quite right!" he exclaimed. "So *you* can predict the future. In that case let me ask you to tell my fortune."

"What nonsense!" Baochai laughed. "I simply guessed at what the oracle meant. How can you take it seriously? You're as bad as my second sister-in-law. When you lost your jade, she asked Miaoyu to consult the planchette; and when nobody could understand what it wrote she assured me secretly that Miaoyu could foretell the future and had attained enlightenment. How is it, then, that Miaoyu didn't know of the terrible thing that has happened to her now? Can this count as foretelling the future? Even if I hit upon the truth about Xifeng, I didn't really know what was going to happen to her. I don't even know what's going to happen to me, so how can I tell about you? All such auguries are bogus. How can you believe in them?"

"Never mind her. Let's talk about Cousin Xing," he said. "What with one trouble after another here, we've forgotten about her marriage. It was such an important event in your family, how could you handle it so sloppily, not even inviting relatives and friends?"

"You're wide of the mark again. Our closest relatives are your family and the Wangs. There are no respectable Wangs left now, and we couldn't invite people from this house just after the old lady's funeral; so only cousin Lian helped out a little. Of course a few other relatives attended, but since you didn't go you didn't know that. My second sister-in-law's fate seems rather like mine. When she was betrothed to my cousin Ke, mother meant to hold the wedding in style; but with Pan in prison Ke didn't want a big show, and then there was that trouble in our house. However, Cousin Xing was having a thin time of it with the Elder Mistress, the more so as their property had been confiscated; and she found it hard to put up with Lady Xing's harshness. That's why I asked mother to hold the wedding — but to do it quietly. Now she seems quite

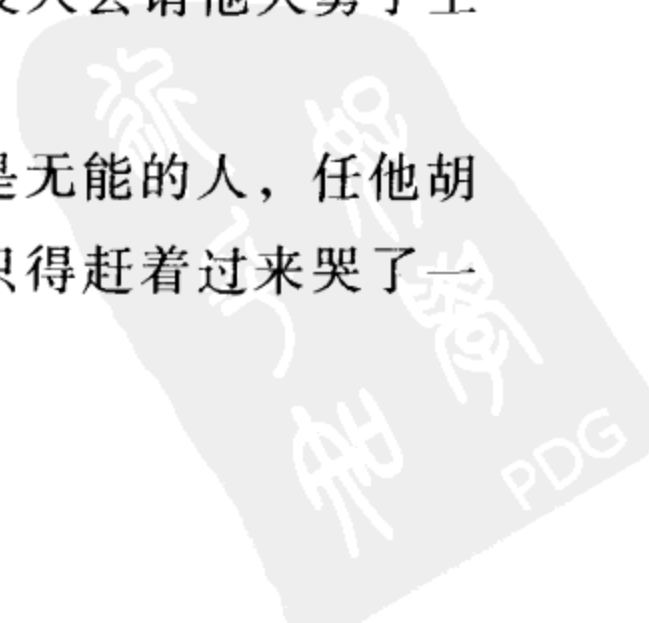


乐意的孝敬我妈妈，比亲媳妇还强十倍呢；待二哥哥也是极尽妇道的；和香菱又甚好。二哥哥不在家，他两个和和气气的过日子，虽说是穷些，我妈妈近来倒安逸好些。就是想起我哥哥来，不免伤心。况且常打发人家里来要使用，多亏二哥哥在外头账头儿上讨来应付他。我听见说：城里的几处房子已经也典了，还剩了一所，如今打算着搬了去住。”宝玉道：“为什么要搬？住在这里，你来去也便宜些；若搬远了，你去就要一天了。”宝钗道：“虽说是亲戚，到底各自的稳便些。那里有个一辈子住在亲戚家的呢？”

宝玉还要讲出不搬去的理，王夫人打发人来说：“琏二奶奶咽了气了，所有的人都过去了，请二爷二奶奶就过去。”宝玉听了，也掌不住跺脚要哭。宝钗虽也悲戚，恐宝玉伤心，便说：“有在这里哭的，不如到那边哭去。”于是两人一直到风姐那里，只见好些人围着哭呢。宝钗走到跟前，见风姐已经停床，便大放悲声。宝玉也拉着贾琏的手，大哭起来，贾琏也重新哭泣。平儿等因见无人劝解，只得含悲上来劝止了。众人都悲哀不止。

贾琏此时手足无措，叫人传了赖大来，叫他办理丧事。自己回明了贾政，然后去行事。但是手头不济，诸事拮据。又想起风姐素日的好处来，更加悲哭不已。又见巧姐哭的死去活来，越发伤心。哭到天明，即刻打发人去请他大舅子王仁过来。

那王仁自从王子腾死后，王子胜又是无能的人，任他胡为，已闹的六亲不和。今知妹子死了，只得赶着过来哭了一





contented and very dutiful to my mother too, ten times better than her real daughter-in-law ever was. She makes an excellent wife for Cousin Ke and is good to Xiangling as well. When he's away the two of them get on famously together. So though our family is poorer now, mother feels quite comfortable these days and only grieves whenever she thinks of Pan. Besides, he keeps sending home for money, and it's Ke who copes by raising cash outside. I hear that all but one of our houses in towns are mortgaged, and they're planning to move over there."

"Why move house?" asked Baoyu. "With them here, it's more convenient for you to drop in. If she moves far away a visit will take a whole day."

"Even though we are mother and daughter, it's still better for each to have her own establishment. How can she stay with relatives all her life?"

Baoyu was about to dispute this when Lady Wang sent a maid to announce, "Madam Lian has breathed her last and everyone's gone over there. Her Ladyship wants the young master and young mistress to go too now."

Hearing this Baoyu stamped his foot, on the verge of tears. Baochai although upset too tried to restrain him.

"Why mourn here?" she demurred. "We'd better go over."

They went straight to Xifeng's quarters, and found many mourners assembled there. When Baochai saw Xifeng already laid out, she gave way to loud weeping. Baoyu, taking Jia Lian's hand, sobbed bitterly; and Jia Lian too wailed again. As there was no one else present to remonstrate, Pinger stepped forward sadly to urge them to desist; but still they went on lamenting.

Jia Lian, unable to cope, summoned Lai Da and told him to see to the funeral, then reported this to Jia Zheng and obtained his approval. But having little money in hand, he was hard put to it. The thought of Xifeng's help in the past increased his wretchedness; and the sight of Qiaojie beside herself with grief made his heart ache even more. He wept till dawn, then sent to ask Xifeng's brother Wang Ren to come over.

Since the death of Wang Ziteng, as Wang Zisheng was so incompetent Wang Ren had done as he pleased and alienated all his relatives.



场。见这里诸事将就，心下便不舒服，说：“我妹妹在你家辛辛苦苦当了好几年家，也没有什么错处，你们家该认真的发送发送才是，怎么这时候诸事还没有齐备？”贾琏本与王仁不睦，见他说些混账话，知他不懂的什么，也不大理他。王仁便叫了他外甥女儿巧姐过来，说：“你娘在时，本来办事不周到，只知道一味的奉承老太太，把我们的人都不大看在眼里。外甥女儿！你也大了，看见我从来沾染过你们没有？如今你娘死了，诸事要听着舅舅的话。你母亲娘家的亲戚就是我和你二舅舅了。你父亲的为人，我也早知道了：只有敬重别人的。那年什么尤姨娘死了，我虽不在京，听见说花了好些银子。如今你娘死了，你父亲倒是这样的将就办去，你也不知道劝劝你父亲吗？”巧姐道：“我父亲巴不得要好看，只是如今比不得从前了。现在手里没钱，所以诸事省些是有的。”王仁道：“你的东西还少么？”巧姐儿道：“旧年抄去，何尝还有呢？”王仁道：“你也这样说？我听见老太太又给了好些东西，你该拿出来。”巧姐又不好说父亲用去，只推不知道。王仁便道：“哦！我知道了，不过是你留着做嫁妆罢咧！”巧姐听了，不敢回言，只气得哽噎难鸣的哭起来了。

平儿生气说道：“舅老爷，有话等我们二爷进来再说。姑娘这么点年纪，他懂的什么？”王仁道：“你们是巴不得二奶奶死了，你们就好为王了！我并不要什么；好看些，也是你们的脸面！”说着，赌气坐着。

巧姐满心的不舒服，心想：“我父亲并不是没情。我妈妈





When he heard of his younger sister's death he had to come and mourn; but the shabby way things were being done provoked him.

"My sister worked hard for years running your household, and did nothing wrong," he said. "So your family ought to take her funeral seriously. Why is nothing ready yet?"

Jia Lian who had never liked him ignored this foolish, injudicious talk. Then Wang Ren called Qiaojie over.

"When your mother was alive," he said, "she neglected some of her duties and was so set on pleasing the old lady that she paid very little attention to *us*. Now, niece, you are growing up. Have you ever seen me take any advantage of your family? Now that your mother's dead you must be guided in everything by your second grand-uncle and me — we're your only kinsmen left in her family. I know what your father is like: all he cares about is other people. That year his concubine You died, although I wasn't in the capital I heard you spent pots of money; yet now that your mother's dead he's skimping things like this. Why don't you protest?"

"My father would be only too glad to do things handsomely," Qiaojie replied. "But we're not as well-off as before. Having no money in hand, we have to economize wherever we can."

"Haven't you plenty of valuables?" he asked.

"How could we after that raid?"

"So *you* take that line too? I heard that the old lady gave you lots of things. Now is the time too use them."

Not liking to say that her father had already sold those heirlooms, Qiaojie denied any knowledge of the matter.

"Ha, I know!" he sneered. "You want to keep them all for your dowry!"

Qiaojie dared not retort and could only sob with rage. But Pinger remonstrated angrily, "If you have any complaints, sir, wait till our master comes back. What does the child understand?"

"You were looking forward to your mistress' death so that you could take her place!" he retorted. "I don't want anything for myself; but you owe it to yourselves to keep up appearances." He sat down glowering.

Seething with resentment Qiaojie told herself, "It's not that my father





在时，舅舅不知拿了多少东西去，如今说得这样干净！”于是便不大瞧得起他舅舅了。岂知王仁心里想来，他妹妹不知积攒了多少。虽说抄了家，那屋里的银子还怕少吗？“必是怕我来缠他们，所以也帮着这么说。这小东西儿也是不中用的！”从此，王仁也嫌了巧姐儿了。

贾琏并不知道，只忙着弄银钱使用。外头的大事，叫赖大办了；里头也要用好些钱，一时实在不能张罗。平儿知他着急，便叫贾琏道：“二爷也别过于伤了自己的身子！”贾琏道：“什么身子！现在日用的钱都没有，这件事怎么办？偏有个糊涂行子，又在这里蛮缠，你想有什么法儿？”平儿道：“二爷也不用着急。若说没钱使唤，我还有些东西，旧年幸亏没有抄在里头去，二爷要，就拿去当着使唤罢。”贾琏听了，心想：“难得这样。”便笑道：“这样更好，省得我各处张罗。等我银子弄到手了还你。”平儿道：“我的也是奶奶给的，什么还不还！只要这件事办的好看些就是了。”贾琏心里倒着实感激他，便将平儿的东西拿了去，当钱使用。诸凡事情，便与平儿商量。秋桐看着，心里就有些不甘，每每口角里头便说：“平儿没有了奶奶，他要上去了！我是老爷的人，他怎么就越过我去了呢？”平儿也看出来，只不理他。倒是贾琏一时明白，越发把秋桐嫌了，碰着有些烦恼，便拿着秋桐出气。邢夫人知道，反说贾琏不好。贾琏忍气不提。



is heartless. When mama was alive, uncle made off with ever so many of our things; but now he talks as if he had clean hands!" He went down in her estimation.

Wang Ren for his part was convinced that his sister must have sizable savings, so that even after the raid they could hardly be short of silver. He thought, "My niece must be afraid I'll cadge on them; that's why she's taking her father's side. This minx is no good either!" This made him take a dislike to Qiaojie too.

Jia Lian, unaware of this, was preoccupied with raising money. He had put Lai Da in charge of outside business; but their home expenses were going to be heavy too, and he had no idea where the money was to come from. Pinger appreciated his anxiety.

"Don't ruin your health by worrying too much," she urged him.

"To hell with my health!" he exploded. "I haven't even the money for daily expenses. What's to be done? And to make matters worse, this fool has come butting in. What do you expect me to do?"

"Don't worry, Second Master. If you're short of money, I still have some things which luckily weren't confiscated. Take them, sir, to be going on with."

Jia Lian was most relieved. "That's splendid," he answered with a smile. "It'll save me the trouble of borrowing right and left. I'll pay you back when I'm in funds again."

"All I have was given me by the mistress, so why talk about paying me back? I just want this funeral to be properly managed."

Feeling immensely grateful, Jia Lian raised money on these things of Pinger's, and thereafter he consulted her on all matters, much to Qiutong's annoyance.

"Now that the mistress is gone, Pinger wants to take her place," she kept complaining. "I was the Elder Master's maid, so how can she out-rank *me*?"

Pinger paid no attention to such remarks, but when Jia Lian learned of them he was disgusted and each time he lost his temper would swear at Qiutong. But when Lady Xing knew this she took Qiutong's side, and he had to control his anger. No more of this.



再说凤姐停了十余天，送了殡。贾政守着老太太的孝，总在外书房。那时清客相公，渐渐的都辞去了，只有个程日兴还在那里，时常陪着说说话儿。提起：“家运不好，一连人口死了好些，大老爷合珍大爷又在外头。家计一天难似一天，外头东庄地亩，也不知道怎么样，总不得了！”那程日兴道：“我在这里好些年，也知道，府上的人那一个不是肥己的？一年一年都往他家里拿，那自然府上是一年不够一年了。又添了大老爷珍大爷那边两处的费用；外头又有些债务；前儿又破了好些财，要想衙门里缉贼追赃，那是难事。老世翁若要安顿家事，除非传那些管事的来，派一个心腹人各处去清查清查：该去的去，该留的留；有了亏空，着在经手的身上赔补，这就有了数儿了。那一座大园子，人家是不敢买的，这里头的出息也不少，又不派人管了。几年老世翁不在家，这些人就弄神弄鬼儿的，闹的一个人不敢到园里，这都是家人的弊。此时把下人查一查，好的使着，不好的便撵了，这才是道理。”贾政点头道：“先生，你有所不知！不必说下人，就是自己的侄儿，也靠不住！若要我查起来，那能一一亲见亲知？况我又在服中，不能照管这些个。我素来又兼不大理家，有的没的，我还摸不着呢。”程日兴道：“老世翁最是仁德的人；若在别人家这样的家计，就穷起来，十年五载还不怕，便向这些管家的要，也就够了。我听见世翁的家人还有做知县的呢。”贾政道：“一个人若要使起家人们的钱来，便了不得了，只好自己俭省些。但是册子上的产



After the corpse had been laid out for more than ten days, the funeral took place. All this time Jia Zheng, still in mourning for his mother, was staying in the outer study. By now all his protégés and secretaries had left with the exception of Cheng Rixing who often kept him company.

Jia Zheng told him, "Our family's gone downhill with so many dying one after the other, and the Elder Master and Master Zhen away. We are more hard pressed every day, and I don't know what's become of our farm at East Village. All in all, we're in a bad way!"

"Yes, after all these years here I know the situation," said Cheng Rixing. "Which of your servants hasn't been battenning on you by filching things from your mansion year after year? Naturally you're runing shorter every year. On top of that you have to meet the expenses of the Elder Master and Master Zhen, not to mention your debts outside; besides, recently you were robbed, and the police aren't likely to catch the thieves or recover your stolen property. If you want to set your house in order, sir, you will have to summon your stewards and send one whom you trust to check up everywhere. Some servants should be dismissed; and if there is a deficit anywhere, make the one responsible pay for it. Then you will know where you are. As for that big Garden of yours, no one would dare sell it; but you haven't put anyone in charge of all its produce. During those years when you were away, these people got up to their tricks pretending the place was haunted so that everybody was afraid to go there. Better check up on your staff and keep on only the servants loyal to you, sending the rest away."

Jia Zheng nodded. "I don't mind telling you, sir," he said, "that quite apart from the servants even my own nephews aren't to be relied on! If I start investigating, how am I to see to everything myself? Besides, being still in mourning, I can't attend to these things. And never having paid much attention to family affairs, I'm not clear what the situation is."

"You are the soul of goodness, sir. If other families owned such a property and fell on hard times, they would be able to get by for five or ten years by applying to these stewards. Some of them, I hear, have had themselves made magistrates."

"It's unthinkable to ask one's servants for money," objected Jia Zheng. "We shall just have to be more frugal. If the properties entered in our



业，若是实有还好，生怕有名无实了。”程日兴道：“老世翁所见极是。晚生为什么说要查查呢！”贾政道：“先生必有所闻？”程日兴道：“我虽知道些那些管事的神通，晚生也不敢言语的。”贾政听了，便知话里有因，便叹道：“我家祖父以来，都是仁厚的，从没有刻薄过下人。我看如今这些人一日不似一日了！在我手里行出主子样儿来，又叫人笑话！”

两人正说着，门上的进来回道：“江南甄老爷来了。”贾政便问道：“甄老爷进京为什么？”那人道：“奴才也打听过了，说是蒙圣恩起复了。”贾政道：“不用说了，快请罢。”那人出去，请了进来。那甄老爷即是甄宝玉之父，名叫甄应嘉，表字友忠，也是金陵人氏，功勋之后。原与贾府有亲，素来走动的。因前年挂误革了职，动了家产；今遇主上眷念功臣，赐还世职，行取来京陛见。知道贾母新丧，特备祭礼，择日到寄灵的地方拜奠，所以先来拜望。

贾政有服，不能远接，在外书房门口等着。那位甄老爷一见，便悲喜交集；因在制中，不便行礼，遂拉着手叙了些阔别思念的话，然后分宾主坐下，献了茶，彼此又将别后事情的话说了。贾政问道：“老亲翁几时陛见的？”甄应嘉道：“前日。”贾政道：“主上隆恩，必有温谕。”甄应嘉道：“主





books really exist, then we should be all right. I only fear they may be empty names.”

“Quite true, sir. That’s why I humbly suggest a check-up.”

“I suppose you have heard some talk?”

“Though I have an idea what these stewards are capable of, sir, I wouldn’t dare voice my suspicions.”

Aware that there was something behind this, Jia Zheng sighed, “Since our grandfather’s time we have always been kind masters, never treating our underlings harshly. But they seem to be getting more out of hand every day. If I try to act the stern master now, people will laugh at me!”

Just then one of the gatekeepers announced, “Master Zhen from the Yangtze Valley has arrived.”

“What brings him to the capital?” Jia Zheng asked.

“I inquired, sir, and they say he has been reinstated through the Emperor’s favour.”

“Very well, then. Invite him in at once!”

The man went off to usher in Zhen Yingjia, whose secondary name was Youzhong, the father of Zhen Baoyu. He too was a native of Jinling of noble ancestry and related to the Jia family, with whom he had been on close terms. Two years before this, having committed a fault, he had been degraded, his property confiscated. Now the Emperor, out of concern for subjects who had performed meritorious service, had restored his hereditary title and summoned him to the capital for an audience. Learning of the Lady Dowager’s recent death, he had prepared sacrificial gifts and come today to pay his respects at her shrine, first calling on Jia Zheng.

Jia Zheng, still in mourning, could not go out to meet him but waited by his study door. Their reunion filled Mr. Zhen with mixed joy and sorrow. As they could not greet each other formally while Jia Zheng was in mourning, they took hands and exchanged a few civilities, then sat down as host and guest and while tea was served described their experiences since their last meeting.

“When did you go to court, sir?” Jia Zheng asked.

“The day before yesterday.”

“I presume the Most High must have given you certain instructions



上的恩典，真是比天还高，下了好些旨意。”贾政道：“什么好旨意？”甄应嘉道：“近来越寇猖獗，海疆一带，小民不安，派了安国公征剿贼寇。主上因我熟悉土疆，命我前往安抚，但是即日就要起身。昨日知老太太仙逝，谨备瓣香至灵前拜奠，稍尽微忱。”贾政即忙叩首拜谢，便说：“老亲翁即此一行，必是上慰圣心，下安黎庶。诚哉莫大之功，正在此行。但弟不克亲睹奇才，只好遥聆捷服。现在镇海统制是弟舍亲，会时务望青照。”甄应嘉道：“老亲翁与统制是什么亲戚？”贾政道：“弟那年在江西粮道任时，将小女许配与统制少君，结褵已经三载。因海口案内未清，继以海寇聚奸，所以音信不通。弟深念小女，俟老亲翁安抚事竣后，拜恳便中一视。弟即修字数行，烦尊纪带去，便感激不尽了！”甄应嘉道：“儿女之情，人所不免。我正在有奉托老亲翁的事。昨蒙圣恩召取来京，因小儿年幼，家下乏人，将贱眷全带来京。我因钦限迅速，昼夜先行，贱眷在后缓行，到京尚需时日。弟奉旨在京，不敢外留。将来贱眷到京，少不得要到尊府，定叫小犬叩见，如可进教，遇有姻事可图之处，望乞留意为感。”贾政一一答应。





since he was gracious enough to summon you.”

“Yes, the Sovereign’s kindness surpasses heaven. He issued several decrees.”

“What is your good news?”

“Recently pirates have been raiding the southeast coast, giving the people no rest, and the Duke of Anguo is being sent to wipe them out. Since our Sovereign knows that I am familiar with that locality, he has ordered me to pacify the people and to set off straight away. Yesterday I heard of the old lady’s passing, so to express my condolences I have brought incense to pay my respects at her shrine.”

Jia Zheng bowed his thanks and rejoined, “By going on this mission, sir, you will certainly relieve the Emperor’s anxiety and bring peace to the people. You are bound to achieve great deeds. As I shall be unable to witness them, I can only wait far off for news of your triumph. The garrison commander there happens to be related to me; I hope you will think well of him when you meet.”

“What is your relationship, sir?”

“When serving as Grain Commissioner in Jiangxi, I betrothed my young daughter to his son. They’ve been married for three years now. But as pirates have been raiding the coast and some cases there are still under litigation, I have had no news of them. My daughter is much in my thoughts. After your work of pacification, sir, I hope you will spare time to see them. I shall write a few lines to her, and if I may trouble you to pass on my letter I shall be extremely grateful!”

“Who doesn’t feel for his children?” replied Zhen Yingjia. “That reminds me of a favour I’d like to ask of you. When His Majesty graciously summoned me to court, because my son is young and there is no one in charge at home I decided to bring my whole household here as well. But having to travel post-haste I came on ahead, leaving them to follow more slowly, and they have not yet arrived. I have orders to go straight to my post and dare not procrastinate. When my worthless son arrives, I shall certainly leave word for him to come and pay his respects to you, sir. I hope you will give him good advice, and if there is a chance to arrange a suitable match I would be most grateful if you would keep him in mind.”





那甄应嘉又说了几句话，就要起身，说：“明日在城外再见。”贾政见他事忙，谅难再坐，只得送出书房。贾琏宝玉早已伺候在那里代送，因贾政未叫，不敢擅入。甄应嘉出来，两人上去请安。应嘉一见宝玉，呆了一呆，心想：“这个怎么甚像我家宝玉！只是浑身缟素。”问道：“至亲久阔，爷们都不认得了。”贾政忙指贾琏道：“这是家兄名赦之子琏二侄儿。”又指着宝玉道：“这是第二小犬，名叫宝玉。”应嘉拍手道：“奇！我在家听见说老亲翁有个衔玉生的爱子，名叫宝玉，因与小儿同名，心中甚为罕异。后来想着这个也是常有的事，不在意了。岂知今日一见，不但面貌相同，且举止一般，这更奇了！”问起年纪，“比这里的哥儿略小一岁。”

贾政便又提起承荐包勇，问及“令郎哥儿与小儿同名”的话述了一遍。应嘉因属意宝玉，也不暇问及那包勇的好歹，只连连的称道：“真真罕异！”因又拉着宝玉的手，极致殷勤。又恐安国公起身甚速，急须预备长行，勉强分手徐行。贾琏宝玉送出，一路又问了宝玉好些，然后才登车而去。那贾琏宝玉回来见了贾政，便将应嘉问的话回了一遍。贾政命他二人散去。贾琏又去张罗，算明凤姐丧事的账目。

宝玉回到自己房中，告诉了宝钗，说是：“常提的甄宝





Jia Zheng assented to these requests, and after a little more talk Zhen Yingjia rose to leave.

"I'll see you tomorrow outside the city," he said.

Since he was in too much of a hurry to stay, Jia Zheng saw him out of his study. Jia Lian and Baoyu were waiting outside to see the guest off for him, not having presumed to enter as they had not been summoned. They both stepped forward now to pay their respects. The sight of Baoyu astounded Zhen Yingjia, who thought, "Why, he's the image of my Baoyu, except that he's in mourning!"

He greeted them and said, "Though we are close relatives, young gentlemen, we haven't met for so long that we don't recognize each other."

Jia Zheng indicated Jia Lian and said, "This is my elder brother She's son, my second nephew Lian." Then he pointed at Baoyu. "This is my second son, Baoyu."

Zhen Yingjia clapped his hands in amazement. "How extraordinary!" he exclaimed. "I heard at home that you had a son born with a piece of jade in his mouth, whose name was Baoyu. And I was amazed because he had the same name as my son. Later it seemed nothing unusual, so I thought no more about it. Now that I see him, though, they look exactly alike and bear themselves in the same way as well. This is most extraordinary!" He inquired Baoyu's age and remarked, "My boy is one year younger."

Jia Zheng thanked him then for recommending Bao Yong, and referred back to how he had asked the servant about his young master having the same name as his son. Since Zhen Yingjia was so struck by Baoyu, he did not ask about Bao Yong but kept exclaiming "Truly extraordinary!" He took Baoyu attentively by the hand. However, as the Duke of Anguo was about to set out on his journey, he had to go at once to get ready himself and reluctantly took his leave. He asked Baoyu many questions as the two young men saw him out, then left in his carriage. When Jia Lian and Baoyu came back, they reported what the guest had said to Jia Zheng, who then dismissed them. Jia Lian went off to work out the accounts for Xifeng's funeral.

When Baoyu returned to his own quarters he told Baochai, "I've



玉，我想一见不能，今日倒先见了他父亲了。我还听得说，宝玉也不日要到京了，要求拜望我们老爷呢。他也说和我一模一样的，我只不信。若是他后儿到了咱们这里来，你们都去瞧瞧，看他果然和我像不像？”宝钗听了道：“嗳！你说话怎么越发没前后了？什么男人同你一样都说出来了，还叫我们瞧去呢！”宝玉听了，知是失言，脸上一红，连忙的还要解说。不知何话，下回分解。





never had a chance to meet that Zhen Baoyu whom they're always talking about, but today I've seen his father. He says Baoyu will be arriving here any day now and wants to call on my father. He also says his son looks exactly like me, but I can hardly believe it. If he does come, you must all take a look at him to see whether he's really my double or not."

"Oh!" scoffed Baochai. "What nonsense you talk! Claiming that some man is your double and even asking us to look at him!"

Aware of his gaffe Baoyu blushed, wanting to explain. To know how he justified himself, read the next chapter.







惑私春索  
偏惜矢志



## 第一百十五回

惑偏私惜春矢素志 证同类宝玉失相知

说话宝玉为自己失言，被宝钗问住，想要掩饰过去，只见秋纹进来说：“外头老爷叫二爷呢。”宝玉巴不得一声儿，便走了。到贾政那里，贾政道：“我叫你来不为别的。现在你穿着孝，不便到学里去，你在家，必要将你念过的文章温习温习。我这几天倒也闲着。隔两三日要做几篇文章我瞧瞧，看你这些时进益了没有。”宝玉只得答应着。贾政又道：“你环兄弟兰侄儿我也叫他们温习去了。倘若你做的文章不好，反倒不及他们，那可就不成事了。”宝玉不敢言语，答应了个“是”，站着不动。贾政道：“去罢。”宝玉退了出来，正遇见赖大诸人拿着些册子进来。

宝玉一溜烟回到自己房中，宝钗问了，知道叫他作文章，倒也喜欢。惟有宝玉不愿意，也不敢怠慢。正要坐下静静心，只见两个姑子进来，是地藏庵的。见了宝钗，说道：“请二奶奶安。”宝钗待理不理的说：“你们好。”因叫人来：“倒茶给师父们喝。”宝玉原要和那姑子说话，见宝钗似乎厌恶这些，也不好兜搭。那姑子知道宝钗是个冷人，也不久坐，辞了要去。宝钗道：“再坐坐去罢。”那姑子道：“我们因在铁槛寺做了功德，好些时没来请太太奶奶们的安。今日来





## Chapter 115

### Personal Prejudice Strengthens Xichun's Conviction Baoyu Fails to Find a True Friend in His Double

Baoyu, challenged by Baochai because of his gaffe, was trying to cover it up when Qiuwen came in to announce that the master wanted him in his study. He went there, glad of this chance to slip away.

"I'll tell you why I sent for you," said Jia Zheng. "You can't go to school as long as you are in mourning, but while staying at home you must review those essays you studied before. I am fairly free at present, so I want you to write a few essays to show me a couple of days from now, to see what progress if any you've made recently." When Baoyu had assented he went on, "I have told your brother Huan and your nephew Lan to do some revision too. If your essays are poor, not even up to theirs, that will be disgraceful."

Not daring to protest Baoyu answered, "Yes sir," and stood there motionless till his father dismissed him. On his way out he met Lai Da and other stewards coming in with ledgers. He streaked back to his room.

When Baochai ascertained that he had been told to write essays she was delighted and, though reluctant himself, he could not refuse this assignment. As he was sitting down to collect his thoughts, two nuns arrived from Ksitigarbha Nunnery and paid their respects to Baochai, who greeted them coldly then told maids to serve tea. Baoyu would have liked to chat with the nuns but refrained in view of her evident aversion to them. And they, aware that they were being cold-shouldered, very soon took their leave.

"Won't you stay?" said Baochai.

"We have been chanting sutras in Iron Threshold Temple," they replied. "That's why we've not come for some time to pay our respects. Today, after calling on Their ladyships, we want to see Miss Xichun too."

Then she nodded and let them go.





了，见过了奶奶太太们，还要看看四姑娘呢。”宝钗点头，由他去了。

那姑子到了惜春那里，看见彩屏，便问：“姑娘在那里呢？”彩屏道：“不用提了。姑娘这几天饭都没吃，只是歪着。”那姑子道：“为什么？”彩屏道：“说也话长。你见了姑娘，只怕他就和你说了。”惜春早已听见，急忙坐起，说：“你们两个人好啊！见我们家事差了，就不来了！”那姑子道：“阿弥陀佛！有也是施主，没也是施主：别说我们是本家庵里，受过老太太多少恩惠的！如今老太太的事，太太奶奶们都见过了，只没有见姑娘，心里惦记，今儿是特特的来瞧姑娘来了。”

惜春便问起水月庵的姑子来。那姑子道：“他们庵里闹了些事，如今门上也不肯常放进来了。”便问惜春道：“前儿听见说，栊翠庵的妙师父怎么跟了人走了？”惜春道：“那里的话？说这个话的人堤防着割舌头！人家遭了强盗抢去，怎么还说这样的坏话！”那姑子道：“妙师父的为人古怪，只怕是假惺惺罢？在姑娘面前，我们也不好说的。那里像我们这些粗夯人，只知道讽经念佛，给人家忏悔，也为着自己修个善果。”惜春道：“怎么样就是善果呢？”那姑子道：“除了咱们家这样善德人家儿不怕，若是别人家那些诰命夫人小姐，也保不住一辈子的荣华。到了苦难来了，可就救不得了。只有个观世音菩萨大慈大悲：遇见人家有苦难事，就慈心发动，设法儿救济。为什么如今都说‘大慈大悲救苦救难的观世音菩萨’呢！我们修了行的人，虽说比夫人小姐们苦多着呢，只是没有险难的了。虽不能成佛作祖，修修来世或者转个男



Proceeding to Xichun's quarters the nuns asked Caiping, "Where is your young lady?"

"You may well ask," Caiping answered. "These days she won't eat a thing, just curls up on the *kang*."

"What's the matter?"

"That's a long story. When you see her, she'll probably tell you."

Xichun who had overheard them promptly sat up. "How are you?" she cried. "When our family's hard up you don't come near us!"

"Amida Buddha!" they exclaimed. "Whether well or badly off you're still our patrons, not to say that our nunnery belongs to your family and the old lady was always so good to us. During her funeral we saw all the mistresses except you. It's because we missed you that we've come today especially to see you, miss."

Xichun inquired after the nuns in Water Moon Convent.

"There was some scandal there; so now your gatemen won't let them in," they told her. "Is it true, as we heard the other day, that sister Miaoyu of Green Lattice Nunnery ran off with someone too?"

"What nonsense! Whoever gossips like that should have her tongue cut off! She was kidnapped by bandits. Why spread such wicked rumours?"

"That crankiness of hers — was she putting on an act? Mind, we don't want to run her down to you, miss. She's not like us rough creatures who can only chant Buddhist canons or masses for others, and pray to come to a good end ourselves."

"What do you mean by a good end?"

"Of course a virtuous family like yours has nothing to worry about; but ladies of other houses, however noble, can't be sure of living in luxury all their lives. When trouble comes, they've no way to save themselves. But the Bodhisattva Avalokitesvara is most kind and compassionate: when she sees anyone in distress she takes pity on her and finds a way to save her. That's why we all say, 'All-merciful Avalokitesvara saves souls in distress!' Those of us in holy orders, though we have a much harder life than ladies, are not in any danger. Even if we can't attain sainthood, we can at least hope for a better future by being reincarnated as men. Then we shan't have to suffer in silence as we do now, born as women. You



身，自己也就好了。不像如今脱生了个女人胎子，什么委屈烦难都说不出来。姑娘，你还不知道呢：要是姑娘们到了出了门子，这一辈子跟着人，是更没法儿的。若说修行，也只要修得真。那妙师父自为才情比我们强，他就嫌我们这些人俗。岂知俗的才能得善缘呢，他如今到底是遭了大劫了！”

惜春被那姑子一番话说的合在机上，也顾不得丫头们在这里，便将尤氏待他怎样，前儿看家的事说了一遍，并将头发指给他瞧，道：“你打量我是什么没主意恋火坑的人么？早有这样的心，只是想不出道儿来！”那姑子听了，假作惊慌道：“姑娘再别说这个话！珍大奶奶听见，还要骂杀我们，撵出庵去呢！姑娘这样人品，这样人家，将来配个好姑爷，享一辈子的荣华富贵——”惜春不等说完，便红了脸，说：“珍大奶奶撵得你，我就撵不得么？”那姑子知是真心，便索性激他一激，说道：“姑娘别怪我们说错了话，太太奶奶们那里就依得姑娘的性子呢？那时闹出没意思来倒不好。我们倒是为姑娘的话。”惜春道：“这也瞧罢咧。”彩屏等听这话头不好，便使个眼色儿给姑子，叫他走。那姑子会意，本来心里也害怕，不敢挑逗，便告辞出去。惜春也不留他，便冷笑道：“打量天下就是你们一个地藏庵么？”那姑子也不敢答言，去了。

彩屏见事不妥，恐耽不是，悄悄的去告诉了尤氏说：“四姑娘较头发的念头还没有息呢。他这几天不是病，竟是怨命。奶奶堤防些，别闹出事来，那会子归罪我们身上。”尤



don't realize it, miss, but if you get married you'll be tied to your husband all your life, worse off than at present. But you have to be in earnest about renouncing the world. Sister Miaoyu, now, with her intelligence, thought herself a cut above us and looked down on us as vulgar. Little did she know that we vulgar ones would come to a good end while she met with such a fearful calamity."

As these words touched the right chord, ignoring the presence of her maids Xichun told them how Madam You had treated her and how she had been left to watch the house. Pointing at her shorn head she asked, "Do you think me so weak-willed as to hanker after this wretched life? I made up my mind long ago to renounce the world, but just didn't know how to do it."

In simulated alarm the nuns demurred, "You mustn't talk like that, miss. If Madam You heard, she'd drive us away from our nunnery with curses! A lovely young lady like you, from such a fine family too, is bound to make a good match and enjoy a life of luxury and splendour...."

Flushing crimson Xichun cut them short. "If Madam You can drive you away, can't I?"

Knowing then that she was in earnest, they deliberately goaded her on by saying, "Don't be angry, miss, if we speak out of turn. But the mistresses would never let you, would they? It wouldn't be good if trouble came of this. It's you we're thinking of, miss."

"Just wait and see."

This sounded so ominous that Caiping signalled to the nuns to go. They took the hint, being afraid to incite Xichun any further. When they took their leave she did not try to detain them, simply saying sarcastically, "Do you think your nunnery is the only one in the world?"

Without venturing to answer, the nuns left.

As this development looked serious and Caiping feared she would be held to blame, she quietly went and reported it to Madam You.

"Our young lady still wants to cut off her hair," she said. "These last few days she's been unwell or else lamenting her fate. You'd better be careful, madam, that she doesn't make away with herself or we shall get the blame."

"*She* doesn't want to be a nun!" scoffed Madam You. "She just



氏道：“他那里是为要出家？他为的是大爷不在家，安心和我过不去！也只好由他罢了！”彩屏等没法，也只好常常劝解。岂知惜春一天一天的不吃饭，只想铰头发。彩屏等吃不住，只得到各处告诉。邢王二夫人等也都劝了好几次，怎奈惜春执迷不解。

邢王二夫人正要告诉贾政，只听外头传进来说：“甄家的太太带了他们家的宝玉来了。”众人急忙接出，便在王夫人处坐下。众人行礼，叙些寒温，不必细述。只言王夫人提起甄宝玉与自己的宝玉无二，要请甄宝玉进来一见。传话出去。回来说道：“甄少爷在外书房同老爷说话，说的投了机了，打发人来请我们二爷三爷，还叫兰哥儿在外头吃饭，吃了饭进来。”说毕，里头也便摆饭。

原来此时贾政见甄宝玉相貌果与宝玉一样，试探他的文才，竟应对如流，甚是心敬，故叫宝玉等三人出来，警励他们；再者，到底叫宝玉来比一比。宝玉听命，穿了素服，带了兄弟侄儿出来，见了甄宝玉，竟是旧相识一般。那甄宝玉也像那里见过的。两人行了礼，然后贾环贾兰相见。本来贾政席地而坐，要让甄宝玉在椅子上坐，甄宝玉因是晚辈，不敢上坐，就在地下铺了褥子坐下。如今宝玉等出来，又不能同贾政一处坐着，为甄宝玉是晚一辈，又不好竟叫宝玉等站着。贾政知是不便，站起来又说了几句话，叫人摆饭，说：“我失陪，叫小儿辈陪着，大家说话儿，好叫他们领领大教。”甄宝玉逊谢道：“老伯大人请便，小侄正欲领世兄们的教呢！”贾政回复了几句，便自往内书房去。那甄宝玉却要



likes to provoke me while the master's away. Well, let her."

Then Caiping could only try to talk Xichun round; but her young mistress went on fasting every day and remained set on cutting off her hair. Her maids, unable to cope, reported this to the other mistresses. Their Ladyships did their best to dissuade Xichun, but she was adamant.

They were thinking of telling Jia Zheng when the arrival of Lady Zhen and her son Baoyu was announced. All hurried out to welcome her, then ushered her into Lady Wang's room to sit down. After an exchange of amenities Lady Wang sent to invite Zhen Baoyu in too, having heard that he was the image of *her* Baoyu.

The messenger came back to report, "Master Zhen is talking with the master in the study. His Lordship is so struck by him that he's sent for our Master Bao and Master Huan and wants Master Lan to have his meal there too. They'll come over after they've eaten." By this time dinner had also been served inside.

When Jia Zheng saw that Zhen Baoyu did indeed look exactly like his son, he tested his literary talents and was so impressed by the youth's fluent answers that he sent for his sons and grandson to meet this prodigy, also meaning Baoyu to compare himself with him. Thus summoned, Baoyu came out in mourning with his younger brother and nephew. At sight of Zhen Baoyu he felt as if they were old acquaintances, while young Zhen too had the impression that they had met before. After they had greeted each other, Huan and Lan stepped forward in turn to pay their respects.

Jia Zheng, being in mourning, had been sitting on the floor. When he offered Zhen Baoyu a seat the lad felt it would be presumptuous to take it as he belonged to the younger generation. He placed a mattress on the floor and sat on that. Baoyu and the two other boys could not sit with Jia Zheng; on the other hand, since the visitor belonged to their generation, Jia Zheng could hardly make his sons stand in his presence. In this dilemma he rose after a few remarks and ordered the meal to be served.

"Please excuse me," he said. "My sons will keep you company. They can profit by your edifying conversation."

"Don't let me keep you, sir," rejoined Zhen Baoyu politely. "I am the one hoping to learn from them."

After a few further words Jia Zheng went to his inner study, not let-



送出来，贾政拦住。宝玉等先抢了一步，出了书房门槛站立着，看贾政进去，然后进来让甄宝玉坐下。彼此套叙了一回，诸如久慕渴想的话，也不必细述。

且说贾宝玉见了甄宝玉，想到梦中之景，并且素知甄宝玉为人，必是和他同心，以为得了知己。因初次见面，不便造次，且又贾环贾兰在坐，只有极力夸赞说：“久仰芳名，无由亲炙，今日见面，真是谪仙一流的人物！”那甄宝玉素来也知贾宝玉的为人，今日一见，果然不差，“只是可与我共学，不可与我适道。他既和我同名同貌，也是三生石上的旧精魂了。我如今略知些道理，何不和他讲讲？但只是初见，尚不知他的心与我同不同，只好缓缓的来。”便道：“世兄的才名，弟所素知的。在世兄是数万人里头选出来最清最雅的，至于弟乃庸庸碌碌一等愚人，忝附同名，殊觉玷辱了这两个字。”

贾宝玉听了，心想：“这个人果然同我的心一样的，但是你我都是男人，不比那女孩儿们清洁，怎么他拿我当作女孩儿看待起来？”便道：“世兄谬赞，实不敢当。弟至浊至愚，只不过一块顽石耳！何敢比世兄品望清高，实称此两字呢？”甄宝玉道：“弟少时不知分量，自谓尚可琢磨；岂知家遭消索，数年来更比瓦砾犹贱。虽不敢说历尽甘苦，然世道人情，略略的领悟了些须。世兄是锦衣玉食，无不遂心的，必是文章经济，高出人上，所以老伯钟爱，将为席上之珍；弟所以才说尊名方称。”



ting young Zhen escort him. Baoyu, Huan and Lan, who had left the room first, stood respectfully outside the door until Jia Zheng had gone before returning to ask the guest to sit down. Then they told each other how long they had been looking forward to this meeting — no need to record their conversation in detail.

Now the sight of Zhen Baoyu had reminded Baoyu of his dream. Sure that they must share the same views, he felt he had found a friend after his own heart; but since this was their first meeting he had to hold himself in check, the more so as Jia Huan and Jia Lan were present.

He complimented the visitor by saying, “I have long known of your fine reputation, but never had the chance to meet you in person. Now that I see you, sir, you truly seem an immortal descended from heaven!”

Zhen Baoyu had also heard of Baoyu, and felt that he lived up to his reputation. “We can study together, but we may not be travelling the same road,”<sup>1</sup> he thought. “Since we have the same name and look alike, we must be predestined to be kindred spirits. Now that I am beginning to know what is right, why shouldn’t I pass my knowledge on to him? But as we’ve only just met, I don’t know whether we are of the same mind. I mustn’t be too hasty.” So he said, “I have long known of your talents. You are one in ten thousand — so pure and refined. Being nothing but a vulgar fool myself, I am well aware that I disgrace the name which we both share.”

Hearing this Baoyu thought, “He really does think as I do. But as both of us are men who can’t compare with chaste girls, how can he attribute their qualities to me?” He answered, “Indeed, I don’t deserve such praise. I am a foolish lout, a mere block of stone. How can I compare with your pure nobility? It is you who live up to the name ‘precious jade.’ ”

“When I was young I was very cocksure,” replied Zhen. “I thought myself jade which only needed polishing; but after our family got into trouble, for some years I ranked lower than a pebble or tile. Though I can’t claim to have experienced prosperity and adversity in full, I’ve nevertheless reached a slightly better understanding of human affairs. You have all the luxuries you can desire while your literary talent and grasp of affairs must be outstanding, so naturally your father treasures you. This is why I *think* you deserve to be called ‘precious jade.’ ”





贾宝玉听这话头又近了禄蠹的旧套，想话回答。贾环未见与他说话，心中早不自在。倒是贾兰听了这话，甚觉合意，便说道：“世叔所言，固是太谦，若论到文章经济，实在从历练中出来的，方为真才实学。在小侄年幼，虽不知文章为何物，然将读过的细味起来，那膏粱文绣，比着令闻广誉，真是不啻百倍的了！”甄宝玉未及答言，贾宝玉听了兰儿的话，心里越发不合，想道：“这孩子从几时也学了这一派酸论！”便说道：“弟闻得世兄也诋尽流俗，性情中另有一番见解。今日弟幸会芝范，想欲领教一番超凡入圣的道理，从此可以洗净俗肠，重开眼界。不意视弟为蠢物，所以将世路的话来酬应。”

甄宝玉听说，心里晓得：“他知我少年的性情，所以疑我为假，我索性把话说明，或者与我作个知心朋友，也是好的。”便说：“世兄高论，固是真切，但弟少时也曾深恶那些旧套陈言。只是一年长似一年，家君致仕在家，懒于酬应，委弟接待，后来见过那些大人先生，尽都是显亲扬名的人；便是著书立说，无非言忠言孝，自有一番立德立言的事业，方不枉生在圣明之时，也不致负了父亲师长养育教诲之恩：所以把少时那些迂想痴情，渐渐的淘汰了些。如今尚欲访师觅友，教导愚蒙。幸会世兄，定当有以教我。适才所言，并非虚意。”

贾宝玉愈听愈不耐烦，又不好冷淡，只得将言语支吾。幸喜里头传出话来，说：“若是外头爷们吃了饭，请甄少爷里头去坐呢。”宝玉听了，趁势便邀甄宝玉进去。那甄宝玉依



This seemed to Baoyu sycophantic talk, and he did not know how to answer. Jia Huan was rather unhappy at being ignored. Jia Lan, however, approved of what Zhen had said.

“You are too modest, sir,” he chimed in. “Regarding literary talent and the ability to manage affairs, the only way to amass genuine knowledge is through experience and study. Though I am too young to know much about literature, when I carefully think over what I have read, a good reputation and honour rank a hundred times higher than wealth and luxury.”

Baoyu wondered irritably when the boy had picked up this pedantic twaddle. He said to Zhen, “I have heard that you too are against all that is vulgar and have a superior understanding of life. I am very lucky to have met you today and would like to hear some of your transcendent views to cleanse my heart of vulgarity and enable me to see things in a new light. I didn’t think you would take me for such a fool as to fob me off with mundane talk of that kind.”

Zhen Baoyu thought, “He knows what I was like as a boy, so he suspects me of shamming. I had better made myself clear in the hope that then we may become close friends.” So he replied, “You have spoken very sincerely, and the fact is that when I was younger I did detest those old truisms too. As I grew older, though, and my father retired from official life, he couldn’t be troubled to entertain guests and gave the task to me. Then I saw that all those mandarins had brought glory to their families, while of men of letters not one but spoke of loyalty and filial piety, concerned to win fame for their virtue and learning in order not to have lived in vain under such a sagacious reign or fall short of the expectations of their fathers and the tutors who brought them up. So gradually I rid myself of some of the foolish notions I had as a boy. Now I want to seek out teachers and friends to help enlighten me. I am fortunate to have met you who can certainly edify me. What I said just now was truly from my heart.”

By now Baoyu was thoroughly exasperated, but for politeness’ sake he made an evasive answer. Luckily a message now came from the inner quarters: “If the young gentlemen have finished dinner, Master Zhen is invited over for a chat.”

命前行，贾宝玉等陪着来见王夫人。贾宝玉见是甄太太上坐，便先请过了安。贾环贾兰也见了。甄宝玉也请了王夫人的安。两母两子，互相厮认。虽是贾宝玉是娶过亲的，那甄夫人年纪已老，又是老亲，因见贾宝玉的相貌身材与他儿子一般，不禁亲热起来。王夫人要不用说，拉着甄宝玉问长问短，觉得比自己家的宝玉老成些。回看贾兰，也是清秀超群的，虽不能象两个宝玉的形象，也还随得上，只有贾环粗夯，未免有偏爱之色。

众人一见两个宝玉在这里，都来瞧看，说道：“真真奇事！名字同了也罢，怎么相貌身材都是一样的！亏得是我们宝玉穿孝，若是一样的衣服穿着，一时也认不出来。”内中紫鹃一时痴意发作，因想起黛玉来，心里说道：“可惜林姑娘死了！若不死时，就将那甄宝玉配了他，只怕也是愿意的。”正想着，只听得甄夫人道：“前日听得我们老爷回来说：我们宝玉年纪也大了，求这里老爷留心一门亲事。”王夫人正爱甄宝玉，顺口便说道：“我也想要与令郎作伐。我家有四个姑娘：那三个都不用说，死的死，嫁的嫁了。还有我们珍大侄儿的妹子，只是年纪过小几岁，恐怕难配。倒是我们大媳妇的两个堂妹子，生得人材齐正。二姑娘呢，已经许了人家；三姑娘正好与令郎为配。过一天，我给令郎作媒。但是他家的家计如今差些。”甄夫人道：“太太这话又客套了。如今我们家还有什么？只怕人家嫌我们穷罢咧。”王夫人道：“现今

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Baoyu seized this chance to urge Zhen Baoyu to go in and the latter accordingly went ahead, accompanied by the others to Lady Wang's apartments. There Baoyu saw Lady Zhen in the seat of honour and paid his respects to her. Jia Huan and Jia Lan followed suit, while Zhen Baoyu paid his respects to Lady Wang. So the two mothers confronted each other's sons. Though Baoyu was already a married man, as Lady Zhen was advanced in years and an old relative too, she showed a great interest in him when she saw his close resemblance to her son. Lady Wang, it goes without saying, when she took young Zhen by the hand to question him found him better mannered than her own Baoyu. She glanced at Jia Lan who, although more handsome than most, could not compare with either of them in looks. As for Jia Huan, he was so uncouth that she could not hide to whom she felt most partial.

All the maids came in to look at the two Baoyu's. "But how extraordinary!" they commented. "It's not so strange their having the same name, but they are the image of each other! It's a good thing our Master Bao is in mourning, because if they were dressed alike there'd be no telling them apart."

Zijuan suddenly thought back fondly to Daiyu, telling herself, "What a pity Miss Lin is dead! Otherwise she might have been willing to marry this Zhen Baoyu." Then she heard Lady Zhen say, "The other day I heard from my husband that since our son is growing up he had begged your husband to take care of his marriage."

Lady Wang who had taken to the boy answered readily, "I'd like to act as go-between myself. Our house had four daughters, but three are either dead or already married, and the only one left, the younger sister of our nephew Zhen, is a few years too young; so it wouldn't be a good match. However, my elder daughter-in-law has two girl cousins, both nice-looking. One is already betrothed; the other would be just right for your honourable son. After a day or so I'll propose the match. The only snag is that her family is not so well-off nowadays."

"Madam, don't stand on ceremony with us!" protested Lady Zhen. "What have we to boast about? I'm afraid her family may think us too poor."

"Now that your husband has been entrusted with a mission, your for-



府上复又出了差，将来不但复旧，必是比先前更要鼎盛起来。”甄夫人笑着道：“但愿依着太太的话更好。这么着，就求太太作个保山。”

甄宝玉听见他们说起亲事，便告辞出来，贾宝玉等只得陪着来到书房。见贾政已在那里，复又立谈几句。听见甄家的人来回甄宝玉道：“太太要走了，请爷回去罢。”于是甄宝玉告辞出来。贾政命宝玉、环、兰相送，不提。

且说宝玉自那日见了甄宝玉之父，知道甄宝玉来京，朝夕盼望，今儿见面，原想得一知己，岂知谈了半天，竟有些冰炭不投。闷闷的回到自己房中，也不言，也不笑，只管发怔。宝钗便问：“那甄宝玉果然像你么？”宝玉道：“相貌倒还是一样的，只是言谈间看起来，并不知道什么，不过也是个禄蠹。”宝钗道：“你又编派人家了。怎么就见得也是个禄蠹呢？”宝玉道：“他说了半天，并没个明心见性之谈，不过说些什么‘文章经济’，又说什么‘为忠为孝’。这样人可不是个禄蠹么？只可惜他也生了这样一个相貌！我想来有了他，我竟要连我这个相貌都不要了！”宝钗见他又说呆话，便说道：“你真真说出句话来叫人发笑！这相貌怎么能不要呢？况且人家这话是正理，做了一个男人，原该要立身扬名的，谁像你一味的柔情私意？不说自己没有刚烈，倒说人家是禄蠹！”宝玉本听了甄宝玉的话，甚不耐烦，又被宝钗抢白了一场，心中更加不乐，闷闷昏昏，不觉将旧病又勾起来了，并不言语，只是傻笑。宝钗不知，只道自己的话错了，他所以冷笑，也不理他。岂知那日便有些发呆；袭人等恼他，也不言语。过了一夜，次日起来，只是呆呆的，竟有前番病的样子。



tunes will not only be restored — you're bound to prosper even more than before."

"I only hope so," replied Lady Zhen with a smile. "In that case, I beg you to be the go-between."

When they started discussing his marriage Zhen Baoyu had taken his leave, and Baoyu escorted him back to the outer study where Jia Zheng had returned. They stood talking there for a while until the Zhens' servant announced that his mother was leaving and wanted him to go home. Jia Zheng told the three boys to see him out. No more of this.

To revert to Baoyu, ever since he had met Zhen Baoyu's father and learned that his son was coming to the capital, he had been longing to meet him, sure that he would prove a kindred spirit. However, their talk had shown him that they were as incompatible as ice and charcoal. He went back dejectedly to his own quarters to brood in gloomy silence.

"Is that Zhen Baoyu really like you?" Baochai asked him.

"In looks, yes; but judging by the way he talks he doesn't have much understanding. He's just a place-seeker of the lowest sort."

"There you go running people down again! How can you be sure of that?"

"He talked and talked but said not a word about seeking for truth, just holding forth on scholarship and the management of affairs, as well as loyalty and filial piety. Isn't such a person a toady? It's too bad that we look alike! The thought of him makes me wish I could change my looks!"

As this sounded nonsensical to Baochai, she said, "The way you talk is really laughable! How can you change your looks? Besides, he was quite right. A man should establish himself and make a name. Who else is as soft and sentimental as you? Yet instead of admitting your weak character you call other people place-seekers."

Baoyu had been thoroughly exasperated by Zhen Baoyu's homily, and this rebuff from Baochai rankled still more. His dejection made his old illness flare up again, and instead of answering he grinned inanely. Baochai, not knowing the reason, thought he was scoffing at her to show disapproval and therefore paid no attention. But that day he was so distracted that when Xiren and others teased him, he said nothing. The next morning he got up looking as vacant and stupid as during his past de-

一日，王夫人因为惜春定要铰发出家，尤氏不能拦阻，看着惜春的样子是若不依他，必要自尽的，虽然昼夜着人看守，终非常事，便告诉了贾政。贾政叹气跺脚，只说：“东府里不知干了什么，闹到如此地位！”叫了贾蓉来说了一顿，叫他去和他母亲说：“认真劝解劝解。若是必要这样，就不是我们家的姑娘了。”岂知尤氏不劝还好，一劝了，更要寻死，说：“做了女孩儿，终不能在家一辈子的。若像二姐姐一样，老爷太太们倒要操心，况且死了。如今譬如我死了似的，放我出了家，干干净净的一辈子，就是疼我了！况且我又不出门，就是栊翠庵原是咱们家的基址，我就在那里修行。我有什么，你们也照应得着。现在妙玉的当家的在那里。你们依我呢，我就算得了命了；若不依我呢，我也没法，只有死就完了！我如若遂了自己的心愿，那时哥哥回来，我和他说并不是你们逼着我的；若说我死了，未免哥哥回来，倒说你们不容我。”

尤氏本与惜春不合，听他的话，也似乎有理，只得去回王夫人。王夫人已到宝钗那里，见宝玉神魂失所，心下着忙，便说袭人道：“你们忒不留神！二爷犯了病，也不来回我。”袭人道：“二爷的病原来是常有的，一时好，一时不好。天天到太太那里，仍旧请安去，原是好好儿的，今日才发糊涂些。二奶奶正要来回太太，恐怕太太说我们大惊小怪。”

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rangement.

Since Xichun was set on cutting off her hair and becoming a nun and Madam You was unable to talk her round, it seemed that unless they let her have her way she would commit suicide. Though she was under constant watch that did not solve the problem. So one day Lady Wang reported this to Jia Zheng. Her husband stamped his foot.

“What has our East Mansion done to be reduced to this?” he sighed.

Sending for Jia Rong to admonish him, he told him to get his mother to have a serious talk with Xichun. “If she insists on this course, she’ll no longer be a daughter of our house,” he warned.

However, Madam You’s exhortations only made Xichun more eager to kill herself.

“As a girl, I can’t stay with the family all my life,” she said. “If my marriage proved like Second Sister’s, the master and mistress would have more cause to worry, and besides she died too in the end. So if you have any real affection for me, just count me as dead and let me become a nun to live a clean life. Especially as I don’t have to leave the house. Green Lattice Nunnery is in our own grounds and I can practise my devotions there, while if I need anything you can see to it. Miaoyu’s maids are still there too now. If you’ll agree to this you’ll be saving my life; if you don’t, I have no option but to die and be done with it! If I can have my wish, when my brother comes back I shall explain to him that you didn’t force me to do this; but if I die he’s bound to think it was you who drove me to it.”

Madam You, who had always been on bad terms with Xichun, felt there was reason in this argument and went off to report it to Lady Wang; but the latter had gone to Baochai’s apartments.

Horrified to find Baoyu out of his mind, Lady Wang reprimanded Xiren, “How careless you all are! Why didn’t you tell me that Baoyu was ill again?”

“This illness of his is chronic,” replied Xiren. “He gets better for a while, then has a relapse. He’s been going to pay his respects to you every day, with nothing wrong with him, madam, and it’s only today that his wits have wandered again. Madam Bao was just thinking of letting you know, but was afraid you might scold us for raising a false alarm.”



宝玉听见王夫人说他们，心里一时明白，怕他们受委屈，便说道：“太太放心，我没什么病，只是心里觉着有些闷闷的。”王夫人道：“你是有这病根子，早说了，好请大夫瞧瞧，吃两剂药好了不好？若再闹到头里丢了玉的样子，那可就费事了！”宝玉道：“太太不放心，便叫个人瞧瞧，我就吃药。”王夫人便叫丫头传话出来请大夫。这一个心思都在宝玉身上，便将惜春的事忘了。迟了一回，大夫看了服药，王夫人回去。

过了几天，宝玉更糊涂了，甚至于饭食不进，大家着急起来。恰又忙着脱孝，家中无人，又叫了贾芸来照应大夫。贾琏家下无人，请了王仁来在外帮着料理。那巧姐儿是日夜哭母，也是病了。所以荣府中又闹得马仰人翻。

一日，又当脱孝来家，王夫人亲身又看宝玉，见宝玉人事不醒，急得众人手足无措，一面哭着，一面告诉贾政说：“大夫说了，不肯下药，只好预备后事！”贾政叹气连连，只得亲自看视，见其光景果然不好，便又叫贾琏办去。

贾琏不敢违拗，只得叫人料理；手头又短，正在为难，只见一个人跳进来说：“二爷，不好了！又有饥荒来了！”贾琏不知何事，这一吓非同小可，瞪着眼说道：“什么事？”那小厮道：“门上来了一个和尚，手里拿着二爷的这块丢的玉，说要一万赏银。”贾琏照脸啐道：“我打量什么事，这样慌张！前番那假的你不知道么？就是真的，现在人要死了，要这玉做什么？”小厮道：“奴才也说了。那和尚说，给他银子就好



When Baoyu heard his mother rebuking them, his mind cleared for a moment and to defend them he said, "Don't worry, madam. There's nothing wrong with me except that I feel rather gloomy."

"This is an old trouble of yours. You should tell me as soon as you feel unwell, so that we can get a doctor to prescribe medicine. What an ado there'd be if you had another bad relapse like that time when you lost your jade!"

"If you're worried, madam, you can send for a doctor and I'll take some medicine," he answered.

Lady Wang despatched maids to see to this and, as her whole concern was Baoyu, she forgot about Xichun's problem, not returning to her own quarters until the doctor had come and made out a prescription.

A few days later Baoyu was more feeble-minded and, to everyone's consternation, he would not eat. As the termination of mourning was keeping the others busy, Jia Yun was instructed to receive the doctor; and Jia Lian, being short-handed, asked Wang Ren to help attend to outside affairs. Qiaojie was ill too after crying day and night for her mother. So once again the Rong Mansion was in a tumult.

On the day that they returned from terminating the mourning, Lady Wang came to see Baoyu. He was unconscious, and the whole household was frantic.

Weeping she told Jia Zheng, "The doctor refuses to prescribe any medicine. All we can do is prepare for the last rites."

Sighing bitterly Jia Zheng went over in person, and when he saw that Baoyu was indeed dying he told Jia Lian to have preparations made. Jia Lian had to pass on his orders, but lacking money he was in a dilemma.

Just at this juncture a servant rushed in crying, "More trouble, Master Lian!"

Staggered, staring at the servant, Jia Lian demanded, "What now?"

"A monk has come to our gate bringing the jade which Master Bao lost. He's asking for a reward of ten thousand taels."

Jia Lian spat in the fellow's face. "Is that any reason to panic? Don't you know last time it was a fraud? Even if this is genuine, Baoyu is dying, so what good will the jade do him?"

"I told the monk that. But he says if we give him the silver Master

了。”正说着，外头嚷进来说：“这和尚撒野，各自跑进来了，众人拦他拦不住！”贾琏道：“那里有这样怪事？你们还不快打出去呢！”又闹着，贾政听见了，也没了主意了。里头又哭出来，说：“宝二爷不好了！”贾政益发着急。只见那和尚说道：“要命拿银子来！”贾政忽然想起：“头里宝玉的病是和尚治好的；这会子和尚来，或者有救星。但是这玉倘或是真，他要起银子来，怎么样呢？”想一想：“如今且不管他，果真人好了再说。”贾政叫人去请，那和尚已进来了，也不施礼，也不答话，便往里就跑。贾琏拉着道：“里头都是内眷，你这野东西混跑什么？”那和尚道：“迟了就不能救了！”贾琏急得一面走，一面乱嚷道：“里头的人不要哭了，和尚进来了！”

王夫人等只顾着哭，那里理会？贾琏走进来又嚷。王夫人等回过头来，见一个长大的和尚，吓了一跳，躲避不及。那和尚直走到宝玉炕前。宝钗避过一边，袭人见王夫人站着，不敢走开。只见那和尚道：“施主们，我是送玉来的。”说着，把那块玉擎着道：“快把银子拿出来，我好救他！”

王夫人等惊惶无措，也不择真假，便说道：“若是救活了人，银子是有的。”那和尚笑道：“拿来！”王夫人道：“你放心，横竖折变的出来。”和尚哈哈大笑，手拿着玉，在宝玉耳边叫道：“宝玉，宝玉！你的‘宝玉’回来了。”说了这一句，王夫人等见宝玉把眼一睁。袭人说道：“好了！”只见宝



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Bao will recover.”

Just then they heard shouts outside, “This monk has run amuck! He rushed in and no one could stop him.”

“Preposterous!” cried Jia Lian. “Throw him out, quick!”

They heard another commotion, and Jia Zheng was wondering what to do when a wailing went up inside, “Master Bao is dying!”

Feeling still more distraught, he heard the monk shouting, “If you want him to live, give me the money!”

He thought, “Last time it was a monk who cured Baoyu; now another has turned up who may be able to save him. But even if it’s the genuine jade, how are we to raise so much money?” On second thoughts he decided, “Never mind. We can worry about that if Baoyu really recovers.” He was sending for the monk when in the man came and, without so much as paying his respects or saying a word, ran towards the inner apartments.

Jia Lian grabbed his arm protesting, “There are ladies inside; how can you charge in so wildly?”

“Any delay and I’ll be too late to save him!”

Then Jia Lian went over yelling, “Stop crying, everyone inside! A monk is coming in!”

Lady Wang and the others were sobbing too bitterly to pay any attention. As Jia Lian entered, still shouting, they turned to see a hulking monk. Although terrified, they had no time to hide as the monk marched straight to Baoyu’s *kang*. Baochai slipped away then, but Xiren dared not move as Lady Wang had remained standing there.

“Benefactresses,” cried the monk, “I’ve brought the jade.” Holding it up he added, “Hurry up and bring out the silver, then I’ll save him.”

Panic-stricken Lady Wang could not tell whether it was genuine or not. “Provided you save his life, you’ll get the silver,” she promised.

“Hand it over then!” the monk insisted.

“Don’t worry. We can raise that much silver anyway,” Lady Wang assured him.

The monk roared with laughter and, holding the jade, lent over the *kang* to cry, “Baoyu, Baoyu! Your precious jade has come back.”

Lady Wang and the rest saw Baoyu open his eyes, at which Xiren



玉便问道：“在那里呢？”那和尚把玉递给他手里。宝玉先前紧紧的攥着，后来慢慢的回过手来，放在自己眼前，细细的一看，说：“嗟呀！久违了。”里外众人都喜欢的念佛，连宝钗也顾不得有和尚了。

贾琏也走过来一看，果见宝玉回过来了，心里一喜，疾忙躲出去了。那和尚也不言语，赶来拉着贾琏就跑。贾琏只得跟着，到了前头，赶着告诉贾政。贾政听了喜欢，即找和尚施礼叩谢。和尚还了礼坐下。贾琏心下狐疑：“必是要了银子才走。”贾政细看那和尚，又非前次见的，便问：“宝刹何方？法师大号？这玉是那里得的？怎么小儿一见便会活过来呢？”那和尚微微笑道：“我也不知道，只要拿一万银子来就完了。”贾政见这和尚粗鲁，也不敢得罪，便说：“有。”和尚道：“有便快拿来罢，我要走了。”贾政道：“略请少坐，待我进内瞧瞧。”和尚道：“你去，快出来才好。”

贾政果然进去，也不及告诉，便走到宝玉炕前。宝玉见是父亲来，欲要爬起，因身子虚弱，起不来。王夫人按着说道：“不要动。”宝玉笑着，拿这玉给贾政瞧，道：“宝玉来了。”贾政略略一看，知道此玉有些根源，也不细看，便和王夫人道：“宝玉好过来了，这赏银怎么样？”王夫人道：“尽着我所有的折变了给他就是了。”宝玉道：“只怕这和尚不是要银子的罢？”贾政点头道：“我也看来古怪，但是他口口声





cried out for joy.

“Where is it?” Baoyu asked.

The monk placed it in his hand and he grasped it tightly, then slowly held it up to examine it closely. “Ah!” he exclaimed. “At last!”

All there invoked Buddha in elation, even Baochai for getting the monk’s presence.

Jia Lian coming over too now saw that Baoyu had indeed regained consciousness. Although delighted he made off hastily. The monk, however, overtook and grabbed him without a word, and Jia Lian had to go with him to the front of the house where he lost no time in reporting this to Jia Zheng. Overjoyed, Jia Zheng bowed his thanks to the monk, who bowed in return then sat down, making Jia Lian suspect that he would not leave until he received his reward. Jia Zheng, looking closely at him, saw that this was not the same monk as last time.

He asked, “Where is your monastery, and what is your name in religion? Where did you find this jade? How is it that the sight of it restored my son to life?”

“That I don’t know,” answered the monk with a smile. “All I want is ten thousand taels of silver.”

He looked so boorish that Jia Zheng dared not offend him and simply replied, “You shall have it.”

“If you have it, hurry up and bring it. I must be going.”

“Please wait a little while I go inside to have a look.”

“Go on then. Don’t be long about it.”

Jia Zheng went inside without having himself announced and walked to Baoyu’s bedside. At sight of him his son wanted to sit up but was too weak to do so, and Lady Wang made him lie down, telling him not to move.

With a smile Baoyu showed his father the jade and said, “The precious jade has come back.”

Jia Zheng glanced at it but did not examine it closely, knowing there must be some mystery about it. “Now that Baoyu has recovered,” he said to his wife, “how are we to raise the reward?”

“We must just give the monk all we possess,” she answered.

“I can’t believe this monk came for the money, did he?” asked Baoyu.

声的要银子。”王夫人道：“老爷出去先款留着他再说。”

贾政出来。宝玉便嚷饿了，喝了一碗粥，还说要饭。婆子们果然取了饭来。王夫人还不敢给他吃。宝玉说：“不妨的，我已经好了。”便爬着吃了一碗，渐渐的神气果然好过来了，便要坐起来。麝月上去轻轻的扶起，因心里喜欢忘了情，说道：“真是宝贝！才看见了一会儿，就好了。亏的当初没有砸破！”宝玉听了这话，神色一变，把玉一撂，身子往后一仰，——未知死活，下回分解。





Jia Zheng nodded. "I find it strange too, yet he keeps demanding silver."

Lady Wang suggested, "Go and entertain him first, sir."

After his father had left, Baoyu said he was hungry. He finished a bowl of congee then asked for rice, and the serving women brought him a bowl. His mother did not want him to eat too much, but he assured her, "It's all right, I'm better now." He propped himself up to finish the bowl, and very soon felt well enough to sit up.

Sheyue helped him gently up, and in her jubilation remarked tactlessly, "This really is a treasure! Just the sight of it cured him. How lucky it wasn't smashed that time before!"

Reminded of his quarrel with Daiyu, Baoyu changed colour, let fall the jade and toppled over backwards. To know whether he lived or died, read the next chapter.





## 第一百十六回

### 得通灵幻境悟仙缘 送慈柩故乡全孝道

话说宝玉一听麝月的话，身往后仰，复又死去，急得王夫人等哭叫不止。麝月自知失言致祸，此时王夫人等也不及说他。那麝月一面哭着，一面打算主意，心想：“若是宝玉一死，我便自尽，跟了他去！”不言麝月心里的事。且说王夫人等见叫不回来，赶着叫人出来找和尚救治，岂知贾政进内出去时，那和尚已不见了。贾政正在诧异，听见里头又闹，急忙进来，见宝玉又是先前的样子，牙关紧闭，脉息全无。用手在心窝中一摸，尚是温热。贾政只得急忙请医，灌药救治。

那知那宝玉的魂魄早已出了窍了。你道死了不成？却原来恍恍惚惚赶到前厅，见那送玉的和尚坐着，便施了礼。那和尚忙站起身来，拉着宝玉就走。宝玉跟了和尚，觉得身轻如叶，飘飘飏飏，也没出大门，不知从那里走出来了。行了一程，到了个荒野地方，远远的望见一座牌楼，好像曾到过的。正要问那和尚，只见恍恍惚惚又来了一个女人。宝玉心里想道：“这样旷野地方，那得有如此的丽人？必是神仙下界了。”宝玉想着，走近前来，细细一看，竟有些认得的，只是一时想不起来。见那女人合和尚打了一个照面，就不见



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## Chapter 116

### Baoyu, His Divine Jade Recovered, Attains Understanding in the Illusory Realm Jia Zheng Escorts His Mother's Coffin Home to Fulfil His Filial Duty

At Sheyue's reference to his jade, Baoyu fell backwards and fainted away again. Lady Wang and the others cried out in consternation, and although they did not reproach her Sheyue knew that her ill-considered comment was to blame. Weeping, she resolved that if Baoyu died she would follow him to the grave. When the others failed to revive him, his mother sent to ask the monk to save him; but when Jia Zheng looked for him, the monk had disappeared. Taken aback and hearing a fresh commotion from the inner apartments, he hurried in and found Baoyu once more in a coma. His teeth were clenched and his pulse had stopped, though when they felt his heart it was still warm. In desperation Jia Zheng summoned a doctor to administer medicine and restore him to life.

By then Baoyu's spirit had taken flight. Do you think he was really dead? As if in a dream he sped to the front hall where he paid his respects to the monk who was seated there. The monk at once rose to his feet and led him away. Baoyu felt as light as a leaf floating through the air, and somehow without passing through the main gate they left the mansion.

After a while they came to a desolate region with a distant archway which struck Baoyu as familiar; but before he could ask the monk their whereabouts, the nebulous figure of a woman approached them. "How could there be such a beauty in a wilderness like this?" he wondered. "She must be a goddess come down to earth." Going closer and gazing at her more intently, he thought he knew her yet could not identify her. The woman greeted the monk, then disappeared, and as she did so he realized that it was Third Sister You. Marvelling at her presence there, he was again about to question the monk when the latter pulled him through the archway. On it was inscribed in large characters "Happy Land of

了。宝玉一想，竟是尤三姐的样子，越发纳闷：“怎么他也在这里？”又要问时，那和尚早拉着宝玉过了牌楼。只见牌上写着“真如福地”四个大字，两边一副对联，乃是：

假去真来真胜假，无原有是有非无。

转过牌坊，便是一座宫门。门上也横书着四个大字道：“福善祸淫。”又有一副对联，大书云：

过去未来，莫谓智贤能打破；

前因后果，须知亲近不相逢。

宝玉看了，心下想道：“原来如此！我倒要问问因果来去的事了。”这么一想，只见鸳鸯站在那里，招手儿叫他。宝玉想道：“我走了半日，原不曾出园子，怎么改了样儿了呢？”赶着要合鸳鸯说话，岂知一转眼便不见了，心里不免疑惑起来。走到鸳鸯站的地方儿，乃是一溜配殿，各处都有匾额。宝玉无心去看，只向鸳鸯立的所在奔去，见那一间配殿的门半掩半开。宝玉也不敢造次进去，心里正要问那和尚一声，回过头来，和尚早已不见了。宝玉恍惚见那殿宇巍峨，绝非大观园景象，便立住脚，把头看那匾额上写道：“引觉情痴。”两边写的对联考道：

喜笑悲哀都是假，贪求思慕总因痴。

宝玉看了，便点头叹息。想要进去找鸳鸯，问他是什么所在。细细想来，甚是熟识，便仗着胆子推门进去。满屋一瞧，并不见鸳鸯，里头只是黑漆漆的，心下害怕。正要退出，见有十数个大橱，橱门半掩。宝玉忽然想起：“我少时做梦，曾到过这样个地方；如今能够亲自到此，也是大幸！”

恍惚间，把找鸳鸯的念头忘了，便仗着胆子把上首大橱



Truth” flanked by the couplet:

When false gives way to true, true surpasses false.  
Though nothingness exists, being differs from nothingness.

Once through the archway they came to a palace gate, on its lintel the inscription “Fortune for the Good, Calamity for the Licentious.” Another couplet on the two sides read:

Even sages cannot change the past and future;  
Causes and effects tear the closest kin apart.

Having read this, Baoyu thought, “So here is my chance to find out about karma, past and future.” At this point he saw Yuanyang standing there beckoning to him. “Apparently after coming all this way I’m still in the Garden,” he mused. “But why is it so changed?” He wanted to accost her, but to his astonishment in a flash she was gone. Going over towards where she had stood, he saw a row of side courts with tablets over their gates. In no mood to read their inscriptions, he hurried to the place where Yuanyang had vanished. The gate of this court was ajar, but not liking to intrude he decided to ask permission from the monk. When he turned round, however, the monk was nowhere to be seen. He gazed abstractedly at the magnificent hall which he had certainly never seen in the Garden, and halted to look up at the inscription “Enlightenment for the Infatuated.” The couplet on both sides read:

Joy and sorrow alike are false;  
Desire and longing are folly.

Baoyu nodded to himself, sighing, and wanted to go in to ask Yuanyang what this place was. Then realizing that it looked familiar he summoned up courage to open the gate and step in. Yuanyang was nowhere in sight and the whole building was so eerily dark that he was about to slip away when his eye fell on a dozen or so large cabinets, their doors half open. It suddenly occurred to him. “When I was young, I dreamed that I came to a place like this. What a stroke of luck my coming here again today!”

In a daze he forgot his search for Yuanyang and boldly opened the first cabinet, in which he found several albums. Elatedly he told himself, “Most people think dreams are false, but this one was based on fact! I never expected to have the same dream again, yet today I’ve recaptured



开了橱门一瞧，见有好几本册子，心里更觉喜欢，想道：“大凡人做梦，说是假的，岂知有这梦便有这事！我常说还要做这个梦再不能的，不料今儿被我找着了！但不知那册子是哪个见过的不是？”伸手在上头取了一本，册上写着“金陵十二钗正册”。宝玉拿着一想道：“我恍惚记得是那个，只恨记得不清楚！”便打开头一页看去。见上头有画，但是画迹模糊，再瞧不出来。后面有几行字迹，也不清楚，尚可摹拟，便细细的看去。见有什么玉带上头有个好像“林”字，心里想道：“莫不是说林妹妹罢？”便认真看去。底下又有“金簪雪里”四字，诧异道：“怎么又像他的名字呢？”复将前后四句合起来一念道：“也没有什么道理，只是暗藏着他两个名字，并不为奇。独有那‘怜’字‘叹’字不好。这是怎么解？”想到那里，又啐道：“我是偷着看，若只管呆想起来，倘有人来，又看不成了！”遂往后看，也无暇细玩那画图，只从头看去。看到尾上，有几句词，什么“虎兔相逢大梦归”一句，便恍然大悟道：“是了！果然机关不爽！这必是元春姐姐了。若都是这样明白，我要抄了去细玩起来，那些姊妹们的寿夭穷通，没有不知的了。我回去自不肯泄漏，只做一个‘未卜先知’的人，也省了多少闲想。”又向各处一瞧，并没有笔砚。又恐人来，只得忙着看去。只见图上影影有一个放风筝的人儿，也无心去看。急急的将那十二首诗词都看遍了，也有一看便知的，也有一想便得的，也有不大明白的，心下牢牢记着。一面叹息，一面又取那“金陵又副册”一看。看到“堪羨优伶有福，谁知公子无缘”，先前不懂，见上面尚有花席的影子，便大惊痛哭起来。



it. I wonder whether these albums are the same as those I saw last time?"

He took the topmost album entitled *First Register of Twelve Beauties of Jinling*. Holding it he thought, "I have a faint recollection of this; it's too bad that I can't remember clearly." He opened it at the first page and saw a picture, too blurred to make out distinctly. On the back were a few lines of indistinct writing, but by straining his eyes he deciphered a few words about a jade belt, and over these what seemed to be the word *lin*. "Could this refer to Cousin Lin?" he wondered, then read about a golden hairpin in the snow and marvelled at the resemblance to Baochai's name. But when he reread the four lines consecutively, he could make no sense of them except that they seemed to suggest Daiyu and Baochai, which in itself was nothing extraordinary. Only the words "pity" and "sighing" were ominous. How to interpret this? Then he rebuked himself, "I'm doing this on the sly. If I rack my brains too long and somebody comes, I shan't be able to read the rest." So he leafed through the register without paying much attention to the pictures, and finally found the lines:

When Hare and Tiger meet,  
From this Great Dream of life she must depart.

At that, the truth dawned on him. "Right! This prediction came true! It must mean Sister Yuanchun. If all the others were equally clear and I could copy them down to study them, I'd be able to find out the life-spans and fortunes of all these girls. When I went back I'd keep it secret, but knowing in advance would save me worrying so much for nothing."

He looked round but could see no writing-brush or ink, and for fear of being disturbed he read rapidly on. One of the pictures showed a shadowy figure flying a kite, but he did not trouble to examine it carefully. Instead he read hastily through all the twelve verses. Some he understood at a glance, some after reflection; others baffled him and he tried to memorize them. Then, sighing, he picked up the third register of the beauties of Jinling. At first he did not understand the lines:

This prize is borne off by an actor,



待要往后再看，听见有人说道：“你又发呆了，林妹妹请你呢！”好似鸳鸯的声气，回头却不见人。心中正自惊疑，忽鸳鸯在门外招手。宝玉一见，喜得赶出来，但见鸳鸯在前，影影绰绰的走，只是赶不上。宝玉叫道：“好姐姐！等等我！”那鸳鸯并不理，只顾前走。宝玉无奈，尽力赶去。忽见别有一洞天，楼阁高耸，殿角玲珑，且有好些宫女隐约其间，宝玉贪看景致，竟将鸳鸯忘了。宝玉顺步走入一座宫门，内有奇花异卉，也都认不明白，惟有白石花栏围着一颗青草，叶头上略有红色，“但不知是何名草，这样矜贵？”只见微风动处，那青草已摆摇不休。虽说是一枝小草，又无花朵，其妩媚之态，不禁心动神怡，魂消魄丧。

宝玉只管呆呆的看着，只听见旁边有一人说道：“你是那里来的蠢物，在此窥探仙草！”宝玉听了，吃了一惊，回头看时，却是一位仙女，便施礼道：“我找鸳鸯姐姐，误入仙境，恕我冒昧之罪！请问神仙姐姐：这里是何地方？怎么我鸳鸯姐姐到此还说是林妹妹叫我？望乞明示。”那人道：“谁知你的姐姐妹妹？我是看管仙草的，不许凡人在此逗留。”宝玉欲待要出来，又舍不得，只得央告道：“神仙姐姐！既是那管理仙草的，必然是花神姐姐了。但不知这草有何好处？”那仙女道：“你要知道这草，说起来话长着呢。那草本在灵河岸上，名曰‘绛珠草’。因那时萎败，幸得一个神瑛侍者日



And luck passes the young master by.

But when he saw the picture of flowers and a mat, he wept in consternation.

Before he could read on he heard someone calling, "You're playing the fool again. Your Cousin Lin wants you."

It sounded like Yuanyang's voice, yet when he turned he could see no one. While he was vacillating she suddenly beckoned to him from outside the gate and he hurried joyfully over. Yuanyang's shadowy figure walked ahead so fast that he could not overtake her.

"Good sister, wait for me!" he cried.

She paid no attention, continuing on her way, so that Baoyu was forced to put on a spurt. Then he saw another fairyland with high pavilions, stately mansions with hanging eaves, and among them the indistinct figures of palace maids. As he feasted his eyes on this scene he forgot Yuanyang and his legs carried him through a palace gate. Inside were all manner of exotic flowers and herbs unknown to him, while in a flower-bed surrounded by a white stone balustrade grew a green plant, the tips of its leaves a light red. He wondered what rare plant this could be that it was so specially treasured, observing that the faintest breeze set it swaying incessantly, and that though it was so small and had no blossoms its delicate grace was utterly enchanting.

He was looking on raptly when someone beside him demanded, "Where did this oaf come from to spy on our fairy plant?"

He swung round in dismay to see a fairy maid and explained to her with a bow, "While looking for Sister Yuanyang I blundered into this fairy realm. Please pardon my presumption! May I ask what place this is? Why did Sister Yuanyang come here to tell me that Cousin Lin wants me? I beg you to enlighten me."

"Who knows your cousins?" the fairy maid retorted. "I am keeping watch over this fairy plant, and no mortals are allowed to loiter here."

Reluctant to leave he pleaded, "Sister Fairy, if you are in charge of these fairy plants you must be the Goddess of Flowers. Do tell me what makes this plant unique!"

"That's a long story," she answered. "This plant, Vermilion Pearl, used to dwell on the shore of the Sacred River and was withering away





以甘露灌溉，得以长生。后来降凡历劫，还报了灌溉之恩，今返归真境。所以警幻仙子命我看管，不令蜂缠蝶恋。”

宝玉听了不解，一心疑定必是遇见了花神了，今日断不可当面错过，便问：“管这草的是神仙姐姐了。还有无数名花，必有专管的，我也不敢烦问，只有看管芙蓉花的是那位神仙？”那仙女道：“我却不知，除是我主人方晓。”宝玉便问道：“姐姐的主人是谁？”那仙女道：“我主人是潇湘妃子。”宝玉听道：“是了！你不知道：这位妃子就是我的表妹林黛玉。”那仙女道：“胡说！此地乃上界神女之所，虽号为潇湘妃子，并不是娥皇女英之辈，何得与凡人有亲？你少来混说！瞧着叫力士打你出去！”

宝玉听了发怔，只觉自形秽浊。正要退出，又听见有人赶来，说道：“里面叫请神瑛侍者。”那人道：“我奉命等了好些时，总不见有神瑛侍者过来，你叫我那里请去？”那一个笑道：“才退出的不是么？”那侍女慌忙赶出来，说：“请神瑛侍者回来！”宝玉只道是问别人，又怕被人追赶，只得踉跄而逃。

正走时，只见一人手提宝剑，迎面拦住，说：“那里走！”吓得宝玉惊惶无措。仗着胆抬头一看，却不是别人，就是尤三姐。宝玉见了，略定些神，央告道：“姐姐，怎么你也来逼起我来了？”那人道：“你们弟兄没有一个好人：败人名节，破人婚姻！今儿你到这里，是不饶你的了！”宝玉听了话头不好，正自着急，只听后面有人叫道：“姐姐！快快拦住！”



until it was revived by being watered every day with sweet dew by the attendant Shen Ying. Because of this, it went down to the world of men to repay Shen Ying's kindness. Now that it has returned to the realm of truth, the Goddess of Disenchantment has ordered me to watch over it and not let butterflies or bees molest it."

Baoyu could not fathom this. Convinced that he had met the Goddess of Flowers and determined not to let slip this chance, he persisted, "If you are in charge of this plant, Sister Fairy, there must be others in charge of those countless rare flowers. I won't trouble you to tell me who all of them are, but which fairy is in charge of the hibiscus?"

"That I can't tell you, but my mistress may know."

"Who is your mistress, sister?"

"The Queen of Tear-stained Bamboos."

"That's it!" Baoyu exclaimed. "The Queen of Bamboos, I'd have you know, is my cousin Lin Daiyu."

"Nonsense! This is the celestial abode of goddesses. Even if you call your cousin the Queen of Bamboos she's no Ehuang or Nuying — how could *my* mistress be related to mortals? If you go on talking so wildly, I'll call guards to drive you out!"

In abashed dismay Baoyu was just withdrawing when a messenger arrived to announce, "The attendant Shen Ying is invited to enter."

The fairy maid said, "I've been waiting all this time, but he hasn't put in an appearance. So how can I send him in?"

"Isn't that him leaving now?"

Then the fairy maid hurried out calling, "Please come back, Shen Ying!"

Baoyu, thinking it was somebody else she wanted and afraid of being driven away, made off as fast as he could.

Suddenly his way was barred by a sword and he was ordered to halt. In panic he looked up and saw Third Sister You. Slightly reassured he pleaded, "Sister, why should you threaten me too?"

"All the men of your house are a bad lot, spoiling people's reputations and breaking up marriages! Now that you're here I'm not going to let you off!"

Reduced to despair by this threat, Baoyu heard a voice behind him



不要放他走了！”尤三姐道：“我奉妃子之命，等候已久。今儿见了，必定要一剑斩断你的尘缘！”宝玉听了，益发着忙，又不懂这些话到底是什么意思，只得回头要跑。岂知身后说话的并非别人，却是晴雯。宝玉一见，悲喜交集，便说：“我一个人走迷了道儿，遇见仇人，我要逃回，却不见你们一人跟着我。如今好了！晴雯姐姐，快快的带我回家去罢！”晴雯道：“侍者不必多疑。我非晴雯，我是奉妃子之命，特来请你一会，并不难为你。”宝玉满腹狐疑，只得问道：“姐姐说是妃子叫我，那妃子究是何人？”晴雯道：“此时不必问，到了那里，自然知道。”

宝玉没法，只得跟着走。细看那人背后举动，恰是晴雯，“那面目声音是不错的了，怎么他说不是？我此时心里模糊，且别管他。到了那边，见了妃子，就有不是，那时再求他。到底女人的心肠是慈悲的，必定恕我冒失。”正想着，不多时，到了一个所在，只见殿宇精致，彩色辉煌，庭中一丛翠竹，户外数本苍松。廊檐下立着几个侍女，都是宫妆打扮。见了宝玉进来，便悄悄的说道：“这就是神瑛侍者么？”引着宝玉的说道：“就是，你快进去通报罢。”有一侍女笑着招手，宝玉便跟着进去。过了几层房舍，见一正房，珠帘高挂。那侍女说：“站着候旨。”宝玉听了，也不敢则声，只好在外等着。

那侍女进去不多时，出来说：“请侍者参见。”又有一人卷起珠帘。只见一女子头戴花冠，身穿绣服，端坐在内。宝

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call, "Sister, stop him! Don't let him get away!"

"On my mistress' orders," Third Sister You told Baoyu, "I've been waiting for a long time. Now that we've met, with one stroke of my sword I'm to cut through your involvements in the mundane world!"

This made Baoyu even more frantic, not that he fully understood her meaning. Turning to run, he found Qingwen behind him and torn between sorrow and joy appealed to her, "I've lost my way all on my own, and run into enemies. I want to go back but have none of you with me. Thank goodness you're here, Sister Qingwen! Do take me home at once."

"Don't be so alarmed, sir," she said. "I'm not Qingwen but have come on our Queen's orders to take you to her. No one is going to harm you."

Nonplussed he replied, "You say your Queen wants to see me. Who is she?"

"This is no time to ask questions. You'll know when you meet."

Baoyu had no choice but to follow her, and watching her carefully he felt certain she was Qingwen. "No doubt about it, that's her face and her voice," he told himself. "So why should she deny it? Well, I'm too confused to bother about that now. When I see her mistress I'll beg her to forgive me for anything I've done wrong. After all, women are so kindhearted, she's bound to excuse my presumption."

By now they had reached a fine palace blazing with colour, with a clump of bamboos in the courtyard, outside the door several pines. Under the eaves stood maids dressed like palace attendants who at sight of him murmured, "Is this the attendant Shen Ying?"

The maid who had brought him there said, "Yes, it is. Go in quickly to announce him."

One of the waiting-maids beckoned Baoyu with a smile, and he followed her through several buildings to the main apartment which had a pearl curtain over its lofty door.

"Wait here till you're sent for," she told him, and in abject silence he did so while she went in, reappearing soon to say, "You may go in to pay your respects."

Another maid rolled up the portiere, and Baoyu saw a garlanded young lady in embroidered robes seated inside. Raising his eyes to her face he



玉略一抬头，见是黛玉的形容，便不禁的说道：“妹妹在这里，叫我好想！”那帘外的侍女悄咤道：“这侍者无礼！快快出去！”说犹未了，又见一个侍儿将珠帘放下。宝玉此时欲待进去又不敢，要走又不舍，待要问明，见那些侍女并不认得，又被驱逐，无奈出来。心想要问晴雯，回头四顾，并不见有晴雯。心下狐疑，只得快快出来，又无人引着。正欲找原路而去，却又找不出旧路了。正在为难，见凤姐站在一所房檐下招手儿。宝玉看见，喜欢道：“可好了！原来回到自己家里了！怎么一时迷乱如此？”急奔前来，说：“姐姐在这里么？我被这些人捉弄到这个分儿，林妹妹又不肯见我，不知是何原故？”说着，走到凤姐站的地方，细看起来，并不是凤姐，原来却是贾蓉的前妻秦氏。宝玉只得立住脚，要问凤姐姐在那里。那秦氏也不答言，竟自往屋里去了。

宝玉恍恍惚惚的，又不敢跟进去，只得呆呆的站着，叹道：“我今儿得了什么不是，众人都不理我！”便痛哭起来。见有几个黄巾力士执鞭赶来，说是：“何处男人敢闯入我们这天仙福地来！快走出去！”宝玉听得，不敢言语。正要寻路出来，远远望见一群女子，说笑前来。宝玉看时，又像是迎春等一千人走来，心里喜欢，叫道：“我迷住在这里，你们快来救我！”正嚷着，后面力士赶来。宝玉急得往前乱跑，忽见那一群女子都变作鬼怪形象，也来追扑。

宝玉正在情急，只见那送玉来的和尚，手里拿着一面镜子一照，说道：“我奉元妃娘娘旨意，特来救你！”登时鬼怪全无，仍是一片荒郊。宝玉拉着和尚说道：“我记得是你领我



saw it was Daiyu.

“So here you are, cousin!” he blurted out. “How I’ve been longing for you!”

The waiting-maids outside expostulated, “This attendant has no manners! Out you go, quick!” One of them lowered the portière again.

Baoyu longed to go in but dared not, yet was reluctant to leave. He wanted to question the waiting-maids, but none of them knew him and they drove him out. Qingwen, when he looked round for her, was nowhere to be seen. Filled with misgivings he left disconsolately, still with no one to guide him, unable to find the way by which he had come. He was in a quandary when he caught sight of Xifeng under the eaves of a house beckoning to him.

“Thank goodness!” he exclaimed. “I’m home again! What flummoxed me so just now?” He ran towards her crying, “So this is where you are, sister. The people here have been plaguing me, and Cousin Lin refused to see me, I don’t know why.”

As he reached her he saw it was not Xifeng but Qin Keqing, the first wife of Jia Rong. He halted and asked where Xifeng was. Instead of answering, Keqing went inside.

Not venturing to follow her, he stood there woodenly in a daze and sighed, “What have I done wrong to make them all cut me like this?” He burst out crying.

At once guards in yellow turbans with whips in their hands bore down on him demanding, “Where is this fellow from that he dares intrude into this fairy realm of bliss! Off you go!”

Afraid to protest, Baoyu was trying to find a way out when in the distance he saw a group of girls approaching, chatting and laughing. He was pleased to see that one of them looked like Yingchun.

“I’ve lost my way,” he called to her. “Come to my rescue!”

At once the guards behind gave chase, and as he dashed off headlong the girls changed into demons too and joined in the pursuit.

Baoyu was desperate when along came the monk who had returned his jade. Holding up a mirror he declared, “I have come on orders from the Imperial Consort to save you.”

The demons instantly vanished — all left was the desolate plain.

到这里，你一时又不见了。看见了好些亲人，只是都不理我，忽又变作鬼怪。到底是梦是真？望老师明白指示。”那和尚道：“你到这里，曾偷看什么东西没有？”宝玉一想，道：“他既能带我到天仙福地，自然也是神仙了，如何瞒得他？况且正要问个明白。”便道：“我倒见了好些册子来着。”那和尚道：“可又来！你见了册子，还不解么？世上的情缘，都是那些魔障！只要把历过的事情细细记着，将来我与你说明。”说着，把宝玉狠命的一推，说：“回去罢！”宝玉站不住脚，一跤跌倒，口里嚷道：“阿哟！”

众人正在哭泣，听见宝玉苏来，连忙呼唤。宝玉睁眼看时，仍躺在炕上，见王夫人宝钗等哭的眼泡红肿。定神一想，心里说道：“是了！我是死去过来的！”遂把神魂所历的事呆呆的细想。幸喜还记得，便哈哈的笑道：“是了，是了！”

王夫人只道旧病复发，便好延医调治，即命丫头婆子快去告诉贾政，说是：“宝玉回过来了。头里原是心迷住了，如今说出话来，不用备办后事了。”贾政听了，即忙进来看视，果见宝玉苏来，便道：“没福的痴儿！你要唬死谁么？”说着，眼泪也不知不觉流下来了。又叹了几口气，仍出去叫人请医生，诊脉服药。

这里麝月正思自尽，见宝玉一过来，也放了心。只见王夫人叫人端了桂圆汤，叫他喝了几口，渐渐的定了神。王夫人等放心，也没有说麝月，只叫人仍把那玉交给宝钗给他带上。想起那和尚来，“这玉不知哪里找来的？也是古怪：怎



Seizing the monk by the arm, Baoyu implored him, "I remember you were the one to bring me here, but then you disappeared. I met many people dear to me, but they all ignored me and suddenly turned into demons. Was that a dream or did it really happen? Please explain this to me, father."

"Did you pry into any secrets here?" asked the monk.

Baoyu thought, "Since he brought me to this fairy realm, he himself must be an immortal; so how can I hide anything from him? Besides, I want him to elucidate this." He therefore answered, "Yes, I saw some registers."

"There you are! After reading them can't you understand? All earthly ties of affection are bewitchments. Just bear what has happened carefully in mind, and I shall explain it to you later on." He gave him a violent shove. "Now go back!" Baoyu lost his balance and fell with a cry of dismay.

His whole household was in tears when Baoyu regained consciousness. At once they called out to him. He opened his eyes to find himself on the *kang* and, seeing that the eyes of Lady Wang, Baochai and the rest were red and swollen from weeping, he calmed himself and thought, "Why, I must have died and come to life again!" Recalling all that had befallen his spirit, and pleased that he could still remember it, he laughed aloud and exclaimed, "That's it, that's it!"

His mother summoned a doctor, thinking he was deranged again, at the same time sending maids to report to Jia Zheng that their son had recovered from his heart attack and now that he could talk there was no need to prepare for the last rites. At this, Jia Zheng hurried over and saw that Baoyu had indeed regained consciousness.

"You luckless fool!" he cried. "Trying to frighten us to death!" All unwittingly he shed tears. Then, sighing, he called in the doctor to examine Baoyu's pulse and administer medicine.

Sheyue, who had been thinking of suicide, was equally relieved by his recovery. Lady Wang sent for a longan cordial, and when he had taken a few sips he felt calmer. In the general relief no one blamed Sheyue, but Lady Wang had the jade given to Baochai to hang on Baoyu's neck.

"I wonder where that monk found the jade," she remarked. "It's





么一时要银，一时又不见了？莫非是神仙不成？”宝钗道：“说起那和尚来的踪迹，去的影响，那玉并不是找来的；头里丢的时候，必是那和尚取去的。”王夫人道：“玉在家里，怎么能取的了去？”宝钗道：“既可送来，就可取去。”袭人麝月道：“那年丢了玉，林大爷测了个字，后来二奶奶过了门，我还告诉过二奶奶，说测的那字是什么‘赏’字。二奶奶还记得么？”宝钗想道：“是了，你们说测的是当铺里找去，如今才明白了，竟是个和尚的‘尚’字在上头，可不是和尚取了去的么？”王夫人道：“那和尚本来古怪！那年宝玉病的时候，那和尚来说是我们家有宝贝可解，说的就是这块玉了。他既知道，自然这块玉到底有些来历。况且你女婿养下来就嘴里含着的。古往今来，你们听说过这么第二个么？只是不知终久这块玉到底怎么着！就连咱们这一个，也还不知是怎么着呢！病也是这块玉，好也是这块玉，生也是这块玉——”说到这里，忽然住了，不免又流下泪来。宝玉听了，心里却也明白，更想死去的事，愈加有因，只不言语，心里细细的记忆。

那时惜春便说道：“那年失玉，还请妙玉请过仙，说是‘青埂峰下倚古松’，还有什么‘入我门来一笑逢’的话。想起来‘入我门’三字，大有讲究。佛教法门最大，只怕二哥哥不能入得去。”宝玉听了，又冷笑几声。宝钗听着，不觉的把眉头儿拧揪着，发起怔来。尤氏道：“偏你一说，又是



odd the way one moment he was asking for silver and the next he vanished. Could he be an immortal?"

Baochai said, "Judging by the way he came and left, he can't have found the jade. When it was lost before, it must have been this monk who took it away."

"But it was here in our house," objected Lady Wang. "How could he have taken it?"

"If he could bring it back, he could have taken it too."

Xiren and Sheyue reminded them, "That year when the jade was lost, Lin Zhixiao consulted a fortune-teller; and after Madam Bao married into our house we told her that the character he came up with was the *shang*<sup>1</sup> meaning reward. Do you remember, madam?"

"Yes," said Baochai thinking back. "You all said it meant we should look for the jade in a pawnshop. Only now is it clear that it meant that the jade had been taken by a monk, as the upper part of that character is the *shang* for 'monk.' "

"I just can't get over that monk!" remarked Lady Wang. "When Baoyu fell ill that time, another monk came and said we had a treasure in our house — meaning this jade — which could cure him. Since he knew that, there must be more to this jade than meets the eye. Besides, your husband was born with it in his mouth. Have you ever heard of such a thing before? But who knows after all what this jade can do or what will become of him? It was this jade that made him fall ill, this jade that cured him, this jade that he was born with...." She broke off here in a fresh fit of weeping.

Baoyu, who had been following their conversation, was better able now to understand what had happened when his spirit took flight. He said nothing, however, just fixing it in his mind.

Then Xichun joined in, "When the jade was lost, we asked Miaoyu to try the planchette and it wrote 'By the ancient pine at the foot of Blue Ridge Peak... entering my gate with a smile you will meet again.' I think 'entering the gate' is most significant. Buddhism is the gate to sainthood; I'm only afraid Second Cousin can't enter that gate."

Baoyu laughed sarcastically at this but Baochai knitted her brows, lost in thought.

佛门了！你出家的念头还没有歇么？”惜春笑道：“不瞒嫂子说，我早已断了荤了。”王夫人道：“好孩子，阿弥陀佛！这个念头是起不得的！”惜春听了，也不言语。宝玉想“青灯古佛前”的诗句，不禁连叹几声。忽又想起一床席、一枝花的诗句来，拿眼睛看着袭人，不觉又流下泪来。众人都见他忽笑忽悲，也不解是何意，只道是他的旧病；岂知宝玉触处机来，竟能把偷看册上的诗句牢牢记住了，只是不说出来，心中早有一家成见在那里了，暂且不提。

且说众人见宝玉死去复生，神气清爽，又加连日服药，一天好似一天，渐渐的复原起来。便是贾政见宝玉已好，现在丁忧无事，想起贾赦不知几时遇赦，老太太的灵柩久停寺内，终不放心，欲要扶柩回南安葬，便叫了贾琏来商议。贾琏便道：“老爷想的极是。如今趁着丁忧，干了这件大事更好。将来老爷起了服，只怕又不能遂意了。但是我父亲不在家，侄儿又不敢僭越。老爷的主意很好，只是这件事也得好几千银子。衙门里缉赃，那是再缉不出来的。”贾政道：

“我的主意是定了。只为大老爷不在家，叫你来商议商议，怎么个办法。你是不能出门的，现在这里没有人；我想好几口材，都要带回去，我一个人怎么能够照应？想着把蓉哥儿带了去，况且有他媳妇的棺材，也在里头。还有你林妹妹





“There you go harping on Buddhism again!” scolded Madam You. “Haven’t you dropped your idea of becoming a nun?”

Xichun smile. “The truth is, sister-in-law, I’ve been abstaining from meat for some time now.”

“Good gracious, child!” exclaimed Lady Wang. “You mustn’t have these notions.”

Xichun said nothing, but Baoyu could not help sighing as he recollected the verse “By the dimly lit old shrine she sleeps alone.” Then suddenly recalling the inscription for the painting of a mat and flowers, he glanced at Xiren and tears started to his eyes. His abrupt transitions from smiles to tears puzzled the others, who could only assume that he was unhinged again, not knowing that his agitation arose from the verses he had memorized from the registers into which he had pried. Though unwilling to speak of them, he was convinced of the truth of these predictions. But we can return to this later.

The others saw that after Baoyu’s revival his mind had cleared, and by taking medicine every day he steadily recovered his health. This being the case, Jia Zheng turned his mind to other matters. As there was no knowing when Jia She would be pardoned, and he did not like to leave the old lady’s coffin in the temple for too long, he decided to escort it back to the south for burial and called in Jia Lian to consult him.

“Your decision is quite correct, sir,” said Jia Lian. “Not being in office now you are free to see to this important business, whereas once you take off your mourning you will probably have other demands on your time. In my father’s absence I couldn’t presume to suggest this; but although your decision is excellent, this is going to cost several thousand taels and it’s useless to expect the police to recover our stolen property.”

“I have made up my mind,” said Jia Zheng, “but since the Elder Master is away I wanted to consult you on how to handle this. You can’t leave home or there would be no one in charge here. In my opinion all those coffins should be conveyed to the ancestral graveyard, and as I can’t cope single-handed I’m thinking of taking Jia Rong along, the more so as his wife’s is one of the coffins. Then there is your cousin Lin’s. The old lady left instructions that it should go south with hers. I suppose



的，那是老太太的遗言，说跟着老太太一块儿回去的。我想这一项银子，只好在那里挪借几千，也就够了。”贾琏道：

“如今的人情过于淡薄。老爷呢，又丁忧；我们老爷呢，又在外头。一时借是借不出来的了，只好拿房地文书出去押去。”贾政道：“住的房子是官盖的，那里动得？”贾琏道：

“住房是不能动的。外头还有几所，可以出脱的，等老爷起复后再赎也使得。将来我父亲回来了，倘能也再起用，也好赎的。只是老爷这么大年纪，辛苦这一场，侄儿们心里却不安！”贾政道：“老太太的事是应该的。只要你在家谨慎些，把持定了才好！”贾琏道：“老爷这倒只管放心，侄儿虽糊涂，断不敢不认真办理的。况且老爷回南，少不得多带些人去，所留下的人也有限了，这点子费用，还可以过的来。就是老爷路上短少些，必经过赖尚荣的地方，可以叫他出点力儿。”贾政道：“自己老人家的事，叫人家帮什么呢？”贾琏答应了个“是”，便退出来，打算银钱。

贾政便告诉了王夫人，叫他管了家，自己择了发引长行的日子，就要起身。宝玉此时身体复元，贾环贾兰倒认真念书。贾政都交付给贾琏，叫他管教，“今年是大比的年头，环儿是有服的，不能入场；兰儿是孙子，服满了也可以考的，务必叫宝玉同着侄儿考去。能够中一个举人，也好赎一赎咱们的罪名。”贾琏等唯唯应命。贾政又吩咐了在家的人，说了好些话，才别了宗祠，便在城外念了几天经，就发





we shall have to borrow a few thousand taels to cover these expenses.”

“Nowadays we can’t count on others helping us out,” replied Jia Lian. “As you are not in office, sir, and my father is away, we’re in no position to raise a loan at present. All we can do is mortgage some properties.”

“How can we, when this mansion of ours was built by the government?”

“I don’t mean this mansion we live in, but there are houses outside which can be mortgaged and redeemed again after you resume office, sir. If in future my father returns and is given a post, that will make it easier. My one regret is that you should have to exert yourself in this way at your advanced age, sir.”

“I’m simply doing my duty by the old lady. But you must be more prudent in running the household!”

“You can rest assured about that, sir. I shall certainly do my best, incompetent as I am. Besides, you will need to take quite a few servants south, and as that will leave fewer here I can cut down on expenses and get by. If you should find yourself short of funds on the way, sir, since you will be passing Lai Shangrong’s place you can enlist his help.”

“It’s my own mother’s funeral. Why should I ask other families to help?”

“Yes, sir,” muttered Jia Lian, then withdrew to raise the money.

Jia Zheng told Lady Wang his plans and asked her to take charge of domestic affairs, then chose an auspicious day to start this long journey. By now Baoyu had completely recovered his health, while Jia Huan and Jia Lan were studying hard. Jia Zheng entrusted all three to the care of Jia Lian.

“This is a year for the triennial examination,” he told him. “Huan can’t sit for it while in mourning for his mother. Lan is only a grandson, so after the mourning is over he’s still entitled to take the examination and you must send Baoyu there too with his nephew. If he is a successful candidate, it will help to atone for our faults.”

Jia Lian and the boys assented. After giving further instructions to other members of the family, Jia Zheng bade farewell to the ancestral shrine, had sutras chanted for a few days at the temple outside the city, then



引下船，带了林之孝等而去。也没有惊动亲友，惟有自家男女送了一程回来。

宝玉因贾政命他赴考，王夫人便不时催逼，查考起他的工课来。那宝钗袭人时常劝勉，自不必说。那知宝玉病后，虽精神日长，他的念头一发更奇僻了，竟换了一种，不但厌弃功名仕进，竟把那儿女情缘也看淡了好些。只是众人不大理会，宝玉也并不说出来。

一日，恰遇紫鹃送了林黛玉的灵柩回来，闷坐自己屋里啼哭，想着：“宝玉无情，见他林妹妹的灵柩回去，并不伤心落泪；见我这样痛哭，也不来劝慰，反瞅着我笑。这样负心的人，从前都是花言巧语来哄着我们！前夜亏我想得开，不然，几乎又上了他的当！只是一件叫人不解：如今我看他待袭人也是冷冷儿的。二奶奶是本来不喜欢亲热的，麝月那些人就不抱怨他么？看来女孩儿们多半是痴心的，白操了那些时的心，不知将来怎样结局！”正想着，只见五儿走来瞧他。见紫鹃满面泪痕，便说：“姐姐又哭林姑娘了？我想一个人，闻名不如眼见。头里听着，二爷女孩子跟前是最好的，我母亲再三的把我弄进来；岂知我进来了，尽心竭力的伏侍了几次病，如今病好了，连一句好话也没有剩出来，这会子索性连正眼儿也不瞧了！”

紫鹃听他说的好笑，便“噗嗤”的一笑，啐道：“呸！你这小蹄子！你心里要宝玉怎么样待你才好？女孩儿家也不害臊！人家明公正气的屋里人他瞧着还没事人一大堆呢，有功夫理你去？”因又笑着，拿个指头往脸上抹着，问道：“你到底算宝玉的什么人哪？”

那五儿听了，自知失言，便飞红了脸。待要解说不是要



boarded a boat with Lin Zhixiao and others. He did not take leave of his friends and relatives, not wanting to put them out; thus only family members saw him off.

Lady Wang reminded Baoyu from time to time of his father's instructions, and checked up on his studies. Baochai and Xiren too, it goes without saying, encouraged him to work hard. Though he was in better spirits after his illness, he took more fantastic notions into his head: not only was he averse to rank and an official career, he had lost much of his former interest in girls. But this was not too apparent to other people as he did not voice these views.

One day, after returning from seeing off Daiyu's coffin, Zijuan stayed disconsolately in her room to weep. "How unfeeling Baoyu is!" She thought. "When he saw Miss Lin's coffin taken south he showed no sadness, shed not a tear, and instead of consoling me when I sobbed he actually laughed at me. So all this heartless fellow's honeyed talk before was to fool us! It's a good thing I didn't take him seriously the other night, or I'd have been taken in by him again. One thing I can't make out, though, is his coolness towards Xiren nowadays as well. Madam Bao has never liked too much show of feeling, but don't Sheyue and the rest resent his behaviour? What fools most of us girls must be to have cared so much for him all that time — what can come of it in the end?"

Just then Wuer came in to see her. Finding Zijuan in tears she asked, "Are you crying for Miss Lin again? I see now that it's no good basing your opinion of somebody on hearsay. Because we'd always heard how good Master Bao was to girls, my mother tried time and again to get me into his service; and since coming here I've nursed him devotedly each time he was ill, yet now that he's better he hasn't a single kind word for me — he doesn't even so much as look at me!"

Tickled by this, Zijuan laughed. "Bah, you little slut!" she spat out. "How do you want Baoyu to treat you? A young girl should have some shame! When he shows so little interest in all those who belong to his household by rights, what time has he to waste on *you*?" Laughing again, she drew one finger over her cheek to shame her. "Tell me, what's the relationship between you and Baoyu?" she demanded.

Aware that she had given herself away, Wuer blushed furiously. She





宝玉怎样看待，说他近来不怜下的话，只听院门外乱嚷，说：“外头和尚又来了，要那一万银子呢！太太着急，叫璉二爷和他讲去，偏偏璉二爷又不在家！那和尚在外头说些疯话，太太叫请二奶奶过去商量。”不知怎样打发那和尚，下回分解。





was about to explain that *she* wanted no special consideration from Baoyu but he had recently shown too little to his maids, when someone outside the courtyard gate shouted, “That monk is back again. He wants ten thousand taels of silver! The mistress is worried and wanted Master Lian to talk to him, but master Lian isn’t at home! That monk is ranting crazily outside. The mistress asks Madam Bao to go and discuss what to do.”

To know how they got rid of the monk, read the next chapter.









## 第一百十七回

阻超凡佳人双护玉 欣聚党恶子独承家

说话王夫人打发人来叫宝钗过去商量，宝玉听见说是和尚在外头，赶忙的独自一人走到前头，嘴里乱嚷道：“我的师父在那里？”叫了半天，并不见有和尚，只得走到外面。见李贵将和尚拦住，不放他进来。宝玉便说道：“太太叫我请师父进去。”李贵听了，松了手，那和尚便摇摇摆摆的进来。

宝玉看见那僧的形状与他死去时所见的一般，心里早有些明白了，便上前施礼，连叫：“师父，弟子迎候来迟！”那僧说：“我不要你们接待，只要银子拿了来，我就走。”宝玉听来，又不像有道行的话，看他满头癞疮，浑身腌脏破烂，心里想道：“自古说，‘真人不露相，露相不真人’，也不可当面错过。我且应了他谢银，并探探他的口气。”便说道：“师父不必性急。现在家母料理，请师父坐下，略等片刻。弟子请问师父：可是从太虚幻境而来？”那和尚道：

“什么‘幻境’！不过是来处来、去处去罢了。我是送还你的玉来的。我且问你，那玉是从那里来的？”宝玉一时对答不来，那僧笑道：“你自己的来路还不知，便来问我！”宝玉本来颖悟，又经点化，早把红尘看破，只是自己的底里未知。一闻那僧问起玉来，好像当头一棒，便说道：“你也不用



## Chapter 117

### Two Maids Protect Baoyu's Jade Lest He Renounce the World A Worthless Son, Taking Sole Charge of the House, Revels in Bad Company

When Lady Wang sent to ask for Baochai, and Baoyu knew that the monk was outside, he hurried all alone to the front crying out, "Where is my master?"

He called repeatedly but could not find him and, reaching the gate, saw Li Gui barring the way, refusing the monk admission.

"The mistress has sent me," said Baoyu, "to invite this holy man in."

Then Li Gui let go of the monk who swaggered in and, seeing that he looked like the monk in his trance, Baoyu had an inkling of the truth. Bowing he said, "Excuse my tardiness in welcoming you, master."

"I don't want you to entertain me," the monk replied. "Just hand over the silver and I'll be off."

This did not sound to Baoyu the way a saint would talk; moreover, the monk had a scabby head and was wearing filthy rags. He reflected, "The ancients said, 'One who has attained the Way makes no show of it; one who makes a show of it has not attained the Way.' I mustn't let slip this chance, but agree to give him the reward so as to sound him out."

He replied, "Please have patience, master, and sit down to wait while my mother gets it ready. May I ask if you are from the Illusory Land of Great Void?"

"What 'illusory land'? Whence I came, thither shall I depart. I'm here to return you your jade. Can you tell me where it comes from?" When Baoyu could not answer the monk chuckled, "You don't even know your own origin yet question me!"

Baoyu had the intelligence after all he had experienced to have seen through the vanity of this earth, being simply ignorant of his own antecedents. The monk's question awoke him to the truth.

"You don't need any silver," he cried. "I'll return you the jade."



银子的，我把那玉还你罢。”那僧笑道：“也该还我了。”

宝玉也不答言，往里就跑。走到自己院内，见宝钗袭人等都到王夫人那里去了，忙向自己床边取了那玉，便走出来。迎面碰见了袭人，撞了一个满怀，把袭人唬了一跳，说道：“太太说你陪着和尚坐着很好。太太在那里打算送他些银两，你又回来做什么？”宝玉道：“你快去回太太说：不用张罗银子了，我把这玉还了他就是了。”袭人听说，即忙拉住宝玉，道：“这断使不得的！那玉就是你的命，若是他拿了去，你又要病着了！”宝玉道：“如今再不病的了。我已经有了心了，要那玉何用？”摔脱袭人，便想要走。袭人急的赶着嚷道：“你回来，我告诉你一句话！”宝玉回过头来道：“没有什么说的了。”袭人顾不得什么，一面赶着跑，一面嚷道：“上回丢了玉，几乎没有把我的命要了！刚刚儿的有了，他拿了去，你也活不成，我也活不成了！你要还他，除非是叫我死了！”说着，赶上一把拉住。宝玉急了，道：“你死也要还，你不死也要还！”狠命的把袭人一推，抽身要走。怎奈袭人两只手绕着宝玉的带子不放，哭着喊着坐在地下。

里面的丫头听见，连忙赶来，瞧见他两个人的神情不好。只听见袭人哭道：“快告诉太太去！宝二爷要把那玉去还和尚呢！”丫头赶忙飞报王夫人。那宝玉更加生气，用手来掰开了袭人的手。幸亏袭人忍痛不放。紫鹃在屋里听见宝玉要把玉给人，这一急比别人更甚，把素日冷淡宝玉的主意都忘在九霄云外了，连忙跑出来，帮着抱住宝玉。那宝玉虽是个男人，用力摔打，怎奈两个人死命的抱住不放，也难脱



“And so you should!” laughed the monk.

Without a word Baoyu raced in to his own compound, which Baochai and Xiren had left to see Lady Wang. He snatched the jade up from his bed and dashed out, running full tilt into Xiren who started with fright.

“The mistress said it was very good of you to entertain the monk, and she means to give him some silver,” she informed him. “What brings you back?”

“Go straight and tell her there’s no need to raise any money. I’ll return him the jade instead.”

“Not on any account!” She caught him by the arm. “This jade is your life. If he takes it away your illness will come back!”

“Not any more. Now I’m in my right mind again, what do I need the jade for?” He wrenched himself free and made off.

Xiren ran frantically after him calling, “Come back! I’ve something to tell you.”

He cried over his shoulder, “There’s nothing we need talk about.”

She chased after him regardless, expostulating, “Last time you lost the jade it nearly cost me my life! You’ve just got it back and if he takes it away that will be the death of us both! You can only give it back over my dead body!” With that, overtaking Baoyu, she caught hold of him.

“Whether you die or not I must give it back,” was his desperate retort.

He pushed her with all his might, but she seized his belt with both hands and would not let go, weeping and screaming as she sank to the ground. The maids inside hearing this darted out and found them both distraught.

“Tell the mistress, quick!” Xiren sobbed. “Master Bao wants to give his jade back to the monk.”

When the maids ran to report this, Baoyu grew even angrier and tore at Xiren’s hands to free himself; but mindless of the pain she would not let go. And when Zijuan inside heard what Baoyu meant to do, even more frantic than the rest she completely forgot her resolve to remain aloof and ran out to help restrain him. Though he was a man and struggling hard, he could not free himself from their desperate clutches.

“So you’re hanging on to this jade for dear life!” he sighed. “What





身，叹口气道：“为一块玉，这样死命的不放！若是我一个人走了，你们又怎么样？”袭人紫鹃听了这话，不禁嚎啕大哭起来。

正在难分难解，王夫人宝钗急忙赶来。见是这样形景，王夫人便哭着喝道：“宝玉！你又疯了！”宝玉见王夫人来了，明知不能脱身，只得陪笑道：“这当什么，又叫太太着急！他们总是这样大惊小怪。我说那和尚不近人情，他必要一万银子，少一个不能。我生气进来，拿了这玉还他，就说是假的，要这玉干什么？他见我们不希罕那玉，便随意给他些，就过去了。”王夫人道：“我打量真要还他！这也罢了，为什么不告诉明白了他们？叫他们哭哭喊喊的像什么？”宝钗道：

“这么说呢，倒还使得；要是真拿那玉给他，那和尚有些古怪，倘或一给了他，又闹到家口不宁，岂不是不成事了么？至于银钱呢，就把我的头面折变了，也还够了呢。”王夫人听了，道：“也罢了，且就这么办罢。”宝玉也不回答。

只见宝钗走上来，在宝玉手里拿了这玉，说道：“你也不用出去，我合太太给他钱就是了。”宝玉道：“玉不还他也使得，只是我还得当面见他一见才好。”袭人等仍不肯放手。到底宝钗明决，说：“放了手，由他去就是了。”袭人只得放手。宝玉笑道：“你们这些人，原来重玉不重人哪！你们既放了我，我便跟着他走了，看你们就守着那块玉怎么样？”袭人心里又着急起来，仍要拉他，只碍着王夫人和宝钗的面前，又不好太露轻薄，恰好宝玉一撒手就走了。袭人忙叫小丫头在三门口传了焙茗等：“告诉外头照应着二爷，他有些疯了。”小丫头答应了出去。



would you do if I went away myself?" At that they burst into uncontrollable sobbing.

They were still locked together when Lady Wang and Baochai hurried over. "Baoyu!" wailed his mother. "You've gone crazy again!"

At sight of her Baoyu knew he could not escape. With a sheepish smile he said, "Why all this fuss? Why upset the mistress for no reason at all? I thought it unreasonable of the monk to insist on ten thousand taels, not one tael less; so in a pique I came back meaning to return him the jade, saying that it was a fake and we didn't want it. If he saw that we didn't value it, he'd be willing to accept whatever we offered."

"I thought you really meant to give it back," scolded Lady Wang. "All right then, but why didn't you tell them clearly? Why make them raise such a rumpus?"

Baochai put in, "If that's the case, well and good. If you really gave the jade back, that monk is so odd that he could cause fresh trouble for our family and that would never do. As for the reward, you can raise it by selling my jewels."

"Yes," agreed Lady Wang. "Let's do that."

Baoyu made no objection as Baochai stepped forward to take the jade from his hand. "There's no need for you to go out," she said. "Her Ladyship and I will give him the money."

"I don't mind not giving him the jade," he replied, "but I must see him once more."

Xiren and Zijuan were still keeping hold of him. Baochai, having sized up the situation, told them, "Let go of him. He can go if he wants to."

Then Xiren released Baoyu, who said with a smile, "You people think more of the jade than you do of me! Now that you're not stopping me, suppose I go off with the monk and leave you the jade?"

In renewed alarm Xiren wanted to seize him again, but in the presence of the mistresses she could not take liberties, and Baoyu had already slipped away. She at once sent a maid to Beiming at the inner gate with the message, "Tell the servants outside to keep an eye on Master Bao; he's not in his right mind." The girl went off on this errand.

Lady Wang and Baochai went in now and sat down to ask Xiren just what had happened, and she related in detail all Baoyu had said. This so



王夫人宝钗等进来坐下，问起袭人来由。袭人便将宝玉的话细细说了。王夫人宝钗甚是不放心，又叫人出去，吩咐众人伺候，听着和尚说些什么。回来，小丫头传话进来回王夫人道：“二爷真有些疯了。外头小厮们说：里头不给他玉，他也没法儿；如今身子出来了，求那和尚带了他去。”王夫人听了，说道：“这还了得！那和尚说什么来着？”小丫头回道：“和尚说，要玉不要人。”宝钗道：“不要银子了么？”小丫头道：“没听见说。后来和尚合二爷两个人说着笑着，有好些话，外头小厮们都不大懂。”王夫人道：“糊涂东西！听不出来，学是自然学得来的！”便叫小丫头：“你把那小厮叫进来。”

小丫头连忙出去叫进那小厮，站在廊下，隔着窗户请了安。王夫人便问道：“和尚和二爷的话，你们不懂，难道学也学不来吗？”那小厮回道：“我们只听见说什么‘大荒山’，什么‘青埂峰’，又说什么‘太虚境’‘斩断尘缘’这些话。”王夫人听着也不懂。宝钗听了，唬得两眼直瞪，半句话都没有了。

正要叫人出去拉宝玉进来，只见宝玉笑嘻嘻的进来，说：“好了，好了！”宝钗仍是发怔。王夫人道：“你疯疯癫癫的说的的是什么？”宝玉道：“正经话，又说我疯癫！那和尚与我原认得的，他不过也是要来见我一见。他何尝是真要银子呢？也只当化个善缘就是了。所以说明了，他自己就飘然而去了。这可不是好了么？”王夫人不信，又隔着窗户问那小厮。那小厮连忙出去问了门上的人，进来回说：“果然和尚走了，说：‘请太太们放心，我原不要银子，’只要宝二爷时常



worried them that they sent word to the servants outside to wait on Baoyu and hear what the monk had to say.

The maid on her return informed Lady Wang, "Master Bao is really rather crazed. The pages outside say he was at a loss because you wouldn't let him have the jade. Now he's gone out and begged the monk to take him with him."

Lady Wang exclaimed in horror, then asked what the monk had replied.

"He said he wants the jade, not it's owner," the girl said.

"Doesn't he want the money then?" asked Baochai.

"I didn't hear anything about that, madam. Later the monk and Master Bao were laughing and chatting together about many things, but the pages couldn't understand a word."

"Stupid creatures!" cried Lady Wang. "Even if they don't understand, they can memorize it." On her orders the maid hurriedly fetched one of the pages and, standing outside the window, he paid his respects.

"Though you didn't understand the talk between the monk and Master Bao, can't you repeat it to me?" asked Lady Wang.

"All we caught were phrases like 'the Great Waste Mountain,' 'Blue Ridge Peak,' 'the Land of Great Void' and 'severing mortal entanglements'," he told her.

Lady Wang could not make head or tail of this either, but Baochai's eyes widened in alarm and she could not get a word out. They were about to send to fetch Baoyu back, when in he came grinning and saying to himself, "Fine, fine!"

Baochai remained speechless while his mother asked, "What is this crazy talk?"

"I'm in earnest," protested Baoyu, "yet you call me crazy! That monk and I knew each other before and he simply wished to see me. He never really wanted a reward but was just doing a good deed. After he'd explained that, he vanished. Isn't that fine?"

His mother, not believing him, sent the page to question the gateman.

"The monk has really gone," he came back to report. "He left word that Your Ladyships needn't worry. He wants no silver, simply wants Master Bao to pay him occasional visits. 'Just submit to fate and things

到他那里去去就是了，‘诸事只要随缘，自有一定的道理。’”

王夫人道：“原来是个好和尚！你们曾问他住在那里？”小厮道：“门上的说，他说来着，我们二爷知道的。”王夫人便问宝玉：“他到底住在那里？”宝玉笑道：“这个地方儿，说远就远，说近就近。”宝钗不待说完，便道：“你醒醒儿罢！别尽着迷在里头！现在老爷太太就疼你一个人，老爷还吩咐叫你干功名上进呢。”宝玉道：“我说的不是功名么？你们不知道‘一子出家，七祖升天’？”王夫人听到那里，不觉伤起心来，说：“我们的家运怎么好？一个四丫头口口声声要出家，如今又添出一个来了。我这样的日子，过他做什么！”说着，放声大哭。宝钗见王夫人伤心，只得上前苦劝。宝玉笑道：“我说了一句玩话儿，太太又认起真来了。”王夫人止住哭声道：“这些话也是混说的么？”

正闹着，只见丫头来回话：“琏二爷回来了，颜色大变，说，请太太回去说话。”王夫人又吃了一惊，说道：“将就些叫他进来罢。小婶子也是旧亲，不用回避了。”贾琏进来见了王夫人，请了安。宝钗迎着，也问了贾琏的安。贾琏回道：“刚才接了我父亲的书信，说是病重的很，叫我就去，迟了恐怕不能见面！”说到这里，眼泪便掉下来了。王夫人道：“书上写的是什么病？”贾琏道：“写的是感冒风寒起的，如今竟成了癆病了。现在危急，专差一个人连日连夜赶来的，说：‘如若再耽搁一两天，就不能见面了。’故来回太太，侄儿必得就去才好。只是家里没人照管。蔷儿芸儿虽说糊涂，到底是个男人，外头有了事来，还可传个话。侄儿家里



will take their natural course', " he said.

"So he was a good monk after all! Did you ask where he lives?"

"The gateman said he told Master Bao, so he knows."

But Baoyu when questioned answered with a smile, "That place is far or near, depending on how you look at it.... "

"Wake up!" cut in Baochai, "Stop dreaming! The master and the mistress dote on you, and the master told you to study hard to advance yourself."

"What I have in mind will advance us all, won't it? Don't you know the saying. 'When one son renounces the world, seven of his ancestors will go to heaven'?"

Lady Wang lamented, "What's to become of us? First Xichun insists on renouncing the world, and now here's another. How can I live on like this?" She broke down and wept.

Baochai tried hard to console her and Baoyu said, "I was joking, madam. Don't take it seriously."

His mother stopped weeping to retort, "Is this a joking matter?"

Just then a maid came in to announce, "Master Lian is back, quite unlike his usual self. He hopes you'll go back, madam, so that he can report something to you."

"Tell him to come in here," ordered Lady Wang in fresh alarm. "He's known his sister-in-law since they were children, so he doesn't have to avoid her."

When Jia Lian had entered and paid his respects to her, Baochai stepped forward to greet him.

He reported, "I have just had word from my father that he's seriously ill. He's sent for me. Any delay and I may never see him again!" Tears coursed down his cheeks.

"What illness did he say he had?" asked Lady Wang.

"It started as influenza but turned into consumption, and now he's dying. He sent a messenger posthaste with the news, warning that if I delay for so much as two days I shall be too late to see him. So I've come to ask your permission to leave at once, madam. But there's no one at home to see to things unless we rope in Qiang and Yun. Though they aren't much good at least they are men, and if business crops up

倒没有什么事。秋桐是天天哭着喊着，不愿意在这里，侄儿叫了他娘家的人来领了去了，倒省了平儿好些气。虽是巧姐没人照应，还亏平儿的心不很坏。姐儿心里也明白，只是性气比他娘还刚硬些，求太太时常管教管教他。”说着，眼圈儿一红，连忙把腰里拴槟榔荷包的小绢子拉下来擦眼。王夫人道：“放着他亲祖母在那里，托我做什么？”贾琏轻轻的说道：“太太要说这个话，侄儿就该活活儿的打死了！没什么说的，总求太太始终疼侄儿就是了！”说着，就跪下来了。

王夫人也眼圈儿红了，说：“你快起来！娘儿们说话儿，这是怎么说？只是一件：孩子也大了，倘或你父亲有个一差二错，又耽搁住了，或者有个门当户对的来说亲，还是等你回来，还是你太太作主？”贾琏道：“现在太太们在家，自然是太太们做主，不必等我。”王夫人道：“你要去，就写了禀帖给二老爷送个信，说家下无人，你父亲不知怎样，快请二老爷将老太太的大事早早的完结，快快回来。”

贾琏答应了“是”，正要走出去，复转回来，回说道：“咱们家的家下人，家里还够使唤，只是园里没有人，太空了。包勇又跟了他们老爷去了。姨太太住的房子，薛二爷已搬到自己的房子内住了。园里一带屋子都空着，忒没照应，还得太太叫人常查看查看。那栊翠庵原是咱们家的地基，如今妙玉不知那里去了，所有的根基，他的当家女尼不敢自己



outside they can report it.

“My own household is no problem. Because Qitong kept weeping and wailing that she didn’t want to stay. I told her family to fetch her back and that has saved Pinger a good deal of vexation. Though Qiaojie has no one to look after her, Pinger is kind to her and she’s an intelligent girl though even more wilful than her mother, madam, so I hope you will discipline her from time to time.” The rims of his eyes were red now and he dabbed at them with the silk handkerchief attached to the sachet at his waist.

“The child has her grandmother here,” demurred Lady Wang. “Why should you entrust her to me?”

“If you bring that up, madam,” he muttered, “I may say something outrageous. I can only beg you any way to be kind, as you always are, to your nephew.”

He fell on his knees.

“Get up quickly!” she said, her own eyes reddening. “We are all one family, of course I’ll help. Only one thing: the child is growing up, and if anything should happen to your father her marriage would be delayed. If some suitable family makes a proposal, should we wait for your return or let her grandmother decide what to do?”

“Since Your Ladyships are at home, naturally you can decide without waiting for me.”

“Before you go, write to the Second Master telling him there is no one responsible at home and you don’t know whether your father will recover, so we hope he will have the old lady buried quickly and come back as fast as he can.”

Jia Lian assented and started out, then turned back. “We have enough servants here for the house,” he said, “But there’s not one in the Garden since Bao Yong went back to his master. And Master Xue Ke has vacated that compound where Aunt Xue lived to move to their own house. It’s not good having no caretakers for all those empty lodges in the Garden, so I hope you’ll send people from time to time to keep an eye on them. Green Lattice Nunnery belongs to us too, and since Miaoyu’s disappearance the nuns who attended her dare not take charge and want us to assign someone to see to things there.”





作主，要求府里一个人管理管理。”王夫人道：“自己的事还闹不清，还搁得住外头的事么？这句话，好歹别叫四丫头知道；若是他知道了，又要吵着出家的念头出来了。你想：咱们家什么样的人家？好好的姑娘出家，还了得！”贾琏道：

“太太不提起，侄儿也不敢说。四妹妹到底是东府里的，又没有父母，他亲哥哥又在外头，他亲嫂子又不大说的上话，侄儿听见要寻死觅活了好几次。他既是心里这么着的了，若是牛着他，将来倘或认真寻了死，比出家更不好了。”王夫人听了点头，道：“这件事真真叫我也难担！我也做不得主，由他大嫂子去就是了。”

贾琏又说了几句，才出来，叫了众家人来，交代清楚，写了书，收拾了行装。平儿等不免叮咛了好些话。只有巧姐儿惨伤的了不得。贾琏又欲托王仁照应，巧姐到底不愿意；听见外头托了芸蔷二人，心里更不受用，嘴里却说不出来。只得送了他父亲，谨谨慎慎的随着平儿过日子。丰儿小红因凤姐去世，告假的告假，告病的告病。平儿意欲接了家中一个姑娘来，一则给巧姐作伴，二则可以带量他。遍想无人。只有喜鸾四姐儿是贾母旧日钟爱的，偏偏四姐儿新近出了嫁了，喜鸾也有了人家儿，不日就要出阁，也只得罢了。

且说贾芸贾蔷送了贾琏，便进来见了邢王二夫人。他两个倒替着在外书房住下，日间便与家人厮闹，有时找了几个朋友吃个“车箍辘会”，甚至聚赌。里头那里知道。

一日，邢大舅王仁来，瞧见了贾芸贾蔷住在这里，知他



“We can’t set our own house in order, so how can we handle other people’s affairs? But mind you don’t mention this to Xichun, or she’ll plague us again to let her be a nun. How can a family like ours allow one of our daughters to become a nun?”

“If you hadn’t raised this, madam, I wouldn’t have ventured to. But after all Cousin Xichun belongs to the East Mansion, and because she has no parents, her elder brother’s away and she’s hardly on speaking terms with her sister-in-law, I hear that she’s often threatened to take her own life. Since her mind is made up, if we thwart her and she really kills herself, won’t that be worse than entering a nunnery?”

Lady Wang nodded. “This business is really too much for me. I can’t make the decision; that’s up to her sister-in-law.”

After a few further words Jia Lian went out, summoned the stewards to give them their instructions, then wrote to Jia Zheng and packed up for his journey.

Pinger naturally gave him some parting advice. It was Qiaojie, however, who was most distressed. Her father wished to entrust her to Wang Ren, but she was most unwilling; and it upset her even more, although she could hardly say this, to learn that Yun and Qiang would be in charge of outside business. She said goodbye to her father and settled down to live quietly with Pinger, for after Xifeng’s death Fenger and Hongyu had asked leave on the pretext of illness. Pinger would have liked to get a girl from the Jia family to keep Qiaojie company and look after her, but there was no one available; nor could she get Xiluan or Sijie — former favourites of the old lady — for the latter had recently married and the former was engaged and shortly to wed.

Jia Yun and Jia Qiang, having seen Jia Lian off, came in to pay their respects to Their Ladyships. They stayed in the outer study by turns, and during the day would fool around with the servants or assemble friends to feast, taking it in turn to stand treat. They even held gambling parties; but this was kept secret from the inner apartments.

One day Lady Xing’s brother and Wang Ren called and discovered Jia Yun and Jia Qiang staying there. As they were boon companions, on the pretext of helping with family affairs they often joined in the gam-

热闹，也就借着照看的名儿时常在外书房设局赌钱，喝酒。所有几个正经的家人，贾政带了几个去，贾琏又跟去了几个，只有那赖林诸家的儿子侄儿。那些少年，托着老子娘的福吃喝惯了的，那知当家立计的道理？况且他们长辈都不在家，便是“没笼头的马”了。又有两个旁主人怂恿，无不乐为。这一闹，把个荣国府闹得没上没下，没里没外。

那贾蔷还想勾引宝玉。贾芸拦住道：“宝二爷那个人没运气的，不用惹他。那一年我给他说了——一门子绝好的亲：父亲在外头做税官，家里开几个当铺，姑娘长的比仙女儿还好看。我巴巴儿的细细的写了一封书子给他，谁知他没造化，”说到这里，瞧了瞧左右无人，又说：“他心里早和咱们这个二婶娘好上了！你没听见说：还有一个林姑娘呢，弄的害了相思病死的，谁不知道！这也罢了，各自的姻缘罢咧。谁知他为这件事倒恼了我了，总不大理。他打量谁必是借谁的光儿呢！”

贾蔷听了，点点头，才把这个心歇了。他两个还不知道宝玉自会那和尚以后，他是欲断尘缘，一则在王夫人跟前不敢任性，已与宝钗袭人等皆不大款洽了。那些丫头不知道，还要逗他，宝玉那里看得到眼里。他也并不将家事放在心里。时常王夫人宝钗劝他念书，他便假作攻书，一心想着那个和尚引他到那仙境的机关，心目中触处皆为俗人。却在家难受，闲来倒与惜春闲讲。他们两个人讲得上了，那种心更加准了几分，那里还管贾环贾兰等？

那贾环为他父亲不在家，赵姨娘已死，王夫人不大理



bling and drinking parties. The few reliable stewards had gone away with Jia Zheng and Jia Lian, leaving only some sons and nephews of Lai Da and Lin Zhixiao. These young fellows, used to taking advantage of their parents' positions to enjoy themselves, had no idea of how to manage a household and in their elders' absence ran wild like unbridled colts. Egged on by their two masters who were only kinsmen they did just as they pleased. So the Rong Mansion was turned upside-down.

Jia Qiang thought of roping in Baoyu, but Jia Yun dissuaded him saying, "Don't ask for trouble. Uncle Bao was born under an unlucky star. One year I proposed an excellent match for him: the girl's father was a provincial tax-collector, the family owned several pawnshops, and she herself was prettier than a fairy. I went to the trouble of writing him the full particulars, but he wasn't cut out for such luck." Glancing round at his companions he continued, "He'd already fallen for Aunt Bao! And didn't you hear too — everyone must know it — that he made Miss Lin die of a broken heart? Oh well, each one's romance is fated by heaven. Yet he was annoyed with me because of this and since then has cold-shouldered me. He must have imagined I wanted to make him indebted to me."

Jia Qiang nodded and did not press the point. Neither of them knew that since meeting that monk Baoyu was eager to sever all worldly ties, and though he dared not break with his mother he was already holding aloof from Baochai and Xiren. When the younger maids, unaware of this, still tried to attract him he paid no attention. He did not care about the family either. Lady Wang and Baochai kept urging him to study and while he made a pretence of doing so he remained preoccupied with the fairy-land to which the monk had led him, thinking all those around him vulgar creatures. Since his own household irked him, when at leisure he would go to talk with Xichun and, seeing eye to eye, they strengthened each other's convictions.

Jia Huan and Jia Lan were left to their own devices. Jia Huan, because his father was not at home, his own mother had died and Lady Wang paid little attention to him, joined Jia Qiang's group; and when Caiyun reproached him she only got cursed for her pains. Yuchuan, hav-



会，他便入了贾蔷一路。倒是彩云时常规劝，反被贾环辱骂。玉钏儿见宝玉疯癫更甚，早和他娘说了，要求着出去。如今宝玉贾环，他哥儿两个，各有一种脾气，闹得人人不理。独有贾兰跟着他母亲上紧攻书，作了文字，送到学里请教代儒。因近来代儒老病在床，只得自己刻苦。李纨是素来沉静的，除请王夫人的安，会会宝钗，余者一步不走，只有看着贾兰攻书。所以荣府住的人虽不少，竟是各自过各自的，谁也不肯做谁的主。贾环贾蔷等愈闹的不像事了，甚至偷典偷卖，不一而足。贾环更加宿娼滥赌，无所不为。

一日，邢大舅王仁都在贾家外书房喝酒，一时高兴，叫了几个陪酒的来唱着喝着劝酒。贾蔷便说：“你们闹的太俗，我要行个令儿。”众人道：“使得。”贾蔷道：“咱们‘月字流觞’罢。我先说起，‘月’字数到那个，便是那个喝酒。还要酒面酒底；须得依着令官，不依者罚三大杯。”众人都依了。贾蔷喝了一杯令酒，便说：“飞羽觞而醉月。”顺饮数到贾环。贾蔷说：“酒面要个‘桂’字。”贾环便说道：“冷露无声湿桂花。——酒底呢？”贾蔷道：“说个‘香’字。”贾环道：“天香云外飘。”

邢大舅说道：“没趣，没趣！你又懂得什么字了，也假斯文起来！这不是取乐，竟是恼人了！咱们都蠲了，倒是撻拳，





ing seen how unbalanced Baoyu was growing, had also asked her mother to take her home. So Jia Huan and Baoyu, each in his different way, were making themselves shunned by all. Only Jia Lan stayed with his mother and studied hard, writing compositions which he took to school for Jia Dairu to correct; but as recently the tutor had been confined to his bed the boy had at present to study on his own. Li Wan had always been sedate and now, apart from duty calls on Lady Wang and visits to Baochai, she did not stir from her rooms, just watching her son study. So although there were not a few inmates in the Rong Mansion, they kept to themselves, not imposing their will on others. Thus Jia Huan and Jia Qiang went from bad to worse, going so far as to steal things to pawn or sell. And Jia Huan in particular stopped at nothing, even frequenting brothels and gambling-dens.

One day when Uncle Xing and Wang Ren were drinking with them in the outer study, being in high spirits they sent for some singsong girls to join them and propose toasts.

“The racket you make is too vulgar,” objected Jia Qiang. “I suggest we recite some verses while we drink.”

“All right,” agreed the rest.

“Start with the word ‘moon’, ” he went on. “I’ll recite a line first, and we’ll count round to see who has to drink when I reach the word ‘moon.’ Then he must recite another line on my orders and, if he fails, must drink three big cups as a forfeit.”

When they acquiesced he tossed off a cup and declaimed:

“Winged goblets fly as we drink to the moon.”

This made it Jia Huan’s turn. “Recite a line ending with ‘oleander,’ ” he was ordered.

“Silently the cold dew wets the oleander.”

After this quotation he asked, “What’s the other line?”

“One containing the word ‘fragrance’ . ”

“Heavenly fragrance wafts down from the clouds.”

“How deadly dull!” protested Uncle Xing. “A fat lot of literature you know, yet you pose as literati! This isn’t fun; it’s downright exasperat-

输家喝，输家唱，叫作‘苦中苦’。若是不会唱的，说个笑话儿也使得，只要有趣。”众人都道：“使得。”于是乱撺起来。王仁输了，喝了一杯，唱了一个，众人道：“好！”又撺起来了，是个陪酒的输了，唱了一个什么“小姐小姐多丰彩”。以后邢大舅输了，众人要他唱曲儿。他道：“我唱不上来，我说个笑话儿罢。”贾蔷道：“若说不笑人，仍要罚的。”

邢大舅就喝了一杯，说道：“诸位听着：村庄上有一座元帝庙，旁边有个土地祠。那元帝老爷常叫土地来说闲话儿。一日，元帝庙里被了盗，便叫土地去查访。土地禀道：‘这地方没有贼的，必是神将不小心，被外贼偷了东西去。’元帝道：‘胡说！你是土地，失了盗，不问你问谁去呢？你倒不去拿贼，反说我的神将不小心吗？’土地禀道：‘虽说是不小心，到底是庙里的风水不好。’元帝道：‘你倒会看风水么？’土地道：‘待小神看看。’那土地向各处瞧了一会，便来回禀道：‘老爷坐的身子背后，两扇红门，就不谨慎。小神坐的背后，是砌的墙，自然东西丢不了。以后老爷的背后也改了墙就好了。’元帝老爷听来有理，便叫神将派人打墙。众神将叹口气道：‘如今香火一炷也没有，那里有砖灰人工来打墙呢？’元帝老爷没法，叫神将作法，却都没有主



ing! Let's drop it and play a finger-game instead with the loser drinking and singing a song — 'a double dose of gall' this is called. If someone can't sing he can tell a joke, provided it's amusing."

"Right!" cried the rest.

They started playing wildly. Wang Ren lost, drained a cup and sang a song which was applauded. Then they began again and the singsong girl who lost sang *Such a Pretty Young Lady*. The next loser was Uncle Xing, who when asked for a song said, "I can't sing. I'll tell you a joke instead."

"If it doesn't make us laugh," warned Jia Qiang, "you must pay the forfeit."

Uncle Xing emptied his cup. "Listen, gentlemen," he began. "In a certain village stood a temple to Emperor Yuandi, with next to it the shrine of the tutelary god whom the Emperor often called over for a chat. One day Yuandi's temple was robbed, and he told the tutelary god to investigate.

"The tutelary god reported, 'There are no thieves in this locality. Your officers must have slipped up and allowed thieves from outside to break in and rob you.'

"'Nonsense!' said Yuandi. 'As the local deity, you're responsible for any thefts; yet instead of catching the robbers you're accusing my officers of negligence!'"

"The other said, 'If they weren't negligent, there must be something unlucky about your temple.'

"Yuandi asked, 'Do you know anything about geomancy?'"

"'Let me have a look round,' the other replied. He did this, then reported, 'You're running a risk with those double red doors behind you. Behind *my* shrine is a wall, so naturally I don't lose things. Once you build a wall behind yourself all will be well.'

"Emperor Yuandi was convinced and ordered his officers to fetch masons to build a wall.

"His officers objected, 'Nowadays no one comes to offer incense, so how are we to get the bricks and mortar and masons to build a wall?'"

"Not knowing what to do, he told them to use magic but they were powerless.





意。那元帝老爷脚下的龟将军站起来道：“你们不中用，我有主意：你们将红门拆下来，到了夜里，拿我的肚子堵住这门口，难道当不得一堵墙么？”众神将都说道：“好！又不花钱，又便当结实！”于是龟将军便当这个差使，竟安静了。岂知过了几天，那庙里又丢了东西。众神将叫了土地来，说道：“你说砌了墙就不丢东西，怎么如今有了墙还要丢？”那土地道：“这墙砌的不结实。”众神将道：“你瞧去。”土地一看，果然是一堵好墙，怎么还有失事？把手摸了一摸，道：“我打量是真墙，那里知道是个“假墙”！”

众人听了，大笑起来。贾蔷也忍不住的笑，说道：“傻大舅！你好！我没有骂你，你为什么骂我？快拿杯来罚一大杯！”邢大舅喝了，已有醉意。众人又喝了几杯，都醉起来。邢大舅说他姐姐不好，王仁说他妹妹不好，都说的狠狠毒毒的。贾环听了，趁着酒兴，也说凤姐不好，怎样苛刻我们，怎么样踏我们的头。众人道：“大凡做个人，原要厚道些。看凤姑娘仗着老太太这样的利害，如今‘焦了尾巴梢子’了，只剩了一个姐儿，只怕也要现世现报呢！”贾芸想着凤姐待他不好，又想起巧姐儿见他就哭，也信着嘴儿混说。还是贾蔷道：“喝酒罢！说人家做什么？”

那两个陪酒的道：“这位姑娘多大年纪了？长得怎么样？”贾蔷道：“模样儿是好的很的，年纪也有十三四岁了。”那陪酒的说道：“可惜这样人生在府里这样人家！若生在小户人





“Then General Tortoise at Yuandi’s feet stood up to say, ‘You fellows are useless, but I have a plan. Just pull down those red doors, and when night falls I’ll stop up the doorway with my belly. Wouldn’t that do as well as a wall?’

“The other officers approved, ‘Good. This costs no money and should be very solid.’

“So General Tortoise undertook this task and for a few days all was quiet. Then, however, things started disappearing again. They summoned the tutelary god and told him, ‘You said that once we had a wall these thefts would stop. Now with a wall, we’re still losing things; how is that?’

“He answered, ‘Your wall can’t be solid enough.’

“‘Go and see for yourself.’ they retorted.

“He examined it and it was certainly solid. So why were things still disappearing? However, when he felt it he exclaimed, ‘I thought it was a real wall, but this is just a fake wall!’”<sup>1</sup>

All hooted with laughter, even Jia Qiang joining in.

“Fine, Foolish Uncle!” he cried. “Why should you abuse me without any provocation? Hurry up and drink a big cup as punishment.”

Although already tipsy Uncle Xing did so, and the others went on carousing until they were all rather drunk. Then Uncle Xing ran down his elder sister and Wang Ren his younger, in the most virulent terms. Jia Huan in his cups also spoke scathingly of the way Xifeng had bullied his mother and him, trampling all over them.

“People should be more considerate,” said the others. “Xifeng was so ruthless when she had the old lady’s backing that now she’s died sonless, leaving only one daughter. She’s suffering for her sins!”

Jia Yun, recalling how shabbily Xifeng had treated him and how Qiaojie had cried at the sight of him, joined in the general abuse till Jia Qiang said, “Let’s drink! Why gossip about other people?”

The two singsong girls asked, “How old is this daughter of hers? What does she look like?”

“She’s very good-looking,” answered Jia Qiang, “and nearly fourteen already.”

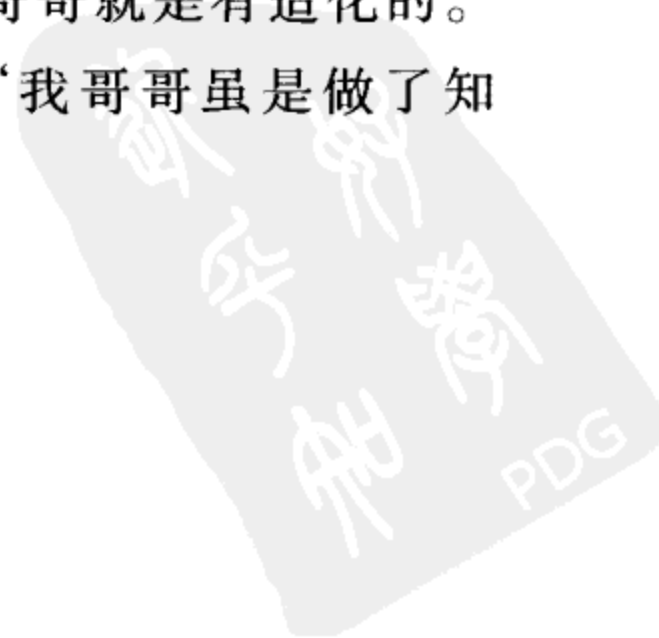
“It’s too bad she was born into such a rich family,” said one of the girls. “If she were from a humble family, she could help her parents and



家，父母兄弟都做了官，还发了财呢！”众人道：“怎么样？”那陪酒的说：“现今有个外藩王爷，最是有情的，要选一个妃子，若合了式，父母兄弟都跟了去，可不是好事儿吗？”众人都不大理会，只有王仁心里略动了一动，仍旧喝酒。

只见外头走进赖林两家的子弟来，说：“爷们好乐呀！”众人站起来说道：“老大，老三，怎么这时候才来？叫我们好等！”那两个人说道：“今早听见一个谣言，说是咱们家又闹出事来了。心里着急。赶到里头打听去，并不是咱们。”众人道：“不是咱们就完了，为什么不就来？”那两个说道：“虽不是咱们，也有些干系。你们知道是谁？就是贾雨村老爷。我们今儿进去，看见带着锁子，说要解到三法司衙门里审问去呢。我们见他常在咱们家里来往，恐有什么事，便跟了去打听。”贾芸道：“到底老大用心，原该打听打听。你且坐下喝一杯再说。”

两人让了一回，便坐下喝着酒，道：“这位雨村老爷，人也能干，也会钻营；官也不小了，只是贪财。被人家参了个‘婪索属员’的几款。如今的万岁爷是最圣明最仁慈的，独听了一个‘贪’字，或因遭塌了百姓，或因恃势欺良，是极生气的，所以旨意便叫拿问。若问出来了，只怕搁不住；若是没有的事，那参的人也不便。如今真真是好时候！只要有造化，做个官儿就好！”众人道：“你的哥哥就是有造化的。现做知县，还不好么？”赖家的说道：“我哥哥虽是做了知





brothers get official titles and make pots of money.” Asked what she meant she explained, “There’s a borderland prince not related to the Imperial House, a very gallant noble who is looking for a concubine. If she took his fancy, her whole family could move into his palace. Wouldn’t that be fine?”

The others paid little attention as they went on drinking, but Wang Ren made a mental note of this.

At this point they were joined by two youngsters from the families of Lai Da and Lin Zhixiao. “What a jolly party you gentlemen are having!” they said.

The others stood up to rejoin, “Why are you so late? We’ve been waiting for you for some time.”

“This morning we were worried by a rumour about more trouble for our family. We hurried off to investigate; but it’s not true.”

“If it has nothing to do with us, why didn’t you come earlier?”

“Though we’re not directly concerned there is a connection. You know who’s in trouble? Mr. Jia Yucun. This morning we went there and saw him in chains and were told he was to be taken to court for trial. Knowing what a frequent visitor he was here, we were afraid our house might be involved and therefore went to make inquiries.”

“That was thoughtful of you, brothers,” said Jia Yun. “Yes, you were right to find out. Sit down and drink a cup, then tell us about it.”

After some polite deferring they sat down to drink and said, “This Jia Yucun is an able gentleman and clever climber, who holds quite a high post but is too grasping; so several charges of extorting money from his subordinates have been brought against him. Our most sagacious, benevolent Emperor is angered by nothing so much as reports of venal officials who abuse their power to oppress good citizens; he therefore issued a decree for his arrest and trial. If he is found guilty he will be in trouble; if the charges prove groundless, those who impeached him will suffer. This is a really good reign, if only we had the luck to be officials!”

“Your elder brother’s in luck,” the others told Lai Da’s son. “Isn’t he sitting pretty as a magistrate?”

“I’m only afraid he may not remain a magistrate for long, the way he’s carrying on,” was the reply.



县，他的行为，只怕也保不住怎么样呢。”众人道：“手也长么？”赖家的点点头儿，便举起杯来喝酒。

众人又道：“里头还听见什么新闻？”两人道：“别的事没有，只听见海疆的贼寇拿住了好些，也解到法司衙门里审问。还审出好些贼寇，也有藏在城里的，打听消息，抽空儿就劫抢人家。如今知道朝里那些老爷们都是能文能武，出力报效，所到之处，早就消灭了。”众人道：“你听见有在城里的，不知审出咱们家失盗的一案来没有？”两人道：“倒没有听见，恍惚有人说是有个内地里的人，城里犯了事，抢了一个女人下海去了，那女人不依，被这贼寇杀了。那贼寇正要逃出关去，被官兵拿住了，就在拿获的地方正了法了。”众人道：“咱们栊翠庵的什么妙玉，不是叫人抢去？不要就是他罢？”贾环道：“必是他！”众人道：“你怎么知道？”贾环道：“妙玉这个东西是最讨人嫌的！他一日家捏酸，见了宝玉，就眉开眼笑了！我若见了他，他从不拿正眼瞧我一瞧！真要是他，我才趁愿呢！”众人道：“抢的人也不少，那里就是他？”贾芸道：“有点信儿。前日有个人说他庵里的道婆做梦，说看见是妙玉叫人杀了。”众人笑道：“梦话算不得！”邢大舅道：“管他梦不梦，咱们快吃饭罢，今夜做个大输赢。”

众人愿意，便吃毕了饭，大赌起来。赌到三更多天，只





“Does he fleece people too?”

The young man nodded, then raised his cup to drink.

“What other news did you hear?” they were asked.

“Nothing much,” the two of them answered. “Only that a number of brigands captured at the coast have been tried, and during their interrogation they revealed the whereabouts of many more, some of them lying low here in town and looking out for a chance to break into more houses. But now all our high officials are good administrators and strategists, exerting themselves to repay the Emperor’s favour, so wherever they go they quickly wipe out brigands.”

“You spoke of some brigands in town. Have they found out who robbed our family?”

“That we haven’t heard. There was some vague talk about a man from the provinces who robbed a house here and kidnapped a girl to take her to the coast; because she resisted him the brigand killed her, and before he could leave the capital he was caught and executed on the spot.”

“Wasn’t Miaoyu in our Green Lattice Nunnery kidnapped? Could she be the girl who was killed?”

“Yes, it must be her!” said Jia Huan.

“How do *you* know?” they asked him.

“That creature Miaoyu was disgusting, the airs she gave herself! She was all smiles to Baoyu, yet never cast so much as a glance at *me*. If it turns out to be her I’ll be only too glad!”

“Women are being kidnapped all the time. This doesn’t have to be her.”

“There’s some indication that it is,” said Jia Yun. “The other day we heard that her serving-woman dreamed that she saw Miaoyu murdered.”

The others chuckled, “A dream doesn’t count!”

“Never mind about her dream,” said Uncle Xing. “Let’s have supper now. We must play for high stakes tonight.”

The rest were willing and after their meal started betting heavily. They were still at it after midnight when they heard a clamour from the inner apartments.

A servant reported, “Miss Xichun has quarrelled with Madam You,

听见里头乱嚷，说是：“四姑娘合珍大奶奶拌嘴，把头发都铰了。赶到邢夫人王夫人那里去磕了头，说是，要求容他做尼姑呢，送他一个地方儿；若不容他，他就死在眼前。那邢王两位太太没主意，叫请蔷大爷芸二爷进去。”贾芸听了，便知是那回看家的时候起的念头，想来是劝不过来的了，便合贾蔷商议道：“太太叫我们进去，我们是做不得主的，况且也不好做主。只好劝去，若劝不住，只好由他们罢。咱们商量了写封书给琏二叔，便卸了我们的干系了。”两人商量定了主意，进去见了邢王两位太太，便假意的劝了一回。

无奈惜春立意必要出家，就不放他出去，只求一两间净屋子，给他诵经拜佛。尤氏见他两个不肯作主，又怕惜春寻死，自己便硬做主张，说是：“这个不是，索性我耽了罢：说我做嫂子的容不下小姑子，逼的他出了家了，就完了！若说到外头去呢，断断使不得；若在家里呢，太太们都在这里，算我的主意罢。叫蔷哥儿写封书子给你珍大爷琏二叔就是了。”贾蔷等答应了。不知邢王二夫人依与不依，下回分解。





then cut off all her hair and rushed to kowtow to Their Ladyships, begging them to let her enter a nunnery and threatening that if they won't she'll kill herself on the spot. Their Ladyships don't know what to do and want Master Qiang and Master Yun to go in."

Jia Yun knew that Xichun had taken this into her head when left in charge of the house, and they had little chance of dissuading her. He proposed to Jia Qiang, "Though Their Ladyships have sent for us we can't — and indeed we shouldn't — make any decisions. We'll have to try to talk her round and, failing that, leave it to them to decide. After discussing it we can write to report this to Uncle Lian so that we won't be held responsible."

Having agreed on this they went inside to see Their Ladyships, and made a show of dissuading Xichun. She, however, was determined to renounce the world and begged them, if they would not let her leave, to give her a couple of clean rooms in which she could chant sutras and worship Buddha. Since the two young men were unwilling to make a decision and Xichun might really commit suicide, Madam You had to decide the matter herself.

"All right," she announced. "I'll take the blame. We'll just say that I couldn't stand my young sister-in-law and forced her to become a nun. Of course we mustn't let news of this get out. Here at home, with Their Ladyships as witnesses, let me take the responsibility. Qiang will have to write to Master Zhen and your Uncle Lian."

The two young men assented. To know whether Their Ladyships agreed or not, you must read the next chapter.





## 第一百十八回

记微嫌舅兄欺弱女 惊谜语妻妾谏痴人

话说邢王二夫人听尤氏一段话，明知也难挽回。王夫人只得说道：“姑娘要行善，这也是前生的夙根，我们也实在拦不住。只是咱们这样人家的姑娘出了家，不成个事体。如今你嫂子说了，准你修行，也是好处。却有一句话要说：那头发可以不剃的，只要自己的心真，那在头发上头呢？你想妙玉也是带发修行的。——不知他怎样凡心一动，才闹到那个分儿，姑娘执意如此，我们就把姑娘住的房子便算了姑娘的静室。所有服侍姑娘的人，也得叫他们来问。他若愿意跟的，就讲不得说亲配人；若不愿意跟的，另打主意。”惜春听了，收了泪，拜谢了邢王二夫人，李纨、尤氏等。

王夫人说了，便问彩屏等：“谁愿跟姑娘修行？”彩屏等回道：“太太们派谁就是谁。”王夫人知道不愿意，正在想人。袭人立在宝玉身后，想来宝玉必要大哭，防着他的旧病。岂知宝玉叹道：“真真难得！”袭人心里更自伤悲。宝钗虽不言语，遇事试探，见他执迷不醒，只得暗中落泪。

王夫人才要叫了众丫头来问，忽见紫鹃走上前去，在王夫人面前跪下，回道：“刚才太太问跟四姑娘的姐姐，太太看着怎么样？”王夫人道：“这个如何强派得人的？谁愿意，他自





## Chapter 118

### A Disgruntled Uncle and Cousin Delude a Helpless Girl Alarmed by His Cryptic Talk, Wife and Concubine Reprove Their Witless Husband

Madam You had convinced Their Ladyships that Xichun's case was hopeless.

"If you're set on worshipping Buddha," said Lady Wang, "it must be predestined and we really can't stop you. It doesn't seem proper, though, for a girl from a family like ours to become a nun. Now your sister-in-law has agreed to it and your piety is commendable, but I've one condition to make: Don't shave your head. So long as you're sincere, what does your hair matter? Just think of Miaoyu — she became a nun with long hair — but who knows what change of heart she had to come to such a bad end! Since you're set on this, we'll count your present quarters as your convent. We'll also have to question all your maids, and if some are willing to stay with you we won't find husbands for them; for the rest we'll make other arrangements."

At this, Xichun stopped weeping and kowtowed her thanks to Their Ladyships, Li Wan and Madam You.

Then Lady Wang asked Caiping and the other maids, "Which of you want to join in your young lady's devotions?"

"Whichever of us you choose, madam," they replied. And, inferring that they were unwilling, she started casting about for someone else.

Xiren standing behind Baoyu expected him to burst into tears and have another relapse. But to her surprise, upsetting her even more, he simply sighed, "How sublime!"

Though Baochai said nothing, not yet having fathomed his meaning, her heart ached to see him a victim still of delusions. Before Lady Wang could question any more maids, Zijuan came forward and knelt down before her. "Just now you asked who would stay with Miss Xichun," She said. "Whom do you have in mind, madam?"



然就说出来了。”紫鹃道：“姑娘修行，自然姑娘愿意，并不是别的姐姐们的意思。我有句话回太太：我也并不是拆开姐姐们，各人有各人的心。我服侍林姑娘一场，林姑娘待我，也是太太们知道的，实在恩重如山，无以可报。他死了，我恨不得跟了他去，但只他不是这里的人，我又受主子家的恩典，难以从死。如今四姑娘既要修行，我就求太太们将我派了跟着姑娘，伏侍姑娘一辈子，不知太太们准不准？若准了，就是我的造化了！”

邢王二夫人尚未答言，只见宝玉听到那里，想起黛玉，一阵心酸，眼泪早下来了。众人才要问他时，他又哈哈的大笑，走上来说道：“我不该说的。这紫鹃蒙太太派给我屋里，我才敢说：求太太准了他罢，全了他的好心。”王夫人道：

“你头里姊妹出了嫁，还哭得死去活来；如今看见四妹妹要出家，不但不劝，倒说‘好事’。你如今到底是怎么个意思？我索性不明白了。”宝玉道：“四妹妹修行是已经准了的，四妹妹也是一定的主意了？若是真呢，我有一句话告诉太太；若是不定呢，我就不敢混说了。”惜春道：“二哥哥说话也好笑，一个人主意不定，便扭得过太太们来了？我也是像紫鹃的话：容我呢，是我的造化；不容我呢，还有一个死呢！那怕什么？二哥哥既有话，只管说。”宝玉道：“我这也不算什么泄漏了，这也是一定的。我念一首诗给你们听听罢。”众人道：“人家苦得很的时候，你倒来做诗恼人！”宝玉道：“不是做诗，我到过一个地方儿看了来的。你们听听



“How can I choose anyone against her will?” was Lady Wang’s reply. “If anyone wants to, she can volunteer.”

“Of course Miss Xichun’s doing this of her own free will, but the girls in her service aren’t willing to do the same,” said Zijuan. “I have a request to make, madam. It’s not that I want to separate the other girls from Miss Xichun, but we each have our own ideas. I waited on Miss Lin all that time and Your Ladyship knows how good she was to me. I can truly never repay her tremendous kindness. When she died I longed to follow her to the grave, but as she belonged to another family and I’m a bond-slave of this house I could hardly kill myself. Now that Miss Xichun wants to enter holy orders, I beg Your Ladyships to assign me to wait on her all my life. If you will agree to this, I shall count it my good fortune!”

Before Lady Xing or Lady Wang could answer, Baoyu felt a pang at the thought of Daiyu and shed tears. The others were about to ask the reason when he burst out laughing again.

“It wasn’t my place to propose this,” he said, stepping forward. “But as you assigned Zijuan to my service, madam, I’m emboldened to ask you to agree so that she can realize her aspirations.”

His mother objected, “When Tanchun married you nearly cried your heart out; yet now that Xichun wants to become a nun, instead of trying to dissuade her you approve. What do you mean by this? I can’t understand you.”

“You’ve already agreed to her becoming a nun, and I assume her mind’s made up on the subject. If that’s the case, there’s something I’d like to tell you; but if she hasn’t decided yet I dare not speak out of turn.”

“How ridiculous you are, cousin,” protested Xichun. “If I had’t made up my mind, how could I have won round the mistresses? I agree with what Zijuan just said. If you let me have my way I shall count it my good fortune. Otherwise I can always die — I’m not afraid! So just say what you have in mind.”

“It can’t count as disclosing any secret, as this was fated. I’m going to recite you a poem.”

The others expostulated, “Why pester us with your poems when we’re all so upset?”

“It’s not *my* poem, but one I read somewhere. Listen.”

罢。”众人道：“使得。你就念念，别顺着嘴儿胡诌。”宝玉也不分辩，便说道：

勘破三春景不长，缡衣顿改昔年妆。

可怜绣户侯门女，独卧青灯古佛旁！

李纨宝钗听了诧异道：“不好了！这个人入了魔了。”王夫人听了这话，点头叹息，便问：“宝玉，你到底是那里看来的？”宝玉不便说出来，回道：“太太也不必问我，自有见的地方。”王夫人回过味来，细细一想，便更哭起来道：“你说前儿是玩话，怎么忽然有这首诗？罢了，我知道了！你们叫我怎么样呢？我也没有法儿了，也只得由着你们去罢！但只等我合上了眼，各自干各自的就完了！”

宝钗一面劝着，这个心比刀绞更甚，也掌不住，便放声大哭起来。袭人已经哭的死去活来，幸亏秋纹扶着。宝玉也不啼哭，也不相劝，只不言语。贾兰贾环听到那里，各自走开。李纨竭力的解说：“总是宝兄弟见四妹妹修行，他想来是痛极了，不顾前后的疯话，这也作不得准。独有紫鹃的事情，准不准，好叫他起来。”王夫人道：“什么依不依？横竖一个人的主意定了，那也是扭不过来的！可是宝玉说的，也是一定的了！”

紫鹃听了磕头。惜春又谢了王夫人。紫鹃又给宝玉宝钗磕了头。宝玉念声“阿弥陀佛！难得，难得！不料你倒先好了！”宝钗虽然有把持，也难掌住。只有袭人也顾不得王夫人在上，便痛哭不止，说：“我也愿意跟了四姑娘去修行！”



“All right,” they conceded. “Recite it, but stop talking nonsense.”  
Without further argument Baoyu declaimed:

She sees through the transience of spring,  
Dark Buddhist robes replace her garments fine;  
Pity this child of a wealthy noble house  
Who now sleeps alone by the dimly lit old shrine.

Li Wan and Baochai exclaimed, “Oh dear! He’s bewitched.”

Lady Wang, however, nodded and asked with a sigh, “Tell me truly, Baoyu, where you saw this poem?”

Not liking to disclose his dream he answered, “Don’t ask me the place, madam.”

Having digested the meaning she burst out sobbing, “I thought at first you were joking, but then you came out with this poem. All right, I understand. What do you expect me to do? I shall simply have to let you do as you choose; but just wait till I’m dead before you each go your own way!”

Baochai, trying to console her, felt such a stab of anguish that she could not help sobbing too, while Xiren was so prostrated with grief that Qiuwen had to support her. Baoyu neither wept nor attempted to comfort them, simply remaining silent. And at this point Jia Lan and Jia Huan slipped away.

To soothe Lady Wang, Li Wan said, “Baoyu must have been so upset by Xichun’s decision that he started raving. Don’t take his nonsense seriously, madam. Why not give Zijuan an answer, so that she can get up?”

“What does my consent count for?” replied Lady Wang. “When someone’s made up her mind there’s no stopping her. As Baoyu said, this was fated.”

Zijuan kowtowed. Xichun also thanked Lady Wang. Then Zijuan kowtowed to Baoyu and Baochai too.

“Amida Buddha! Fine!” cried Baoyu. “You’ve stolen a march on me!”

Baochai, for all her self-control, was finding it hard to bear up. And Xiren despite the presence of Lady Wang sobbed, “I want to be a nun with Miss Xichun too.”



宝玉笑道：“你也是好心，但是你不能享这个清福的！”袭人哭道：“这么说，我是要死的了？”宝玉听到那里，倒觉伤心，只是说不出来。

因时已五更，宝玉请王夫人安歇。李纨等各自散去。彩屏等暂且伏侍惜春回去，后来指配了人家。紫鹃终身伏侍，毫不改初。此是后话。

且言贾政扶了贾母灵柩一路南行，因遇着班师的兵将船只过境，河道拥挤，不能速行，在道实在心焦。幸喜遇见了海疆的官员，闻得镇海统制钦召回京，想来探春一定回家，略略解些烦心。只打听不出起程的日期，心里又是烦躁。想到盘费算来不敷，不得已，写书一封，差人到赖尚荣任上借银五百，叫人沿途迎来，应付需用。过了数日，贾政的船才行得十数里。那家人回来，迎上船只，将赖尚荣的禀启呈上，书内告了多少苦处，备上白银五十两。贾政看了大怒，即命家人：“立刻送还！将原书发回，叫他不必费心。”那家人无奈，只得回到赖尚荣任所。赖尚荣接到原书银两，心中烦闷，知事办得不周到，又添了一百，央来人带回，帮着说些好话。岂知那人不肯带回，撂下就走。

赖尚荣心下不定，立刻修书到家，回明他父亲，叫他设法告假，赎出身来。于是赖家托了贾蔷贾芸等在王夫人面前乞恩放出。贾蔷明知不能，过了一日，假说王夫人不依的话，回复了。赖家一面告假，一面差人到赖尚荣任上，叫他

红楼梦  
脂砚斋  
批  
PDG



“You mean well,” Baoyu told her gently. “But you’re not fated to enjoy this pure happiness.”

“Do you mean I’m going to die?” she cried.

Grieved as he was for her he could not tell her more, and since it was nearly dawn he urged his mother to rest, whereupon Li Wan and the others dispersed. Caiping escorted Xichun back as usual, but was later married off; and then Zijuan waited on Xichun as long as she lived, without any change of heart. But this is anticipating.

Let us now return to Jia Zheng who was escorting the old lady’s coffin south. On his way, boatloads of troops withdrawing upstream jammed the river and held him up, much to his anxiety. Luckily he learned from some officials from the coast that the garrison commander there had been recalled to the capital, and it relieved him to think that Tanchun must be going home. However, he was upset, not knowing when she would be starting on her journey. Estimating that his funds would be running out, he had no choice but to write to Magistrate Lai Shangrong, the son of Lai Da, to ask for a loan of five hundred taels of silver, instructing the messenger to overtake him with the requisite sum.

Some days passed, during which his boat proceeded only a few dozen *li*; then his servant overtook them and, coming aboard, delivered Lai Shangrong’s letter. It pleaded poverty, and the silver sent was a paltry fifty taels.

In a rage Jia Zheng ordered the man, “Take this back at once with his letter, and tell him not to trouble.”

The servant had to go back to Lai Shangrong. Worried by the return of his letter and the silver, and aware that he had bungled things, Lai added another hundred taels and begged the servant to take this back and put in a good word for him. The man refused, however, and left without the money.

Lai Shangrong in dismay at once wrote home to his father, urging him to ask for leave and to buy his freedom. The Lai family requested Jia Qiang and Jia Yun to beg Lady Wang to be kind enough to release him; but Jia Qiang knew that this was out of the question and told them a day later that she had refused. Thereupon Lai Da asked for leave and sent to



告病辞官。王夫人并不知道。

那贾芸听见贾蔷的假话，心里便没想头。连日在外又输了好些银钱，无所抵偿，便和贾环借贷。贾环本是一个钱没有的，虽是赵姨娘有些积蓄，早被他弄光了，那能照应人家？便想起凤姐待他刻薄，趁着贾琏不在家，要摆布巧姐出气，遂把这个当叫贾芸来上，故意的埋怨贾芸道：“你们年纪又大，放着弄银钱的事又不敢办，倒和我没有钱的人商量！”贾芸道：“三叔，你这话说的倒好笑！咱们一块儿玩，一块儿闹，那里有有钱的事？”贾环道：“不是前儿有人说是外藩要买个偏房？你们何不和王大舅商量，把巧姐说给他呢？”贾芸道：“叔叔，我说句招你生气的话：外藩花了钱买人，还想能和咱们走动么？”

贾环在贾芸耳边说了些话，贾芸虽然点头，只道贾环是小孩子的话，也不当事。恰好王仁走来说道：“你们两个人商量些什么？瞒着我吗？”贾芸便将贾环的话附耳低言的说了。王仁拍手道：“这倒是一宗好事！又有银子！只怕你们不能。若是你们敢办，我是亲舅舅，做得主的。只要环老三在大太太跟前那儿一说，我找邢大舅再一说，太太们问起来，你们打伙儿说好就是了。”

贾环等商议定了，王仁便去找邢大舅，贾芸便去回邢王二夫人，说得锦上添花。王夫人听了，虽然入耳，只是不



advise his son to resign on the pretext of illness. Lady Wang, however, knew nothing of all this.

Now Jia Qiang's lie that Lady Wang had refused to let Lai Da redeem himself had dashed Jia Yun's hope of bettering his position in the Rong Mansion. While gambling outside he lost heavily for several days in succession and, unable to pay up, applied to Jia Huan for a loan. But Jia Huan had not a cent, having already squandered his mother's savings, and was unable to help anyone else. Resenting his harsh treatment at Xifeng's hands, he decided now that Jia Lian was away to vent his spite on Qiaojie, using Jia Yun as his cat's paw.

He jeered at him, "You're a grown man, yet for lack of guts you let go a chance to make money, and instead come begging from a pauper like me!"

"That's ridiculous talk, Third Uncle," protested Jia Yun. "Being on the spree together all the time, what chance have we to make money?"

"Didn't someone say the other day that a prince in a border province wants to buy a concubine? Why not discuss this with Uncle Wang and marry Qiaojie off?"

"Don't take offence, uncle," retorted Jia Yun. "But if that prince were to buy her, how could he keep on good terms with our family?"

Jia Huan whispered something into his ear, but although Jia Yun nodded he thought this too childish a notion to entertain seriously.

Just then Wang Ren turned up. "What are you two plotting behind my back?" he asked.

Jia Yun told him what Jia Huan had just whispered to him.

Wang Ren clapped his hands crying, "This is a fine idea! There's money in it! I'm only afraid you won't be able to pull it off. If you have the nerve to, as her maternal uncle I can authorize it. If Huan will propose it to Lady Xing I'll have a word with Uncle Xing; then if the other mistresses ask about it you can speak up in favour and it should go through."

Once they had agreed to this, Wang Ren went to find Uncle Xing while Jia Yun made this proposal — in an embroidered form — to Their Ladyships. Lady Wang was somewhat sceptical, but when Lady Xing

信。邢夫人听得邢大舅知道，心里愿意，便打发人找了邢大舅来问他。那邢大舅已经听了王仁的话，又可分肥，便在邢夫人跟前说道：“若说这位郡王，是极有体面的。若应了这门亲事，虽说不是正配，管保一过了门，姐夫的官早复了，这里的声势又好了。”邢夫人本是没主意的人，被傻大舅一番假话哄得心动，请了王仁来一问。更说得热闹。于是邢夫人倒叫人出来追着贾芸去说。王仁即刻找了人去到外藩公馆说了。

那外藩不知底细，便要打发人来相看。贾芸又钻了相看的人，说明：“原是瞒着合宅的，只说是王府相亲。等到成了，他祖母作主，亲舅舅的保山，是不怕的。”那相看的人应了。贾芸便送信与邢夫人，并回了王夫人。那李纨宝钗等不知原故，只道是件好事，也都欢喜。

那日，果然来了几个女人，都是艳妆丽服。邢夫人接了进去，叙了些闲话。那来人本知是个诰命，也不敢怠慢。邢夫人因事未定，也没有和巧姐说明，只说有亲戚来瞧，叫他去见。巧姐到底是个小孩子，那管这些，便跟了奶奶过来。平儿不放心，也跟着来。只见有两个宫人打扮的，见了巧姐，便浑身上下一看，更又起身来拉着巧姐的手又瞧了一遍，略坐了一坐就走了。倒把巧姐看得羞躁，回到房中纳闷；想来没有这门亲戚，便问平儿。

平儿先看见来头，却也猜着八九：“必是相亲的。但是二爷不在家，大太太作主，到底不知是那府里的。若说是对头



heard that her brother approved she sent to sound him out.

Uncle Xing, who had been won round by Wang Ren and hoped to share the proceeds, told his sister, "That prince is most distinguished. If we agree to this match, even though she's not his principal wife, once she goes to his palace my brother-in-law's rank is bound to be restored and you'll be in a good position again."

Lady Xing had no mind of her own. Taken in by Foolish Uncle's fabrications she consulted Wang Ren, who gave her even more blarney. Then she sent to urge Jia Yun to make the proposal, and Wang Ren lost no time in despatching a messenger to the prince's palace.

Not knowing the truth of the matter, the prince ordered some of his household to inspect the girl. Jia Yun informed them, "We've kept this secret from most of the family, just telling them that His Highness is proposing marriage. But once it's settled, as her grandmother approves and the girl's own uncle is the guarantor, we have nothing to fear."

When they agreed to this arrangement, he sent word to Lady Xing and reported the proposal to Lady Wang. Li Wan, Baochai and the others who were ignorant of the real facts thought it a good match and were all delighted.

On the appointed day, two ladies in magnificent costumes called. Lady Xing welcomed them in and civilities were exchanged, the visitors treating her with due respect as she was a lady of rank. Since the matter was not yet decided, Lady Xing instead of telling Qiaojie about it sent for her to come and meet some relatives who had called, Qiaojie, too young to suspect anything, came over with her nurse. And Pinger accompanied them as she had certain misgivings. She saw these two visitors dressed like ladies-in-waiting looked Qiaojie over from head to foot, after which they got up and took her hand to examine her once more; then after sitting a little longer they left. Qiaojie, most embarrassed by this scrutiny, went back to her room very puzzled and, not having heard of these relatives before, asked Pinger who they were.

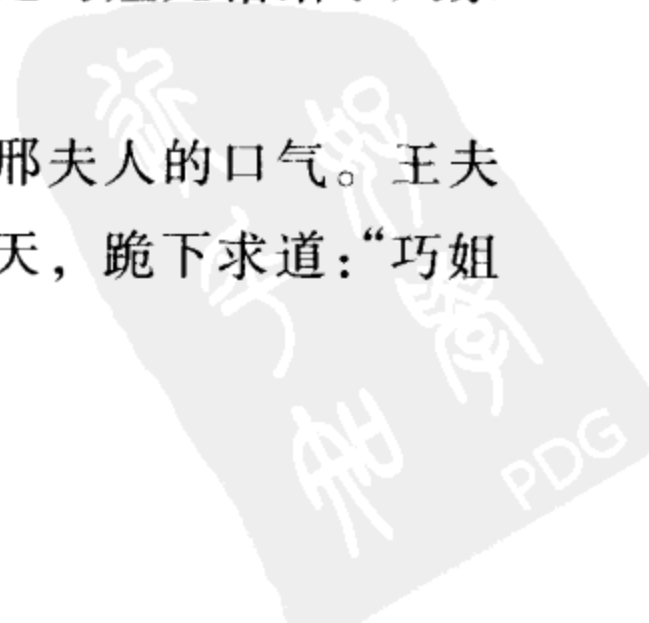
Pinger had more or less guessed from their behaviour that they were looking over a prospective bride; but in Jia Lian's absence, with Lady Xing in charge, she could not find out which family they came from. Their close scrutiny was uncalled for if it was a match between families



亲，不该这样相看。瞧那几个人的来头，不象是本支王府，好像是外头路数。如今且不必和姑娘说明，且打听明白再说。”平儿心下留神打听。那些丫头婆子都是平儿使过的，平儿一问，所有听见外头的风声都告诉了，平儿便吓的没了主意。虽不和巧姐说，便赶着去告诉了李纨宝钗，求他二人告诉王夫人。

王夫人知道这事不好，便和邢夫人说知。怎奈邢夫人信了兄弟并王仁的话，反疑心王夫人不是好意，便说：“孙女儿也大了。现在琏儿不在家，这件事，我还做得主。况且他亲舅爷爷和他亲舅舅打听的，难道倒比别人不真么？我横竖是愿意的。倘有什么不好，我和琏儿也抱怨不着别人。”王夫人听了这些话，心下暗暗生气，勉强说些闲话，便走了出来，告诉了宝钗，自己落泪。宝玉劝道：“太太别烦恼。这件事，我看来是不成的。这又是巧姐儿命里所招，只求太太不管就是了。”王夫人道：“你一开口就是疯话！人家说定了就要接过去。若依平儿的话，你琏二哥哥不抱怨我么？别说自己的侄孙女儿，就是亲戚家的，也是要才好。邢姑娘是我们作媒的，配了你二大舅子，如今和和顺顺的过日子，不好么？那琴姑娘，梅家娶了去，听见说是丰衣足食的，很好。就是史姑娘，是他叔叔的主意，头里原好；如今姑爷痲病死了，你史妹妹立志守寡，也就苦了。若是巧姐儿错给了人家儿，可不是我的心坏？”

正说着，平儿过来瞧宝钗，并探听邢夫人的口气。王夫人将邢夫人的话说了一遍。平儿呆了半天，跪下求道：“巧姐





of equal status; and the two visitors had not behaved like members of any of the royal households with which the Jias were connected, but rather like provincials. She decided not to tell Qiaojie this but to make certain inquiries, which she did by discreetly questioning the maids and serving-women under her, who told her everything they had heard outside. Pinger was consternated. Though she kept this from Qiaojie, she hurried over to tell Li Wan and Baochai, begging them to inform Lady Wang.

Lady Wang knew that this was a bad business and warned Lady Xing against it; but the latter, taken in by her brother and Wang Ren, suspected Lady Wang's motives.

"My grand-daughter has reached marriageable age," she said. "With Lian away the decision is up to me. Besides, her own grand-uncle and maternal uncle have made inquiries, and *they* must surely know the facts of the case better than other people. So I'm quite willing. If things turn out badly, Lian and I won't hold anyone else to blame."

Lady Wang, secretly angered by such talk, forced herself to chat for a while on other matters before going off to confide tearfully to Baochai what had happened.

"Don't let this upset you, madam," said Baoyu. "I don't think it will go through. If it does, it's Qiaojie's fate, so you needn't intervene."

"You can't open your mouth without raving!" his mother retorted. "Once the matter is fixed they'll come and take her away. And then, as Pinger says, won't your cousin Lian hold me to blame? Not to say that she's my own grand-niece, even if she were some distant relative we'd want something better for her. We arranged that match between Miss Xing and your cousin Xue Ke, and isn't it good the way they're living happily together? Then there's Baoqin who's made an excellent marriage into the Mei family, which by all accounts is very comfortably off. As for Xiangyun's marriage, that was her uncle's idea and all went well to start with, but now her husband's died of consumption and she's made up her mind never to marry again, poor thing. How can I have the heart to let Qiaojie marry into the wrong family?"

As she was talking, Pinger called on Baochai to find out Lady Xing's intentions, and Lady Wang told her what the latter had said. Pinger, speech-



儿终身全仗着太太!若信了人家的话,不但姑娘一辈子受了苦,便是琏二爷回来,怎么说呢?”王夫人道:“你是个明白人,起来听我说:巧姐儿到底是大太太孙女儿,他要作主,我能够拦他么?”宝玉劝道:“无妨碍的,只要明白就是了。”平儿生怕宝玉疯癫嚷出来,也并不言语,回了王夫人,竟自去了。

这里王夫人想到烦闷,一阵心痛,叫丫头扶着,勉强回到自己房中躺下,不叫宝玉宝钗过来,说:“睡睡就好的。”自己却也烦闷。听见说李婶娘来了,也不及接待。只见贾兰进来请了安,回道:“今早爷爷那里打发人带了一封书子来,外头小子们传进来的。我母亲接了,正要过来,因我老娘来了,叫我先呈给太太瞧,回来我母亲就过来来回太太。还说我老娘要过来呢。”说着,一面把书子呈上。王夫人一面接书,一面问道:“你老娘来作什么?”贾兰道:“我也不知道。我只听见我老娘说:我三姨儿的婆婆家有什么信儿来了。”王夫人听了,想起来还是前次给甄宝玉说了李绮,后来放定下茶,想来此时甄家要娶过门,所以李婶娘来商量这件事情,便点点头儿;一面拆开书信,见上面写着道:

近因沿途俱系海疆凯旋船只,不能迅速前行。闻探姐随翁婿来都,不知曾有信否?前接到琏侄手禀,知大老爷身体欠安,亦不知已有确信否?宝玉兰儿场期已近,务须实心用功,不可怠惰。老太太灵柩抵家,尚需日时。我身体平善,不必挂念。此谕宝玉等知道。月日手书。蓉儿另禀。



less at first, fell on her knees then implored, "Qiaojie's whole future is in your hands, madam! If we trust *them*, not only will the girl have a wretched life, but how are we to account for it to Master Lian when he comes home?"

"You're a sensible girl," Lady Wang replied. "Get up and listen to me. The Elder Mistress, after all, is Qiaojie's grandmother. If *she* decides on this, how am I to stop her?"

Baoyu insisted, "It doesn't matter, if only you're clear-headed."

For fear that in his madness he might disclose her appeal to Lady Wang, Pinger did not remonstrate with him but left soon afterwards.

Lady Wang's anxiety made her heart palpitate. She told maids to help her to her room to lie down but would not let Baoyu and Baochai attend her, saying, "A little rest will set me right." However, she was so troubled in her mind that when word was brought that Li Wan's aunt had called she did not feel up to entertaining her.

Jia Lan came in then to pay his respects and reported, "This morning a letter came from my grandfather, which the servants at the gate brought in to my mother. She wanted to bring it to you, but then my grand-aunt arrived, so she told me to deliver it instead, madam. My mother will be coming presently and so will my grand-aunt, she says." He presented the letter.

"What has your grand-aunt come for?" asked Lady Wang.

"I don't know," he answered. "I only heard her mention some letter from my aunt Li Qi's future in-laws."

Lady Wang realized that since a match had been arranged and betrothal gifts exchanged between Zhen Baoyu and Li Wan's cousin Li Qi, the Zhen family must be wanting to go ahead with the marriage and Aunt Li had come to discuss this. She nodded and opened the letter, in which she read:

My journey has been delayed by the ships all along the river returning from their successful coastal campaign. I hear that Tanchun is coming to the capital with her father-in-law and husband, and wonder if you have any news of her. I received Lian's letter about the Elder Master's illness, but do not know if there is more definite news. Baoyu and Lan will shortly be taking the examination; they must study hard and not slack. It





王夫人看了，仍旧递给贾兰，说：“你拿去给你二叔叔瞧瞧，还交给你母亲罢。”正说着，李纨同李婶娘过来，请安问好毕，王夫人让了坐。李婶娘便将甄家要娶李绮的话说了一遍。大家商议了一会子。李纨因问王夫人道：“老爷的书子，太太看过了么？”王夫人道：“看过了。”贾兰便拿着给他母亲瞧。李纨看了道：“三姑娘出了门好几年，总没有来；如今要回京了，太太也放了好些心。”王夫人道：“我本是心痛，看见探丫头要回来了，心里略好些，只是不知几时才到？”李婶娘便问了贾政在路好。李纨因向贾兰道：“哥儿瞧见了？场期近了，你爷爷惦记的什么似的。你快拿了去给二叔叔瞧去罢。”李婶娘道：“他们爷儿两个又没进过学，怎么能下场呢？”王夫人道：“他爷爷做粮道的起身时，给他们爷儿两个援了例监了。”李婶娘点头。贾兰一面拿着书子出来，来找宝玉。

却说宝玉送了王夫人去后，正拿着《秋水》一篇在那里细玩。宝钗从里间走出，见他看的得意忘言，便走过来一看，见是这个，心里着实烦闷，细想：“他只顾把这些‘出世离群’的话当作一件正经事，终久不妥！”看他这种光景，料劝不过来，便坐在宝玉傍边，怔怔的瞅着。宝玉见他这般，便道：“你这又是为什么？”宝钗道：“我想你我既为夫





will be some time before the old lady's coffin can be conveyed to our native place. My health is good; have no worry on that score. Tell Baoyu and the others what I have written. Rong will write separately.

To this were appended the date and Jia Zheng's signature.

Lady Wang returned the letter to Lan saying, "Take this to show your Uncle Bao, then give it back to your mother."

Just then, however, Li Wan brought over her aunt to pay their respects, and Lady Wang offered them seats. Aunt Li told her of the Zhen family's wish to expedite Li Qi's wedding, and they talked this over.

Then Li Wan asked Lady Wang, "Have you read the master's letter, madam?"

"Yes, I have."

Jia Lan showed it to his mother, whose comment was, "Tanchun hasn't been back once in all these years since her marriage. Now that she's coming to the capital you can feel much easier in your mind, madam."

"Yes," said Lady Wang. "I had palpitations of the heart just now; but this news has made me feel better. I only wonder when she will arrive."

When Aunt Li had asked whether Jia Zheng had had a good journey, Li Wan said to her son, "Did you read the letter? It's nearly time for the examination and your grandfather has it very much on his mind. You must take his letter to show Uncle Bao."

"They haven't passed the first degree; how can they sit for the provincial examination?" Aunt Li inquired.

Lady Wang explained, "When his grandfather was Grain Commissioner he bought him and Baoyu the rank of Imperial College Student."

Aunt Li nodded and Jia Lan went off with the letter to find Baoyu.

After seeing his mother to her room, Baoyu had gone back to amuse himself by reading the chapter "Autumn Water" in *Zhuang Zi*. Baochai, coming out from the inner room and finding him utterly absorbed in a book, went over to have a look and was dismayed to discover what it was. "He takes that talk about 'leaving the world of men' seriously," she reflected. "No good will come of it in the long run." But thinking it useless to try to dissuade him, she sat down beside him lost in reverie.

Baoyu noticing this asked, "What's on your mind now?"



妇，你便是我终身的倚靠，却不在情欲之私。论起荣华富贵，原不过是‘过眼烟云’；但自古圣贤，以人品根柢为重……”宝玉也没听完，把那本书搁在旁边，微微的笑道：

“据你说‘人品根柢’，又是什么‘古圣贤’，你可知古圣贤说过，‘不失其赤子之心’？那赤子有什么好处？不过是无知，无识，无贪，无忌。我们生来已陷溺在贪、嗔、痴、爱中，犹如污泥一般，怎么能跳出这般尘网？如今才晓得‘聚散浮生’四字，古人说了，不曾提醒一个。既要讲到人品根柢，谁是到那太初一步地位的？”宝钗道：“你既说‘赤子之心’，古圣贤原以忠孝为赤子之心，并不是遁世离群、无关无系为赤子之心。尧、舜、禹、汤、周、孔，时刻以救民济世为心，所谓赤子之心，原不过是‘不忍’二字。若你方才所说的忍于抛弃天伦，还成什么道理？”宝玉点头笑道：

“尧舜不强巢许，武周不强夷齐。”宝钗不等他说完，便道：“你这个话，益发不是了。古来若都是巢、许、夷、齐，为什么如今人又把尧、舜、周、孔称为圣贤呢？况且你自比夷齐，更不成话。夷齐原是生在殷商末世，有许多难处之事，所以才有托而逃。当此圣世，咱们世受国恩，祖父锦衣玉食；况你自有生以来，自去世的老太太，以及老爷太太，视如珍宝。你方才所说，自己想一想，是与不是？”宝玉听





“Since we are man and wife, you’re the one I have to rely on all my life; this isn’t a question of my personal feelings. Of course wealth and honour are ‘transient as drifting clouds’ but the sages of old set store by moral character and a firm foundation....”

Without waiting for her to finish, Baoyu laid his book aside and said with a faint smile, “So you talk about ‘moral character and a firm foundation’ and the ‘sages of old’. Don’t you know that one ancient sage taught that we ‘should not lose the heart of a child?’ What’s special about a child? Simply this: it has no knowledge, no judgement, no greed and no taboos. From our birth we sink into the quagmire of greed, anger, infatuation and love; and how can we escape from earthly entanglements? I’ve only just realized that mortal men are like water weeds drifting together and then apart again. Though the ancients spoke of this, no one seems to have awakened to the fact. If you want to talk about character and foundation, tell me who has achieved the supreme primeval state?”

“Since you speak of the heart of a child,” she countered, “the sages of old took it to mean loyalty and filial piety, not leaving the world and giving up all human relationships. The constant concern of Yao and Shun, Yu and Tang, the Duke of Zhou and Confucius was to save the people and benefit the world; so what they meant by the heart of a child was simply love for humanity. What would the world come to if everyone took your advice and disregarded all natural relationships?”

Baoyu nodded and chuckled, “But Yao and Shun didn’t force Chao Fu and Xu You<sup>1</sup> to take up office, nor did King Wu and the Duke of Zhou force Bo Yi and Shu Qi<sup>2</sup> to serve them.”

Before he could finish, Baochai interposed, “What you’re saying now is even more wrong. If all the men of old had been like Cao Fu, Xu You, Bo Yi and Shu Qi, why should Yao and Shun, the Duke of Zhou and Confucius be considered as sages today? It’s even more ridiculous to compare yourself with Bo Yi and Shu Qi. They lived when the Shang Dynasty was in decline, and because they couldn’t cope with the situation found some pretext to run away. But we live under a sage Emperor, our family is deeply indebted to the state, and our ancestors have lived in luxury; while in your case, particularly, since your childhood you’ve been treasured by the old lady while she was alive and by your parents. Just



了，也不答言，只有仰头微笑。

宝钗因又劝道：“你既理屈词穷，我劝你从此把心收一收，好好的用用功，但能博得一第，便是从此而止，也不枉天恩祖德了！”宝玉点了点头，叹了口气，说道：“一第呢，其实也不是什么难事。倒是你这个‘从此而止’，‘不枉天恩祖德’，却还不离其宗！”宝钗未及答言，袭人过来说道：“刚才二奶奶说的古圣先贤，我们也不懂。我只想着我们这些人，从小儿辛辛苦苦跟着二爷，不知陪了多少小心，——论起理来，原该当的，但只二爷也该体谅体谅。况且二奶奶替二爷在老爷太太跟前行了多少孝道，就是二爷不以夫妻为事，也不可太辜负了人心。至于神仙那一层，更是谎话，谁见过有走到凡间来的神仙呢？那里来的这么个和尚，说了些混话，二爷就信了真！二爷是读书的人，难道他的话比老爷太太还重么？”宝玉听了，低头不语。

袭人还要说时，只听外面脚步走响，隔着窗户问道：“二叔在屋里呢么？”宝玉听了是贾兰的声音，便站起来笑道：“你进来罢。”宝钗也站起来。贾兰进来，笑容可掬的给宝玉宝钗请了安，问了袭人的好，袭人也问了好，便把书子呈给宝玉瞧。宝玉接在手中看了，便道：“你三姑姑回来了？”贾兰道：“爷爷既如此写，自然是回来的了。”宝玉点头不语，默默若有所思。贾兰便问：“叔叔看见了：爷爷后头写着，叫咱们好生念书呢。叔叔这程子只怕总没作文章

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think over what you said. Was it right or wrong?"

Baoyu made no answer, just looked up and smiled.

Baochai went on to plead, "Since you've run out of arguments, my advice to you is to take a grip on yourself and study hard; because if you can pass the triennial examination, even if you stop at that, you'll be paying back your debt of gratitude for your sovereign's favour and your ancestor's virtue."

Baoyu nodded and sighed, then said, "Actually it isn't difficult to pass. And what you said about stopping there and repaying my debt is not far wide of the mark."

Before she could answer, Xiren joined in, "Of course, we don't understand those old sages whom Madam Bao was talking about. I just feel that those of us who've been hard at it since we were small serving Master Bao, and told off ever so often — though of course that was only right — all hope he will show more consideration for us. Besides, it's for *your* sake that Madam Bao has been such a dutiful daughter-in-law; so even if you haven't much family feeling you shouldn't let her down. All those legends about gods and spirits are lies — who ever saw an immortal come down to earth? Yet when that monk from goodness knows where talked some nonsense to you, you believed it! How can someone with book-learning like you, Master Bao, take his advice more seriously than your parents'?"

Baoyu bowed his head and said nothing.

Before she could continue, they heard footsteps in the courtyard and someone outside the window asked, "Is Uncle Bao in?"

Recognizing Jia Lan's voice, Baoyu stood up and called cheerfully, "Come in!"

Baochai also rose to her feet as Jia Lan entered, beaming, to pay his respects to them both, after which he and Xiren exchanged greetings. Then he presented the letter to Baoyu.

After reading it Baoyu said, "So Tanchun's coming back?"

"According to grandfather, she must be," he answered.

Baoyu nodded and seemed lost in thought.

"Did you read the end of the letter, uncle, where grandfather urges us to study hard? Have you written any compositions these days?"



罢？”宝玉笑道：“我也要作几篇熟一熟手，好去诓这个功名。”贾兰道：“叔叔既这样，就拟几个题目，我跟着叔叔作，也好进去混场。别到那时交了白卷子，惹人笑话；不但笑话我，人家连叔叔都要笑话了。”宝玉道：“你也不至如此。”说着，宝钗命贾兰坐下。

宝玉仍坐在原处，贾兰侧身坐了。两个谈了一回文，不觉喜动颜色。宝钗见他爷儿两个谈得高兴，便仍进屋里去了，心中细想：“宝玉此时光景，或者醒悟过来了。只是刚才说话，他把那‘从此而止’四字单单的许可，这又不知是什么意思了？”宝钗尚自犹豫，惟有袭人看他爱讲文章，提到下场，更又欣然，心里想道：“阿弥陀佛！好容易讲《四书》似的才讲过来了！”这里宝玉和贾兰讲文，莺儿沏过茶来。贾兰站起来接了，又说了一会子下场的规矩，并请甄宝玉在一处的话，宝玉也甚似愿意。

一时，贾兰回去，便将书子留给宝玉了。那宝玉看着书子，笑嘻嘻走进来，递给麝月收了，便出来将那本《庄子》收了把几部向来最得意的，如《参同契》、《元命苞》、《五灯会元》之类，叫出麝月、秋纹、莺儿等都搬了搁在一边。宝钗见他这番举动，甚为罕异，因欲试探他，便笑问道：“不看他倒是正经，但又何必搬开呢？”宝玉道：“如今才明白过来了：这些书都算不得什么。我还要一火焚之，方为干净！”宝钗听了，更欣喜异常。只听宝玉口中微吟道：

内典语中无佛性，金丹法外有仙舟。

宝钗也没很听真，只听得“无佛性”，“有仙舟”几个字，



Baoyu smiled and said. "Yes, I must write a few to keep my hand in, so that I can wangle a pass."

"In that case, uncle, won't you set some subjects for us both, so that I can muddle through this examination too? Otherwise I may have to hand in a blank paper, making a fool of myself, which would reflect badly on you, uncle, as well."

"No, you should do all right."

Baochai invited Jia Lan to take a seat, and as Baoyu was still sitting in his own place the boy sat down respectfully beside him. They cheerfully discussed writing essays; and Baochai, observing this, withdrew to the inner room. "Judging by Baoyu's present behaviour," she thought, "he appears to have seen reason. Yet just now he stressed that this was where he would stop — what did he mean by that?"

Though Baochai still had her doubts, Xiren was delighted to hear how animatedly Baoyu was talking about essay writing and the examination. "Merciful Buddha!" she thought. "He seems to have come to his senses at last after that lecture we gave him!"

As Baoyu and Jia Lan were talking, Yinger brought them tea and Jia Lan stood up to take it. He then consulted Baoyu about the examination rules and suggested that they might invite Zhen Baoyu over. Baoyu appeared very willing.

Presently Jia Lan went home, leaving the letter with Baoyu, who went in cheerfully and handed it to Sheyue for safe keeping. Coming out again he put away the volume of *Zhuang Zi*, then gathered together some of his favourite books on Taoism and Buddhism and told Sheyue, Qiuwen and Yinger to take them all away. Wondering what he was up to, Baochai sounded him out playfully, "It's quite right and proper to stop reading those, but why have them taken away?"

"It's just dawned on me that these books count for nothing. I'm going to have them burnt to make a clean sweep!" Hearing this she was beside herself with joy. But then he chanted softly to himself:

Buddha's nature is not to be found in sacred canons,  
The fairy barque sails beyond the realm of alchemy.

She could not hear too clearly but caught the words "Buddha's nature" and "fairy barque" which caused her fresh misgivings. As she waited to





心中转又狐疑，且看他作何光景。宝玉便命麝月秋纹等收拾一间静室，把那些语录名稿及应制诗之类，都找出来，搁在静室中，自己却当真静静的用起功来。宝钗这才放了心。

那袭人此时真是闻所未闻，见所未见，便悄悄的笑向宝钗道：“到底奶奶说话透彻！只一路讲究，就把二爷劝明白了。就只可惜迟了一点儿，临场太近了！”宝钗点头微笑道：“功名自有定数，中与不中，倒也不在用功的迟早。但愿他从此一心巴结正路，把从前那些邪魔永不沾染，就是好了！”说到这里，见房里无人，便悄说道：“这一番悔悟过来，固然很好；但只一件：怕又犯了前头的旧病，和女孩儿们打起交道来，也是不好。”袭人道：“奶奶说的也是。二爷自从信了和尚，才把这些姐妹冷淡了；如今不信和尚，真怕又要犯了前头的旧病呢。我想：奶奶和我，二爷原不大理会。紫鹃去了，如今只他们四个。这里头就是五儿有些个狐媚子，听见说，他妈求了大奶奶和奶奶，说要讨出去给人家儿呢，但是这两天到底在这里呢。麝月秋纹虽没别的，只是二爷那几年也都有些顽顽皮皮的。如今算来，只有莺儿二爷倒不大理会，况且莺儿也稳重。我想倒茶弄水，只叫莺儿带着小丫头们伏侍就够了，不知奶奶心里怎么样？”宝钗道：

“我也虑的是这个，你说的倒也罢了。”从此便派莺儿带着小丫头伏侍。

那宝玉却也不出房门，天天只差人去给王夫人请安。王夫人听见他这番光景，那一种欣慰之情，更不待言了。

到了八月初三这一日，正是贾母的冥寿。宝玉早晨过来



see what he would do next, Baoyu ordered Sheyue and Qiuwen to prepare a quiet room for him, and got out all his collections of the sayings of past sages as well as other famous works and poems written during examinations, which he had put in this room. Then, to Baochai's relief, he set to work in good earnest.

Xiren was amazed by these developments. She quietly told Baochai, "The talking-to you gave him did the trick after all, madam. The way you kept refuting him made him see reason. Too bad, though, that it's rather late in the day — so close to the examination!"

Baochai nodded and answered with a smile, "Success or failure in examinations is fated, regardless of how soon or late one starts to study. We can only hope that from now on he'll stick to the right path and never be influenced again by those evil spirits!" Since they were alone in the room she went on softly, "Of course it's good that he's seen the light at last; but I'm afraid he may revert to his bad old ways and start fooling about with girls."

"Exactly, madam. After Master Bao put his trust in that monk he cooled off towards the girls here; now that he's lost faith in him, his old trouble may very well flare up again. I don't think he ever cared much for you or me, madam. Now Zijuan's gone, leaving just four senior maids and the only vamp among them is Wuer. They say her mother has asked Their Ladyships to let her go home to get married; however, for the time being she's still here. Sheyue and Qiuwen are all right, but in the old days Master Bao used to fool about with them too; so it looks as if Yinger is the only one in whom he's shown no interest, and she's steady girl. I suggest that pouring his tea and fetching his water can be left to her, with some younger girls to help her. What do you think of that, madam?"

"This is what I've been worrying about. Your idea's a good one." So from then on Yinger was assigned to wait on Baoyu with some younger maids.

Baoyu, however, never left his compound, just sending someone every day to pay his respects for him to Lady Wang. And she, it goes without saying, was pleased to know how hard he was studying.

The third day of the eighth lunar month was the old lady's birthday. Baoyu went that morning to kowtow to her shrine before going to his

磕了头，便回去，仍在静室中去了。饭后，宝钗袭人等都和姊妹们跟着邢王二夫人在前面屋里说闲话儿。宝玉自在静室，冥心危坐。忽见莺儿端了一盘瓜果过来，说：“太太叫人送来给二爷吃的，这是老太太的克什。”宝玉站起来答应了，复又坐下，便道：“搁在那里罢。”莺儿一面放下瓜果，一面悄悄向宝玉道：“太太那里夸二爷呢。”宝玉微笑。莺儿又道：“太太说了：二爷这一用功，明儿进场中了出来，明年再中了进士，作了官，老爷太太可就不枉了盼二爷了！”宝玉也只点头微笑。

莺儿忽然想起那年给宝玉打络子的时候宝玉说的话来，便道：“真要二爷中了，那可是我们姑奶奶的造化了！二爷还记得那一年在园子里，不是二爷叫我打梅花络子时说的：我们姑奶奶后来带着我不知到那一个有造化的人家儿去呢？如今二爷可是有造化的罢咧。”宝玉听到这里，又觉尘心一动，连忙敛神定息，微微的笑道：“据你说来，我是有造化的，你们姑娘也是有造化的；你呢？”莺儿把脸飞红了，勉强笑道：“我们不过当丫头一辈子罢咧，有什么造化呢？”宝玉笑道：“果然能够一辈子是丫头，你这个造化比我们还大呢！”莺儿听见这话，似乎又是疯话了，恐怕自己招出宝玉的病根来，打算着要走。只见宝宝笑着说道：“傻丫头，我告诉你罢！”未知宝玉又说出什么话来，且听下回分解。





study. After lunch, Baochai, Xiren and some of the maids were chatting in the front room with Their Ladyships while he remained in his quiet room deep in thought, when suddenly Yinger brought in a tray of fruit and sweetmeats.

"Her Ladyship told me to bring you this, Master Bao," she announced. "It's a sacrifice to the old lady."

Baoyu stood up to express his thanks, then resumed his seat saying, "Put it down there."

As Yinger did so she whispered, "Her Ladyship's praising you." When he smiled she added, "Her Ladyship says, now you're working hard and will soon pass the examination; and next year you'll get your third degree and an official post, living up to your parents' hopes!"

He still merely nodded and smiled.

Yinger suddenly recalled what he had said when she made him a net before. "If you really pass, Master Bao, Madam Bao will be in luck! Remember that year in the Garden, when you told me to make you a plum-blossom net? You said he'd be a lucky man, whoever got the pair of us, mistress and maid. Now you're the one in luck."

Hearing this, Baoyu felt a stirring of desire, but quickly suppressing it said with a faint smile, "You say I'm in luck and your mistress too. How about you?"

Yinger blushed. "What luck is there for the likes of me — bondmaids for life?"

"If you can really remain a bondmaid all your life, you'll be luckier than us," he chuckled.

She was afraid he was raving again on account of what she had said, and decided to leave.

"You silly girl!" he laughed. "I've something to tell you."

To know what this was you must read the next chapter.







中魁玉塵  
鄉寶却緣





## 第一百十九回

中乡魁宝玉却尘缘 沐皇恩贾家延世泽

话说莺儿见宝玉说话，摸不着头脑，正自要走，只听宝玉又说道：“傻丫头，我告诉你罢！你姑娘既是有造化的，你跟着他，自然也是有造化的了。你袭人姐姐是靠不住的。只要往后你尽心伏侍他就是了。日后或有好处，也不枉你跟着他熬了一场！”莺儿听着前头像话，后头说的又有些不像了，便道：“我知道了。姑娘还等我呢。二爷要吃果子时，打发小丫头叫我就是了。”宝玉点头，莺儿才去了。一时，宝钗袭人回来，各自房中去了，不提。

且说过了几天，便是场期。别人只知盼望他爷儿两个作了好文章，便可以高中的了，只有宝钗见宝玉的工课虽好，只是那有意无意之间，却别有一种冷静的光景。知他要进场了，头一件，叔侄两个都是初次赴考，恐人马拥挤，有什么失闪；第二件，宝玉自和尚去后，总不出门，虽然见他用工喜欢，只是改的太速太好了，反倒有些信不及，只怕又有什么变故：所以进场的头一天，一面派了袭人带了小丫头们同着素云等给他爷儿两个收拾妥当，自己又都过了目，好好的搁起，预备着；一面过来同李纨回了王夫人，拣家里老成的管事的多派了几个，只说怕人马拥挤碰了。

次日，宝玉贾兰换了半新不旧的衣服，欣然过来见了王夫人。王夫人嘱咐道：“你们爷儿两个都是初次下场，但是你



## Chapter 119

### Baoyu Passes the Examination with Honours and Severs Earthly Ties The Jia Family Retains Its Wealth and Titles Thanks to Imperial Favour

Bewildered by Baoyu's talk, Yinger was about to leave.

"You silly girl!" he said. "I've something to tell you. Since your young mistress is in luck, of course you as her maid will be lucky too, which is more than your sister Xiren can count on. You must work hard in future, so that when your mistress prospers she may repay you for your faithful service."

The first half of this made sense to Yinger, not the last. However all she said was, "I understand. Madam Bao is expecting me. When you're ready to taste the sweetmeats just send a maid to call me."

Baoyu nodded and she left. Presently Baochai and Xiren also went back to their rooms, where we will leave them.

A few days later it was time for the examination. Everyone else simply hoped that the two young masters would write good compositions and pass with honours; but Baochai had noticed that Baoyu, though studying hard, seemed strangely detached and indifferent. As this was the first examination for which he and Jia Lan had entered, she feared they might meet with some mishap in the throng of people and horses; moreover ever since the monk's departure Baoyu had stayed indoors, and though she had rejoiced to see him studying she was sceptical about his sudden conversion and afraid of some new misfortune. And so, the day before the examination, she sent Xiren with some maids to help Suyun pack the young gentlemen's things; and when she had made sure that everything needed was ready, she went with Li Wan to ask Lady Wang to send more than the usual number of experienced stewards with them, ostensibly to prevent their being jostled in the crowd.

The next day Baoyu and Jia Lan, in clothes neither new nor shabby, presented themselves cheerfully to Lady Wang.



们活了这么大，并不曾离开我一天。就是不在我跟前，也是丫头媳妇们围着，何曾自己孤身睡过一夜？今日各自进去，孤孤凄凄，举目无亲，须要自己保重！早些作完了文章出来，找着家人，早些回来，也叫你母亲、媳妇们放心。”王夫人说着，不免伤起心来。

贾兰听一句答应一句。只见宝玉一声不哼，待王夫人说完了，走过来给王夫人跪下，满眼流泪，磕了三个头，说道：“母亲生我一世，我也无可答报。只有这一入场，用心作了文章，好好的中个举人出来，那时太太喜欢喜欢，便是儿子一辈子的事也完了，一辈子的不好，也都遮过去了。”王夫人听了，更觉伤心，便道：“你有这个心，自然是好的，可惜你老太太不能见你的面了！”一面说，一面哭着拉他。那宝玉只管跪着，不肯起来，便说道：“老太太见与不见，总是知道的，喜欢的。既能知道了，喜欢了，便是不见也和见了的一样。只不过隔了形质，并非隔了神气啊。”

李纨见王夫人和他如此，一则怕勾起宝玉的病来，二则也觉得光景不大吉祥，连忙过来说道：“太太，这是大喜的事，为什么这样伤心？况且宝兄弟近来很知好歹，很孝顺，又肯用功。只要带了侄儿进去，好好的作文章，早早的回来，写出来请咱们的世交老先生们看了，等着爷儿两个都报了喜，就完了。”一面叫人搀起宝玉来。宝玉却转过身来给李纨作了个揖，说：“嫂子放心！我们爷儿两个都是必中的。日后兰哥还有大出息，大嫂子还要带凤冠穿霞帔呢。”李纨笑道：“但愿应了叔叔的话，也不枉——”说到这里，恐



“This is your first examination,” she warned them. “The first time in all these years that you’ve ever left me. Even when I wasn’t keeping an eye on you, you were surrounded by maids and serving-women, never sleeping for a single night alone. Today, entering for the examination, you’re going to be entirely on your own, so you’ll have to take care of yourselves! Come out as soon as you’ve finished your compositions to find our family servants, then come straight back to set the minds of your mothers and wife at rest.” She was moved to grief as she spoke.

Jia Lan had assented to each sentence, whereas Baoyu had said nothing. But when his mother finished he came over to kneel before her, shedding tears. After kowtowing three times he said, “I can never repay the mother who gave birth to me. But I shall do as well as I can in the examination, to obtain a good *ju-ren* degree and make you happy, madam. Then I shall have done my duty as a son and atoned for all my faults.”

This upset Lady Wang even more. “It’s good, of course, for you to feel that way,” she said. “If only the old lady could have lived to see you now!” Weeping she tried to raise him to his feet, but Baoyu refused to get up.

“Even if the old lady can’t see me, she’ll know and be pleased,” he answered. “So it’s all the same whether she sees me or not. We’re separated in form only, not in spirit.”

This exchange made Li Wan afraid that Baoyu was losing his mind again, besides striking her as inauspicious. She made haste to say, “Madam, why grieve over such a happy occasion? Especially as Brother Baoyu has recently been so sensible and dutiful, studying hard as well. When he and his nephew have taken the examination and written some good compositions, they’ll come straight back to show what they wrote to our seniors, after which we can wait for news of their success.” She told maids to help Baoyu up.

He turned to bow to her saying, “Don’t worry, sister-in-law. We’re both of us going to pass. Later on, your Lan is going to do so well that you’ll wear the costume of a high-ranking lady.”

She chuckled, “I only hope it works out as you say, so that it won’t have been in vain....” She broke off there, afraid to upset Lady Wang.

“Provided you have a good son to continue our ancestors’ line,” re-

怕又惹起王夫人的伤心来，连忙咽住了。宝玉笑道：“只要有了好儿子，能够接续祖基，就是大哥哥不能见，也算他的后事完了。”李纨见天气不早了，也不肯尽着和他说话，只好点点头儿。

此时宝钗听得，早已呆了。这些话，不但宝玉说的不好，便是王夫人李纨所说，句句都是不祥之兆，却又不敢认真，只得忍泪无言。那宝玉走到跟前，深深的作了一个揖。众人见他行事古怪，也摸不着是怎么样，又不敢笑他。只见宝钗的眼泪直流下来，众人更是纳罕。又听宝玉说道：“姐姐！我要走了。你好生跟着太太，听我的喜信儿罢！”宝钗道：“是时候了，你不必说这些唠叨话了。”宝玉道：“你倒催的我紧，我自己也知道该走了！”回头见众人都在这里，只没惜春紫鹃，便说道：“四妹妹和紫鹃姐姐跟前，替我说罢。他们两个横竖是再见的。”

众人见他的话，又像有理，又像疯话。大家只说他从来没出过门，都是太太的一套话招出来的，不如早早催他去了，就完了事，便说道：“外面有人等你呢，你再闹就误了时辰了。”宝玉仰面大笑道：“走了，走了！不用胡闹了！完了事了！”众人也都笑道：“快走罢！”独有王夫人和宝钗娘儿两个倒像生离死别的一般，那眼泪也不知从那里来的，直流下来，几乎失声哭出。但见宝玉嘻天哈地，大有疯傻之状，遂从此出门而去。正是：

走来名利无双地，打出樊笼第一关。

不言宝玉贾兰出门赶考，且说贾环见他们考去，自己又



joined Baoyu, "even though my brother hasn't lived to see it, it means he has done his duty."

Li Wan simply nodded, reluctant to say any more as it was growing late.

Baochai was most dismayed. For not only had Baoyu's words struck her as ill-omened, so had everything said by Lady Wang and Li Wan. Still, trying not to take it seriously she just held back her tears and kept silent. And now Baoyu walked over to make her a deep bow. All present, though mystified by his strange behaviour, did not like to laugh. They were even more amazed when Baochai wept.

Baoyu told her, "I'm going now, cousin. Take good care of the mistress and wait for my good news!"

"It's time you were off. There's no need to maunder like this," she answered.

"So you're hurrying me? I know it's time to be off." He turned to look round and noticed two people missing. "Send word for me to Xichun and Zijuan," he added. "Well, all I want to say is I shall be seeing them again."

As he sounded half rational, half crazy, the others attributed this to the fact that he had never left home before and was affected by what his mother had said. They thought it best to speed him on his way. "People are waiting outside," they reminded him. "If you delay any longer you'll be late."

Baoyu threw back his head and laughed. "I'm going now! No more ado! This is the end!"

The others answered cheerfully. "Go quickly."

Only Lady Wang and Baochai behaved as if this were a separation for life. Their tears coursed down and they nearly burst out sobbing as Baoyu, laughing like a maniac, went out. Truly:

Taking the only approach to fame and wealth,  
He breaks through the first door of his cage.

Let us leave Baoyu and Jia Lan for the time being. When Jia Huan saw them set off to take the examination he was furious. Regarding himself as the master now, he decided, "Here's my chance to avenge



气又恨，便自大为王，说：“我可要给母亲报仇了！家里一个男人没有，上头大太太依了我，还怕谁！”想定了主意，跑到邢夫人那边请了安，说了些奉承的话。那邢夫人自然喜欢，便说道：“你这才是明理的孩子呢！像那巧姐儿的事，原该我作主的，你琏二哥糊涂，放着亲奶奶，倒托别人去！”贾环道：“人家那头儿也说了：只认得这一门子，现在定了，还要备一分大礼来送太太呢。如今太太有了这样的藩王孙女女婿，还怕大老爷没大官做么？不是我说自己的太太：他们有了元妃姐姐，便欺压的人难受！将来巧姐儿别也是这样没良心，等我去问问他。”邢夫人道：“你也该告诉他，他才知道你的好处。只怕他父亲在家也找不出这么门子好亲事来！但只平儿那个糊涂东西，他倒说这件事不好，说是你太太也不愿意。想来恐怕我们得了意。若迟了，你二哥回来，又听人家的话，就办不成了。”贾环道：“那边都定了，只等太太出了八字。王府的规矩，三天就要来娶的。但是一件，只怕太太不愿意：那边说是不该娶犯官的孙女，只好悄悄的抬了去；等大老爷免了罪，做了官，再大家热闹起来。”邢夫人道：“这有什么不愿意？也是礼上应该的。”贾环道：“既这么着，这帖子太太出了就是了。”邢夫人道：“这孩子又糊涂了！里头都是女人，你叫芸哥儿写了一个就是了。”贾环听说，喜欢的了不得，连忙答应了出来，赶着和贾芸说了，邀着王仁到那外藩公馆立文书、兑银子去了。

那知刚才所说的话早被跟邢夫人的丫头听见。那丫头是



my mother. All the other men of the family have gone, and as the Elder Mistress listens to me whom else do I have to fear?" His mind made up, he called on Lady Xing, flattering her to get into her good graces.

Very gratified she said, "Now you're talking like a sensible boy! Qiaojie's marriage is something *I* should decide; but your cousin Lian is a fool and instead of leaving it to me, the child's own grandmother, he's entrusted it to other people!"

"That family says this branch of our house is the only one they recognize," Jia Huan told her. "Now that it's settled, they'll be sending you rich presents, madam; and once your grand-daughter's married to a prince, the Elder Master will get a high post for sure. It's not my place to speak ill of our mistress, but after one of her daughters was made an Imperial Consort she became too overbearing! I hope that in future Qiaojie won't be so heartless. I must make her promise that."

"Yes, you should talk to her to let her know whom she has to thank for this. Why, even if her father were at home, he wouldn't be able to find her a better husband. It's only that silly Pinger who thinks this match no good and says your mistress is against it too. I suppose she begrudges us this satisfaction. If we put this off till your cousin Lian comes back, he may listen to them and it may fall through."

"The other side has agreed. They're just waiting for you to send her horoscope, madam. According to the rules of the prince's house they'll fetch her three days after receiving it. There's one thing, though, which may not please you: They say since it's forbidden to marry the grand-daughter of a cashiered official, they can only carry her over quietly and the celebration will have to wait till after our Elder Master is pardoned and back in office."

"Why should I object to that? It's only correct."

"In that case you can send the horoscope, madam."

"Don't be a fool! We've only women at home. You must tell Qiang to write it."

Jia Huan assented with gleeful alacrity and hurried off to give Jia Yun this message, after which they urged Wang Ren to go to the prince's residence to draw up the contract and bring back the money.

However, one of Lady Xing's maids — one recommended by Pinger

求了平儿才挑上的，便抽空儿赶到平儿那里，一五一十的都告诉了。平儿早知此事不好，已和巧姐细细的说明。巧姐哭了一夜，必要等他父亲回来作主，大太太的话不能遵；今儿又听见这话，便大哭起来，要和太太讲去。平儿急忙拦住道：“姑娘且慢着！大太太是你的亲祖母，他说二爷不在家，大太太做得主的，况且还有舅舅做保山：他们都是一气，姑娘一个人，那里说得过呢？我到底是下人，说不上话去。如今只可想法儿，断不可冒失的！”邢夫人那边的丫头道：“你们快快的想主意，不然，可就要抬走了！”说着，各自走了。

平儿回过头来，见巧姐哭作一团，连忙扶着道：“姑娘，哭是不中用的！如今是二爷彀不着。听见他们的话头——”这句话还没说完，只见邢夫人那边打发人来告诉：“姑娘大喜的事来了！叫平儿将姑娘所有应用的东西料理出来。若是赔送呢，原说明了等二爷回来再办。”平儿只得答应了回来。又见王夫人过来，巧姐儿一把抱住，哭得倒在怀里。王夫人也哭道：“姐儿不用着急！我为你吃了大太太好些话，看来是扭不过来的。我们只好应着缓下去，即刻差个家人赶到你父亲那里去告诉。”平儿道：“太太还不知道么？早起三爷在大太太跟前说了：什么外藩规矩，三日就要过去的。如今大太太已叫芸哥儿写了名字年庚去了，还等得二爷么？”王夫人听说是三爷，便气得话也说不出，呆了半天，一叠声叫找贾环。找了半天，人回：“今早同蔷哥儿王舅爷出去了。”王



— had overheard them and now slipped away to repeat the whole of their conversation to her. Pinger had known that they were up to no good and had explained this to Qiaojie, with the result that the girl wept all night, insisting that they must wait for her father's return instead of accepting Lady Xing's decision. This fresh news made her cry more bitterly, and she wanted to appeal to Lady Wang.

Pinger hastily stopped her saying, "Steady on, miss! The Elder Mistress is your grandmother, so in your father's absence she's the one who has the say. Besides, your uncle is acting as guarantor, and they're in cahoots, so how can *you* override them? I'm only a servant, what I say doesn't count. We must think of some way out but on no account act rashly!"

"You'd better be quick about it," said Lady Xing's maid. "Otherwise a sedan-chair will be coming to fetch her!" With that she left.

When Pinger had seen her off, she found Qiaojie prostrated with grief. Helping her up she said, "It's no use crying, miss. We're not in touch with your father, and judging by what they said...."

Before she could finish, a maid arrived from Lady Xing to announce, "The young lady's marriage is fixed! Pinger is to get together all the things she'll be needing. Her dowry can wait till Master Lian comes back."

Pinger had to agree. On her return to the room she found that Lady Wang had called and Qiaojie was weeping in her arms.

"Don't worry, child," said Lady Wang tearfully, "Your grandmother gave me a good ticking-off because I spoke up for you; so I can't see myself talking her round. We shall have to agree but put it off while we send a servant posthaste to tell your father."

"You haven't heard the latest, madam," said Pinger. "This morning Master Huan told Lady Xing it's the rule of the prince's house to fetch the girl there within three days of receiving her horoscope. She's already asked Master Yun to write it out; so how can we wait for Master Lian?"

The news that Jia Huan was behind this made Lady Wang speechless with rage. When she found her tongue again she gave furious orders to have him fetched; but after a long search her maids reported that he had gone out that morning with Jia Qiang and Wang Ren.





夫人问：“芸哥呢？”众人回说：“不知道。”巧姐屋内人人瞪眼，都无方法。王夫人也难和邢夫人争论，只有大家抱头大哭。

正闹着，一个婆子进来回说：“后门上的人说，那个刘姥姥又来了。”王夫人道：“咱们家遭了这样事，那有工夫接待人，不拘怎么回了他去罢。”平儿道：“太太该叫他进来，他是姐儿的干妈，也得告诉告诉他。”王夫人不言语。那婆子便带了刘姥姥进来。各人见了问好。刘姥姥见众人的眼圈儿通红，也摸不着头脑，迟了一会子，问道：“怎么了？太太姑娘们必是想二姑奶奶了。”巧姐儿听见提起他母亲，越发大哭起来。平儿道：“姥姥别说闲话。你既是姑娘的干妈，也该知道的。”便一五一十的告诉了。

把个刘姥姥也唬怔了。等了半天，忽然笑道：“你这样一个伶俐姑娘，没听说过‘鼓儿词’么？这上头的法儿多着呢，这有什么难的！”平儿赶忙问道：“姥姥！你有什么法儿？快说罢！”刘姥姥道：“这有什么难的呢：一个人也不叫他们知道，扔崩一走就完了事了。”平儿道：“这可是混说了！我们这样人家的人，走到那里去？”刘姥姥道：“只怕你们不走，你们要走，就到我屯里去。我就把姑娘藏起来，即刻叫我女婿弄了人，叫姑娘亲笔写个字儿，赶到姑老爷那里，少不得他就来了，可不好么？”平儿道：“大太太知道呢？”刘姥姥道：“我来，他们知道么？”平儿道：“大太太住在前头，他

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“Where is Jia Yun?” she demanded.

“He’s nowhere to be found either.”

They stared at each other in dismay, at a loss. As Lady Wang could hardly take issue with Lady Xing, all they could do was weep.

A serving-woman came in at this point to announce, “The servants at the back gate say that Granny Liu’s here again.”

“In a family crisis like this we’ve no time to entertain visitors,” said Lady Wang. “Put her off with some excuse.”

But Pinger demurred, “Better invite her in, madam. As Qiaojie’s godmother she should be told about this.”

As Lady Wang raised no objection, the serving-woman brought in Granny Liu and greetings were exchanged. Puzzled to find them all with red eyes, Granny Liu presently asked, “What’s wrong? You must have been grieving for Madam Lian again.”

This mention of her mother made Qiaojie weep even more bitterly.

Pinger said, “Let’s not beat about the bush. Since you’re her godmother you ought to know this.” She drew her aside to explain the situation.

Granny Liu was flabbergasted too. After a while, however, she laughed and said, “A clever young lady like you must surely have listened to durm-ballads? They describe plenty of ways and means. It’s not hard to find a way out.”

“What way out have you, granny?” asked Pinger eagerly. “Do tell us quickly.”

“It’s very simple. Don’t say a word to a soul; just up and leave, and that’s that.”

“That’s easier said than done. A young lady from a house like ours, where’s she to go?”

“If you want to spirit her away and don’t mind her coming to my village, I’ll hide the young lady. I’ll get my son-in-law to find a messenger, and she can write a letter in her own hand for him to take to her father, so that he comes back at once. How about that?”

“What if the Elder Mistress finds out?”

“Do they know that I’m here?”

“As her quarters are in the back and she’s such a tartar, nobody

待人刻薄，有什么信，没人送给他的。你若前门走来，就知道了；如今是后门来的，不妨事。”刘姥姥道：“咱们说定了几时，我叫女婿打了车来接了去。”平儿道：“这还等得几时吗？你坐着罢。”急忙进去，将刘姥姥的话，避了旁人告诉了。

王夫人想了半天不妥当。平儿道：“只好这样！为的是太太，才敢说明。太太就装不知道，回来倒问大太太。我们那里就有人去，想二爷回来也快。”王夫人不言语，叹了一口气。巧姐儿听见，便和王夫人道：“求太太救我！横竖父亲回来，只有感激的！”平儿道：“不用说了，太太回去罢。只要太太派人看屋子。”王夫人道：“掩密些！你们两个人的衣服铺盖是要的啊。”平儿道：“要快走才中用呢！若是他们定了回来，就有饥荒了！”一句话提醒了王夫人，便道：“是了，你们快办去罢！有我呢！”于是王夫人回去，倒过去找邢夫人说闲话儿，把邢夫人先绊住了。

平儿这里便遣人料理去了，嘱咐道：“倒别避人！有人进来看见，就说是大太太吩咐的，要一辆车子送刘姥姥去。”这里又买嘱了看后门的人雇了车来。平儿便将巧姐装做青儿模样，急急的去了。后来平儿只当送人，眼错不见，也跨上车去了。原来近日贾府后门虽开，只有一两个人看着，余外虽有几个家下人，因房大人少，空落落的，谁能照应？且邢



passes on any news to her. If you'd come by the front gate she'd have known about it, but not now that you've come in by the back."

"Then let's fix a time, and I'll get my son-in-law to come with a carriage to fetch her."

"That would take too long," said Pinger. "Just wait here a moment." She hurried in and took Lady Wang aside to pass on Granny Liu's proposal.

Lady Wang after thinking it over decided it would not do.

"It's the only way!" pleaded Pinger. "I wouldn't dare propose this to anyone else. You can pretend to be in the dark, madam, and later ask the Elder Mistress where Qiaojie has gone. We'll send to get Master Lian to hurry back."

Lady Wang said nothing but sighed.

Qiaojie who had overheard them begged, "Please come to my rescue, madam! When my father comes home he's bound to be grateful to you!"

"That's settled then," said Pinger. "You'd better go back, madam. We'll just ask you to send someone to look after our house."

"Keep it hushed up!" urged Lady Wang. "And mind you both take clothes and bedding with you."

"We can only pull it off if we leave at once," replied Pinger. "If they come back with everything fixed, then we're sunk!"

"All right. Go and get ready quickly. I'll see to things here." With that Lady Wang went over to see Lady Xing, engaging her in conversation to keep her at home while Pinger sent servants to make preparations.

"Don't sneak out!" she instructed them. "If anybody sees you, just say that the Elder Mistress has ordered a carriage to take Granny Liu home."

So the servants at the back were told to hire a carriage, while Pinger dressed Qiaojie up to look like Qinger and hurried her out. She herself, pretending to be seeing off Granny Liu, slipped into the carriage too when no one was looking; and so they left the mansion. Though the back gate had been open recently, there were only a couple of gatekeepers on duty; and though there were a few other servants around, as the place was so big and practically deserted how could they keep an eye on everything?

夫人又是个不怜下人的。家人明知此事不好，又都感念平儿的好处，所以通同一气，放走了巧姐。邢夫人还自和王夫人说话，那里理会？

只有王夫人甚不放心，说了一回话，悄悄的走到宝钗那里坐下，心里还是惦记着。宝钗见王夫人神色恍惚，便问：“太太的心里有什么事？”王夫人将这事背地里和宝钗说了。宝钗道：“险得很！如今得快快儿的叫芸哥儿止住那里才妥当。”王夫人道：“我找不着环儿呢！”宝钗道：“太太总要装作不知，等我想个人去叫太太知道才好。”王夫人点头，一任宝钗想人，暂且不言。

且说外藩原是要买几个使唤的女人，据媒人一面之辞，所以派人相看。相看的人回去，禀明了藩王，藩王问起人家，众人不敢隐瞒，只得实说。那外藩听了，知是世代勋戚，便说：“了不得！这是有干例禁的，几乎误了大事！况我朝觐已过，便要择日起程。倘有人来再说，快快打发出去！”这日恰好贾芸王仁等递送年庚，只见府门里头的人便说：“奉王爷的命说：敢拿贾府的人来冒充民女者，要拿住究治的！如今太平时候，谁敢这样大胆？”这一嚷，唬得王仁等抱头鼠窜的出来，埋怨那说事的人，大家扫兴而散。

贾环在家候信，又闻王夫人传唤，急得烦躁起来，见贾



Besides, Lady Xing had never shown them the least consideration whereas they were all indebted to Pinger; so although aware that this was wrong they connived at Qiaojie's escape. Lady Xing, still talking with Lady Wang, had no inkling of what was afoot.

Lady Wang, however, was on tenterhooks. After making conversation for a while she slipped over to see Baochai, who observing her distracted air asked what was worrying her. Lady Wang told her in confidence what had happened.

"How dangerous!" exclaimed Baochai. "We must hurry up and stop Yun from going there."

"But I can't find Huan."

"You had better pretend to know nothing about this, madam, while I find someone to inform Lady Xing."

Lady Wang nodded and left it to her; but no more of this for the time being.

Now that prince from the provinces wanted to buy some serving-maids, and on the strength of the go-between's description he sent some of his household to look Qiaojie over. When they reported back to him he asked about her family, and not daring to deceive him they told him the truth.

On learning that she came from an old noble family, the prince exclaimed, "Out of the question! This is strictly forbidden: it would have been a fiasco! Since I have already paid homage at court I must choose a day now to return to my post. If anyone comes to broach this again, send him packing!"

So today when Jia Yun and Wang Ren arrived to present Qiaojie's horoscope, the prince's attendants blustered, "His Highness has given orders: Anyone who tries to pass off a daughter of the Jia family as a common citizen must be arrested and tried! In this reign of peace who dares do such a thing?"

This so terrified Wang Ren and Jia Yun that they scuttled off, complaining that this had not been made clear at the start. They parted crest-fallen.

Jia Huan, back at home waiting for news, was flustered to hear of



芸一人回来，赶着问道：“定了么？”贾芸慌忙跺足道：“了不得，了不得！不知谁露了风了！”还把吃亏的话说了一遍。贾环气得发怔，说：“我早起在大太太跟前说的这样好，如今怎么样处呢？这都是你们众人坑了我了！”

正没主意，听见里头乱嚷，叫着贾环等的名字，说：“大太太二太太叫呢！”两个人只得蹭进去。只见王夫人怒容满面，说：“你们干的好事！如今逼死了巧姐和平儿了。快快的给我找还尸首来完事！”两个人跪下。贾环不敢言语。贾芸低头说道：“孙子不敢干什么。为的是邢舅太爷和王舅爷说给巧妹妹作媒，我们才回太太们的。大太太愿意，才叫孙子写帖儿去的。人家还不要呢，怎么我们逼死了妹妹呢？”王夫人道：“环儿在大太太那里说的，三日内便要抬了走。说亲作媒，有这样的么？我也不问，你们快把巧姐儿还了我们，等老爷回来再说！”邢夫人如今也是一句话儿说不出，只有落泪。王夫人便骂贾环说：“赵姨娘这样混账东西，留的种子也是这混账的！”说着，叫丫头扶了，回到自己房中。

那贾环、贾芸、邢夫人三个人互相埋怨，说道：“如今且不用埋怨。想来死是不死的，必是平儿带了他到那什么亲戚家躲着去了。”邢夫人听了前后的门上人来骂着，问：“巧姐儿和平儿，知道那里去了？”岂知下人一口同音，说是：“大太太不必问我们，问当家的爷们就知道了。在大太太也不用闹，等我们太太问起来，我们有话说。要打大家打，要



Lady Wang's summons. When Jia Yun came back alone his first words were, "Is it settled?"

Jia Yun stamped his foot. "The fat's in the fire! Someone's let the cat out of the bag!" He described the dressing-down they had been given.

In consternation Jia Huan said, "Now what's to be done? After I made it sound so good to the Elder Mistress this morning, you lot have landed me in a proper mess!"

As they were wondering what to do, they heard servants inside calling that Their Ladyships wanted them. Very sheepishly they went in.

Lady Wang looked blackly at them and exclaimed, "A fine thing you've done, hounding Qiaojie and Pinger to death! Hurry up and bring me their bodies!"

The two young men fell on their knees. Jia Huan was too afraid to say a word. Jia Yun with bowed head protested, "We would never have dared, but Grand-Uncle Xing and Uncle Wang proposed this match for Qiaojie, as we reported to Your Ladyships. The Elder Mistress was willing, and told me to write out the horoscope. But that family has turned her down, so how did we hound her to death?"

"Huan told the Elder Mistress she'd be fetched away in three days," snapped Lady Wang. "And that her relatives were the guarantors. Isn't that what you said? Well, I shan't question you now. Hurry up and bring Qiaojie back. You'll have to answer for this when the master returns!" Lady Xing being now reduced to tearful silence, Lady Wang swore at Jia Huan, "Concubine Zhao was a bitch, and she left behind her a misbegotten scoundrel!" She called her maids to help her back to her own quarters.

Jia Huan, Jia Yun and Lady Xing indulged in mutual recriminations, then said, "Well, let's stop blaming each other. They can't really have killed themselves. Pinger must have hidden her in some relative's house."

Lady Xing sent for the gatemens from the front and the back of the house and berated them. "Do you know where Qiaojie and Pinger have gone?" she demanded.

They answered in the same vein, "Don't ask us, madam. Ask the gentlemen in charge. You've no call to storm at us. When our mistress questions us we know what to say. She can have us all beaten or dis-



发大家都发。自从琏二爷出了门，外头闹的还得了！我们的月钱月米是不给了！赌钱喝酒，闹小旦，还接了外头的媳妇儿到宅里来，这不是爷吗？”说得贾芸等顿口无言。

王夫人那边又打发人来催说：“叫爷们快找来！”那贾环等急得恨无地缝可钻，又不敢盘问巧姐那边的人。明知众人深恨，是必藏起来了，但是这句话怎敢在王夫人面前说，只得各处亲戚家打听，毫无踪迹。里头一个邢夫人，外头环儿等，这几天闹的昼夜不宁。

看看到了出场日期，王夫人只盼着宝玉贾兰回来。等到晌午，不见回来，王夫人、李纨、宝钗着忙，打发人去到下处打听。去了一起，又无消息，连去的人也不来了。回来又打发一起人去，又不见回来。三个人心里如热油熬煎。

等到傍晚，有人进来，见是贾兰。众人喜欢，问道：“宝二叔呢？”贾兰也不及请安，便哭道：“二叔丢了！”王夫人听了这话，便怔了半天，也不言语，便直挺挺的躺倒床上。亏得彩云等在后面扶着，下死的叫醒转来，哭着。见宝钗也是白瞪两眼，袭人等已哭得泪人一般，只有哭着骂贾兰道：“糊涂东西！你同二叔在一处，怎么他就丢了？”贾兰道：

“我和二叔在下处是一处吃，一处睡。进了场，相离也不远，刻刻在一处的。今儿一早，二叔的卷子早完了，还等我呢。我们两个人一起去交了卷子，一同出来，在龙门口一挤，回头就不见了。我们家接场的人都问我。李贵还说：

‘看见的，相离不过数步，怎么一挤就不见了？’现叫李贵





missed; but since Master Lian left there've been fine goings-on in the outer quarters! We haven't been issued our monthly allowances. They gamble, get drunk, fool about with young actors, and even bring women from outside into the house. Isn't that so, gentlemen?"

Jia Yun and Jia Huan had nothing to say for themselves, and when Lady Wang sent to order them to find Pinger and Qiaojie immediately they only wished the earth would swallow them up. They did not venture to question Qiaojie's household, knowing that all the maids there, detesting them, would keep her whereabouts secret. Not daring to admit this to Lady Wang, they sent round to other relatives to ask, but in each case drew a blank. So Lady Xing inside and Jia Huan and the others outside were given no peace for several days in a row.

Soon came the day for the examination to end, and Lady Wang was eager for the return of Baoyu and Jia Lan. By the afternoon when there was no sign of them, she, Li Wan and Baochai sent servants out to make inquiries, but they did not come back, having no news. Others were sent, and when these did not return either the three women felt quite distraught.

That evening, to their delight Jia Lan came back.

"Where is your Uncle Bao?" he was asked.

Without stopping to pay his respects he sobbed, "Uncle Bao has disappeared!"

Lady Wang, dumbfounded, collapsed. Luckily Caiyun and others were at hand to carry her to her bed and revive her; but at once she started wailing. Baochai remained speechless, dazed.

Xiren, dissolved in tears, reproached Jia Lan, "Stupid creature! You were with him, how could you lose him?"

"In the hostel we ate and slept in the same place," he told them. "And in the examination grounds our cells weren't too far apart, so we kept in close touch. This morning, Uncle Bao finished his papers first and waited for me to hand them in together. Then we came out together; but in the crowd at the Dragon Gate he disappeared. The servants who'd come to meet us asked me where he was and Li Gui said he'd seen him, just a few yards away, but he'd vanished in the crowd. I sent Li Gui and others to search in different directions while I took some men with me to



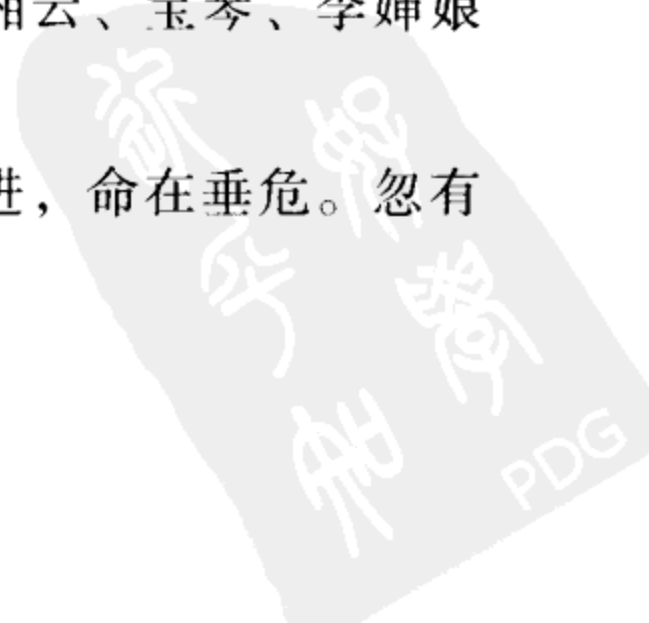
等分头的找去。我也带了人，各处号里都找遍了，没有，我所以这时候才回来。”

王夫人是哭的一句话也说不出；宝钗心里已知八九；袭人痛哭不已；贾蔷等不等吩咐，也是分头而去。可怜荣府的人，个个死多活少，空备了接场的酒饭。贾兰也都忘了辛苦，还要自己找去。倒是王夫人拦住道：“我的儿！你叔叔丢了，还禁得再丢了么？好孩子，你歇歇去罢！”贾兰那里肯走，尤氏等苦劝不止。

众人中只有惜春心里却明白了，只不好说出来，便问宝钗道：“二哥哥带了玉去了没有？”宝钗道：“这是随身的东西，怎么不带？”惜春听了，便不言语。袭人想起那日抢玉的事来，也是料着那和尚作怪，柔肠几断，珠泪交流，呜呜咽咽哭个不住，追想当年宝玉相待的情分：“有时恼他，他便恼了，也有一种令人回心的好处，那温存体贴，是不用说了。若恼急了他，便赌誓说做和尚。谁知今日却应了这句话了！”

不言袭人苦想，却说那天已是四更，并没个信儿。李纨怕王夫人苦坏了，极力劝着回房。众人都跟着伺候，只有邢夫人回去。贾环躲着不敢出来。王夫人叫贾兰去了，一夜无眠。次日天明，虽有家人回来，都说：“没有一处不寻到，实在没有影儿。”于是薛姨妈、薛蝌、史湘云、宝琴、李婶娘等接二连三的过来请安问信。

如此一连数日，王夫人哭得饮食不进，命在垂危。忽有





search all the cells. But he wasn't there. That's why I'm so late back."

Lady Wang was crying too much to speak, Baochai had a fair idea of the truth of the matter, while Xiren was sobbing as if she would never stop. So Jia Qiang without waiting for orders went out with others in different directions to search. In the Rong Mansion, plunged in gloom and half deserted, the banquet to welcome the candidates back went untouched. Forgetting his own exhaustion, Jia Lan wanted to make another search for Baoyu, but Lady Wang restrained him.

"Child, your uncle has disappeared," she said. "We can't have *you* getting lost too. Go and rest now, there's a good boy!"

Still Jia Lan insisted on going, till Madam You and the rest managed to dissuade him.

Xichun, the only one to grasp the truth, could not divulge it. She asked Baochai, "Did Cousin Baoyu take his jade with him?"

"Of course, he always wore it," was the answer, to which Xichun made no reply.

Xiren, recalling her attempt to snatch the jade from Baoyu, suspected the monk of spiriting him away. Her tears fell like pearls as, sobbing and broken-hearted, she remembered Baoyu's past kindness. "Sometimes when I provoked him he lost his temper," she thought. "But he always had the grace to make it up later, to say nothing of his warm-hearted consideration. When I provoked him too much, he swore he'd become a monk. For all we know he may have kept his word!"

By now it was already the fourth watch and there was still no news. Afraid Lady Wang would wear herself out with grief, Li Wan urged her to go and rest, and the others attended her, only Lady Xing going back to her own quarters while Jia Huan skulked out of sight. Lady Wang sent Jia Lan to bed but herself passed a sleepless night.

At dawn, the servants came back to report that they had searched high and low without finding a trace of Baoyu. Then Aunt Xue, Xue Ke, Xiangyun, Baoqin and Aunt Li called in turn to pay their respects and ask for news. This went on for several days, with Lady Wang too grief-stricken to eat.

She was at death's door when a servant announced, "A messenger from the coast says he comes from the Garrison Commander, and our

家人回道：“海疆来了一人，口称统制大人那里来的，说：我们家的三姑奶奶，明日到京了。”王夫人听说探春回京，虽不能解宝玉之愁，那个心略放了些。到了明日，果然探春回来。众人远远接着，见探春出挑得比先前更好了，服采鲜明。看见王夫人形容枯槁，众人眼肿腮红，便也大哭起来，哭了一会，然后行礼。看见惜春道姑打扮，心里很不舒服。又听见宝玉心迷走失，家中多少不顺的事，大家又哭起来。还亏得探春能言，见解亦高，把话来慢慢儿的劝解了好些时，王夫人等略觉好些。至次日，三姑爷也来了，知有这样事，留探春住下劝解。跟探春的丫头老婆也与众姐妹们相聚，各诉别后情事。从此，上上下下的人，竟是无昼无夜，专等宝玉的信。

那一夜五更多天，外头几个家人进来，到二门口报喜。几个小丫头乱跑进来，也不及告诉大丫头了，进了屋子，便说：“太太奶奶们大喜！”王夫人打量宝玉找着了，便喜欢的站起身来说：“在那里找着的？快叫他进来！”那人道：“中了第七名举人。”王夫人道：“宝玉呢？”家人不言语。王夫人仍旧坐下。探春便问：“第七名中的是谁？”家人回说：“是宝二爷。”正说着，外头又嚷道：“兰哥儿中了！”那家人赶忙出去，接了报单回禀，见贾兰中了一百三十名。李纨心下自然喜欢，但因不见了宝玉，不敢喜形于色。王夫人见贾兰中了，心下也是喜欢，只想：“若是宝玉一回来，咱们这些人，不知怎样乐呢！”独有宝钗心下悲苦，又不好掉泪。众人道

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Miss Tanchun will be arriving tomorrow.”

This news relieved Lady Wang’s mind, although she still grieved for Baoyu. And the next day, sure enough, Tanchun came home. They all went out some distance to welcome her and saw that, splendidly dressed, she looked lovelier than ever. At sight of Lady Wang’s haggard looks and the red, swollen eyes of the others, she too broke down and wept before greeting them. It distressed her to see Xichun dressed like a Taoist nun; and when she learned of Baoyu’s disappearance and the family’s many misfortunes they all wept again. Fortunately, with her persuasiveness and good sense she succeeded little by little in consoling Lady Wang to some extent.

The following day Tanchun’s husband also called and, when informed what had happened, urged her to stay for a while to comfort the household. The maids who had accompanied her at the time of her marriage, reunited with their old friends, talked of all that had taken place since their departure; but day and night high and low alike were waiting for word of Baoyu.

One day, after the fifth watch, servants from the outer apartments came to the inner gate to announce good tidings. A few young maids rushed in, without waiting for the senior maids’ permission, and burst out, “Such good news, madam!”

Jumping to the wrong conclusion, Lady Wang stood up elatedly to ask, “Where did they find him? Bring him in at once!”

“He’s come seventh of the successful candidates.”

“But where is he?” When there was no answer she sat down again.

“Who came seventh?” asked Tanchun.

“Master Bao,” they told her.

Then another shout went up outside, “Master Lan has passed too!” The maids hurried out and came back with the announcement that Jia Lan’s name was the hundred-and-thirtieth on the list. Li Wan was naturally overjoyed, but while Baoyu was missing she dared not show it. Lady Wang too was pleased that Jia Lan had passed but thought, “If only Baoyu were to come back how happy we all should be!”

Baochai, the only one still overcome with grief, had to hold back her tears.



喜，说是：“宝玉既有中的命，自然再不会丢的，不过再过两天，必然找的着。”

王夫人等想来不错，略有笑容，众人便趁势劝王夫人等多进了些饮食。只见三门外头焙茗乱嚷说：“我们二爷中了举人，是丢不了的了！”众人问道：“怎么见得？”焙茗道：

“‘一举成名天下闻’！如今二爷走到那里，那里就知道的，谁敢不送来！”里头的众人都说：“这小子虽是没规矩，这句话是不错的。”惜春道：“这样大人了，那里有走失的？只怕他勘破世情，入了空门，这就难找着他了！”这句话又招的王夫人等都大哭起来。李纨道：“古来成佛作祖成神仙的，果然把爵位富贵都抛了，也多得很。”王夫人哭道：

“他若抛了父母，这就是不孝，怎能成佛作祖？”探春道：“大凡一个人，不可有奇处。二哥哥生来带块玉来，都道是好事；这么说起来，都是有了这块玉的不好。若是再有几天不见，——我不是叫太太生气：就有些原故了，只好譬如没有生这位哥哥罢了。果然有来头成了正果，也是太太几辈子的修积。”宝钗听了不言语。袭人那里忍得住，心里一疼，头上一晕，便栽倒了。王夫人看着可怜，命人扶他回去。

贾环见哥哥侄儿中了，又为巧姐的事，大不好意思，只抱怨蔷薇两个。知道探春回来，此事不肯干休，又不敢躲开，这几天竟是如在荆棘之中。





All who offered congratulations said, "Since Baoyu was fated to pass, he's bound to turn up. Besides, now as a successful candidate, he's too well-known to remain lost."

Lady Wang half convinced by this gave a wan smile, whereupon they urged her to take some nourishment.

Beiming outside the third gate was clamouring, "Now that Master Bao has passed, we're certain to find him!" Asked what he meant he explained, "The proverb says: 'A successful candidate's fame spreads throughout the world.' Wherever he goes now, people will know about him and will have to send him back."

Those in the inner apartments commented, "That young fellow has no manners, yet he talks sense."

Xichun, however, countered, "How could a grown man like him get lost? I suspect he's seen through the ways of the world and taken monastic vows, in which case it will be difficult to find him."

This set Lady Wang and the others weeping again.

Li Wan agreed, "Yes, since ancient times many men have given up rank and wealth to achieve Buddhahood and become immortals."

"If he's so unfilial as to abandon his parents, how can he become a Buddha?" sobbed Lady Wang.

"People shouldn't have anything unique about them," Tanchun remarked. "We all thought it a good thing Brother Baoyu being born with that jade; but now it seems all this trouble stems from it. Don't be angry, madam, at what I'm going to say, but if he doesn't turn up in the next few days then there must be some reason, and you'd better consider him as never having been born. If there really is some mystery about him and he becomes a Buddha, this must be owing to your virtue in some previous existence."

Baochai said nothing, but Xiren could not bear her mental anguish — her head reeled and she collapsed. Lady Wang compassionately told some maids to help her back to her room.

Jia Huan was thoroughly mortified by the success of his brother and his nephew on top of Qiaojie's disappearance, for which he held Jia Qiang and Jia Yun to blame. He knew that with Tanchun back this matter would not be dropped, yet he dared not hide himself. These days he felt



次日，贾兰只得先去谢恩，知道甄宝玉也中了，大家序了同年。提起贾宝玉心迷走失，甄宝玉叹息劝慰。知贡举的将考中的卷子奏闻，皇上一一的披阅，看取中的文章，俱是平正通达的。见第七名贾宝玉是金陵籍贯，第一百三十名又是金陵贾兰，皇上传旨询问：“两个姓贾的是金陵人氏，是否贾妃一族？”大臣领命出来，传贾宝玉贾兰问话。贾兰将宝玉场后迷失的话，并将三代陈明，大臣代为转奏。皇上最是圣明仁德，想起贾氏功勋，命大臣查复。大臣便细细的奏明。皇上甚是悯恤，命有司将贾赦犯罪情由，查案呈奏。皇上又看到“海疆靖寇班师善后事宜”一本，奏的是“海宴河清，万民乐业”的事。皇上圣心大悦，命九卿叙功议赏，并大赦天下。

贾兰等朝臣散后，拜了座师，并听见朝内有大赦的信，便回了王夫人等。合家略有喜色，只盼宝玉回来。薛姨妈更加喜欢，便要打算赎罪。

一日，人报甄老爷同三姑爷来道喜，王夫人便命贾兰出去接待。不多一时，贾兰进来，笑嘻嘻的回王夫人道：“太太们大喜了！甄老爷在朝内听见有旨意，说是大爷爷的罪名免了；珍大爷不但免了罪，仍袭了宁国三等世职。荣国世职，仍是爷爷袭了，俟丁忧服满，仍升工部郎中。所抄家产，全行赏还。二叔的文章，皇上看了甚喜。问知元妃兄弟，北静





on thorns.

The next day when Jia Lan went to offer his thanks at court, he learned that Zhen Baoyu had also passed and so they ranked as classmates. Young Zhen, told of Baoyu's mysterious disappearance, expressed his sympathy.

The officer in charge of recommendations presented the papers of the successful candidates to the Emperor, who perused each in turn and found them all perspicuous. Observing that the seventh candidate Jia Baoyu was a native of Jinling, as was the hundred-and-thirtieth Jia Lan, he asked, "Is either of these Jias from Jinling from the same family as the late Imperial Consort?"

His ministers sent for them to question them, then repeated Jia Lan's account of Baoyu's disappearance as well as of their antecedents. Thereupon our sagacious, compassionate Emperor recalled the Jia family's services to the state and ordered his ministers to draw up a detailed memorial on the subject. His Majesty in his great goodness then ordered the bureau in charge to re-investigate Jia She's case and submit their findings to him. He also read in the report "On the Successful Conclusion of the Campaign Against Brigands at the Coast" that "the whole empire is at peace and the people are content." In his delight he ordered his ministers to reward those officials responsible and to proclaim a general amnesty.

After Jia Lan had left the court and thanked his examiner, he heard of the general amnesty and reported it to Lady Wang. The whole family rejoiced and only hoped that Baoyu would now return home. Aunt Xue, even more overjoyed, made ready to ransom Xue Pan.

Then one day it was announced that old Mr. Zhen and Tanchun's husband had called to offer congratulations. Lady Wang sent Jia Lan out to entertain them. Presently he returned to her beaming.

"Wonderful news, madam!" he told her. "Mr. Zhen has heard at court that our Elder Master has been pardoned; and Uncle Zhen has not only been pardoned but is to inherit the Ning Mansion's noble title. Grandfather will keep the title of Duke of Rongguo, and after the period of mourning is to be made vice-minister of the Ministry of Works. All the property confiscated will be returned. The Emperor was impressed by Uncle Bao's



王还奏说人品亦好，皇上传旨召见。众大臣奏称：‘据伊侄贾兰回称出场时迷失，现在各处寻访。’皇上降旨，着五营各衙门用心寻访。这旨意一下，请太太们放心，皇上这样圣恩，再没有找不着的！”王夫人等这才大家称贺，喜欢起来。

只有贾环等心下着急，四处找寻巧姐。那知巧姐随了刘姥姥，带着平儿出了城，到了庄上，刘姥姥也不敢轻褻巧姐，便打扫上房，让给巧姐平儿住下。每日供给，虽是乡村风味，倒也洁净；又有青儿陪着，暂且宽心。那庄上也有几家富户，知道刘姥姥家来了贾府姑娘，谁不来瞧，都道是天上神仙，也有送菜果的，也有送野味的，倒也热闹。内中有一个极富的人家姓周，家财巨万，良田千顷；只有一子，生得文雅清秀，年纪十四岁，他父母延师读书，新近科试，中了秀才。那日他母亲看见巧姐，心里羡慕，自想：“我是庄稼人家，那里配得起这样世家小姐？”只顾呆想。刘姥姥早看出他的心事来，便说：“你的心事我知道了，我给你们做个媒罢。”周妈妈笑道：“你别哄我。他们什么人家，肯给我们庄稼人？”刘姥姥道：“说着瞧罢。”于是两人各自走开。

刘姥姥惦记着贾府，叫板儿进城打听。那日恰好到宁荣街，只见有好些车轿在那里，板儿便在邻近打听。说是：

“宁荣两府复了官，赏还抄的家产，如今府里又要起来了。





essays, and discovered that he is the Imperial Consort's younger brother, whose good character the Prince of Beijing has vouched for. His Majesty summoned him to court and when it was reported that according to his nephew Jia Lan he had disappeared after the examination and a search was being made for him everywhere, the Emperor decreed that all the garrisons of the capital must do their utmost to find him. This decree should set your mind at rest, madam. Now that the Emperor has shown us such favour, Uncle Bao is bound to be found!"

Lady Wang and the rest of the family exchanged jubilant congratulations. Only Jia Huan was frantic as he searched high and low for Qiaojie, who had left the city with Granny Liu and Pinger. In the village Granny Liu treated her with respect, cleaning out the best rooms for her and Pinger to stay in; and though she could only offer them country fare the food was fresh and clean, while with Qinger to keep her company Qiaojie felt quite at home.

When the few well-to-do families in the village heard that a young lady from the Jia Mansion was staying with Granny Liu, they flocked to see her and thought her a goddess come down to earth. Some sent presents of vegetables and fruit, others of game, making quite a commotion. The richest family among them, named Zhou, were millionaires owning a vast estate of good land. Their only son, a handsome, intelligent lad of fourteen for whom his parents had procured a tutor, had just passed the county examination. When his mother saw Qiaojie she thought enviously, "Country folk like us aren't good enough for such a young lady from a noble house."

Granny Liu guessed what she was thinking. "I know what's in your mind," she said. "Let me propose the match."

"Don't make fun of me!" laughed Mrs. Zhou. "Such grand people would never agree to marry her to a family like ours."

"We'll see about that," was the reply. And there the matter rested.

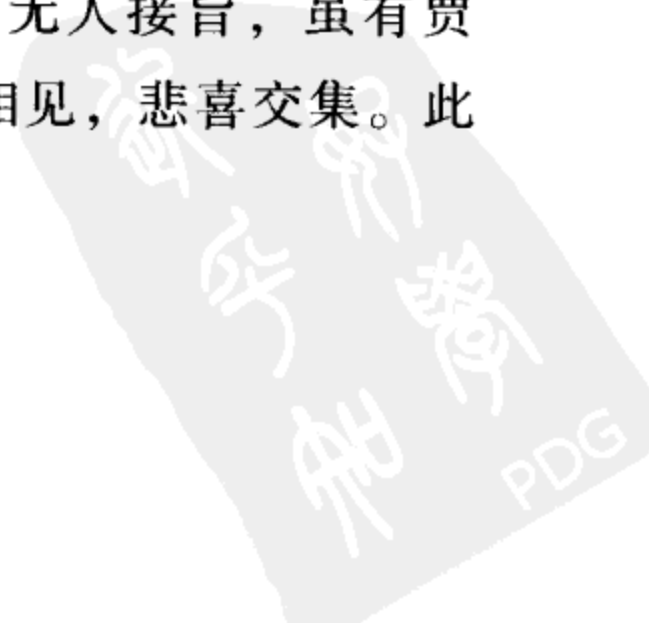
Concerned to know how the Jia family was faring, Granny Liu sent Baner to town to make inquiries. As it happened, he found Rongning Street lined with carriages and sedan-chairs, and people in the neighbourhood informed him, "The heads of the Ning and Rong Mansions are getting back their official posts and their confiscated property.



只是他们的宝玉中了官，不知走到那里去了。”板儿心里喜欢，便要回去。又见好几匹马到来，在门前下马，只见门上打千儿请安，说：“二爷回来了！大喜！大老爷身上安了么？”那位爷笑着道：“好了，又遇恩旨，就要回来了。”还问：“那些人做什么的？”门上回说：“是皇上派官在这里下旨意，叫人领家产。”那位爷便喜喜欢欢的进去。板儿料是贾琏，也不再打听，赶忙回去告诉他外祖母。

刘姥姥听说，喜的眉开眼笑，去给巧姐儿道喜，将板儿的话说了一遍。平儿笑说道：“可是亏了姥姥这样一办！不然，姑娘也摸不着这好时候儿了。”巧姐更自喜欢。正说着，那送贾琏信的人也回来了，说是：“姑老爷感激得很，叫我一到家，快把姑娘送回去。又赏了我好几两银子。”刘姥姥听了得意，便叫人赶了两辆车，请巧姐平儿上车。巧姐等在刘姥姥家住熟了，反是依依不舍，更有青儿哭着，恨不能留下。刘姥姥见他不忍相别，便叫青儿跟了进城，一径直奔荣府而来。

且说贾琏先前知道贾赦病重，赶到配所，父子相见，痛哭一场，渐渐的好起来。贾琏接着家书，知道家中的事，禀明贾赦回来，走到中途，听得大赦，又赶了两天，今日到家，恰遇颁赏恩旨。里面邢夫人等正愁无人接旨，虽有贾兰，终是年轻。人报琏二爷回来，大家相见，悲喜交集。此





They're going up in the world again. Only that Baoyu of theirs who passed the examination has disappeared."

Baner was about to go happily home when some horsemen galloped up and alighted before the gate. The gateman went down on one knee to salute the foremost. "So you're back, Second Master," he cried. "Congratulations! Is the Elder Master better?"

"He is," was the smiling answer. "Thanks to the Imperial favour, he will be home very soon. Whose are all these carriages?"

The gateman reported, "Imperial envoys have been sent to order us to fetch back the family property." Then the gentleman went in as if walking on air, and Baner guessed that he must be Jia Lian. Without making further inquiries, he hurried back to tell his grandmother.

When Granny Liu heard this news, beaming with smiles she passed it on to Qiaojie with her congratulations.

Pinger exclaimed, "What a lot we owe you, granny! If not for the way you fixed things, our young lady wouldn't be so happily placed today." Qiaojie was still more delighted.

As they were chatting, the messenger who had taken her letter to Jia Lian came back to report, "Master Lian is extremely grateful and told me, as soon as I reached home, to escort the young lady back. He rewarded me too with several taels of silver."

Granny Liu, gratified to hear this, had two carts prepared for them and urged Qiaojie to mount one. But by now she felt so at home here that she was reluctant to leave, while Qinger burst into tears, unwilling to part with her. Seeing this, Granny Liu told Qinger to go with them, and together they drove straight back to the Rong Mansion.

Earlier on, when Jia Lian had heard that his father was mortally ill and sped to his place of exile, they had wept on meeting again; but gradually Jia She recovered. When Qiaojie's letter arrived, Jia Lian told his father what had happened at home and promptly started back. On the way he heard of the general amnesty, and pressing on for another two days he reached home just as the Imperial decree had been brought. Lady Xing was worried because there was no one to receive it, Jia Lan being too young. Now Jia Lian's return was announced, and both joy and sadness



时也不及叙话，即到前厅，叩见了。钦命大人问了他父亲好，说：“明日到内府领赏。宁国府第，发交居住。”众人起身辞别。

贾琏送出门去，见有几辆屯车，家人们不许停歇，正在吵闹，贾琏早知道是巧姐来的车，便骂家人道：“你们这一起糊涂忘八崽子！我不在家，就欺心害主，将姐儿都逼走了，如今人家送来，还要拦阻！必是你们和我有什么仇么？”众家人原怕贾琏回来不依，想来少时才破，岂知贾琏说得更明，心下不懂，只得站着回道：“二爷出门，奴才们有病的，有告假的，都是三爷、蔷大爷、芸二爷作主，不与奴才们相干。”贾琏道：“什么混账东西！我完了事，再和你们说。快把车赶进来！”

贾琏进去，见邢夫人也不言语，转身到了王夫人那里，跪下磕了个头，回道：“姐儿回来了，全亏太太周全！环兄弟也不用说他了。只是芸儿这东西，他上回看家，就闹乱儿；如今我去了几个月，便闹到这样。回太太的话：这种人，撵了他，不往来也使得的！”王夫人道：“王仁这下流种子为什么也是这样坏！”贾琏道：“太太不用说了，我自有道理。”

正说着，彩云等回道：“姐儿进来了。”于是巧姐儿见了王夫人，虽然别不多时，想起那样逃难的景况，不免落下泪来。巧姐儿也便大哭。贾琏忙过来道谢了刘姥姥。王夫人便拉他坐下，说起那日的话来。贾琏见了平儿，外面不好说别的，心里十分感激，眼中不觉流泪。自此，益发敬重平儿，

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attended this reunion, but having no time to stop and talk he hurried to the front hall to pay homage.

The Imperial envoys asked after his father and instructed him, "Come tomorrow to the Imperial Treasury to receive your bounty. The Ning Mansion is yours to live in again." With that they took their leave.

When Jia Lian escorted them out, he saw several countrified carts which the servants were forbidding to draw up there. He knew from the altercation going on that Qiaojie had come back.

"Stupid bastards!" he swore at the servants. "When I was away you swindled us, forcing my daughter to flee, and now that they're bringing her back you bar the way! What grudge have you got against me?"

The servants had been afraid that Jia Lian on his return would bring them to book, not grasping the situation; but to their surprise he knew more about it than they did. Standing at respectful attention they reported, "After you left, sir, some of us fell ill, some had to ask for leave. Master Huan, Master Qiang and Master Yun were in charge — we had nothing to do with this."

"You scoundrels!" he swore. "When I'm through with my business I'll deal with you. Let those carts in at once!"

When Jia Lian went inside again he ignored Lady Xing. Going instead to Lady Wang's apartments he knelt down and kowtowed to her. "Qiaojie is back safe and sound, all thanks to you, madam!" he said. "I'll leave Cousin Huan out of this, but Yun is a rascal who made trouble before when left in charge of the house. Now I've only been away a couple of months, yet look at the chaos here! A fellow like this, I suggest we drive him away and have no more to do with him!"

"That wretch Wang Ren is just as bad," she complained.

"Don't worry, madam. I know how to deal with them."

As they were talking, Caiyun announced Qiaojie, and the girl paid her respects to Lady Wang. They had not been parted long, yet the thought of her narrow escape moved them both to tears, Qiaojie weeping bitterly. Jia Lian lost no time in thanking Granny Liu, and Lady Wang made the old woman sit beside her to talk over recent events. When Jia Lian saw Pinger he shed tears of gratitude, although he could not express his feelings in public. And so much had she risen in his estimation that he de-



打算等贾赦回来，要扶平儿为正。此是后话，暂且不提。

只说邢夫人正恐贾琏不见了巧姐，必有一番的周折；又听见贾琏在王夫人那里，心下更是着急，便叫丫头去打听。回头说是巧姐儿同着刘姥姥在那里说话儿呢，邢夫人才如梦初觉，知是他们弄鬼，还抱怨王夫人：“调唆的我母子不和！到底不知是哪个送信给平儿的？”正问着，只见巧姐同着刘姥姥，带了平儿，王夫人在后头跟着进来，先把头里的话都说在贾芸王仁身上，说：“太太原是听见人说，为的是好事。那里知道外头的鬼？”邢夫人听了，自觉羞惭，想起王夫人主意不差，心里也服。于是邢王二夫人，彼此倒心下相安了。

平儿回了王夫人，带了巧姐到宝钗那里来请安；各自提各自的苦处。又说到：“皇上隆恩，咱们家该兴旺起来了。想来宝二爷必回来的。”正说到这句话，只见秋纹慌慌张张的跑来说道：“袭人不好了！”不知何事，且听下回分解。



cided, after his father's return, to ask to have her promoted to be his wife. But this is anticipating.

Lady Xing had feared ructions when Jia Lian found Qiaojie missing. The news that he had gone to see Lady Wang alarmed her even more, and she sent a maid to find out what was afoot. When the girl came back to report that Qiaojie and Granny Liu were talking there too, Lady Xing at last realized the trick played on her and suspected Lady Wang of setting her son against her. "But who could have sent Pinger word?" she fumed.

Just then Qiaojie came in with Granny Liu and Pinger, followed by Lady Wang who laid the whole blame on Jia Yun and Wang Ren.

"When you heard their proposal, you naturally thought it a good one," she said. "How were you to know what they were up to outside?"

Abashed, Lady Xing admitted to herself that Lady Wang had made the right decision. After this, these two mistresses were on better terms.

Upon leaving Lady Wang, Pinger took Qiaojie to see Baochai, and each confided her troubles to the other.

Pinger told them, "The Emperor has shown us such favour that now our family should prosper again. I'm sure Master Bao will come back."

Just then Qiuwen came running in frantically. "Xiren is dying!" she cried. If you want to know what had happened, read the next chapter.





## 第一百二十回

### 甄士隐详说太虚情 贾雨村归结红楼梦

话说宝钗听秋纹说袭人不好，连忙进去瞧看，巧姐儿同平儿也随着。走到袭人炕前，只见袭人心痛难禁，一时气厥。宝钗等用开水灌了过来，仍旧扶他睡下，一面传请大夫。巧姐儿因问宝钗道：“袭人姐姐怎么病到这个样儿？”宝钗道：“大前儿晚上，哭伤了心了，一时发晕栽倒了。太太叫人扶他回来，他就睡倒了。因外头有事，没有请大夫瞧他，所以致此。”说着，大夫来了，宝钗等略避。大夫看了脉，说是急怒所致，开了方子去了。

原来袭人模糊听见说，宝玉若不回来，便要打发屋里的人都出去，一急，越发不好了。到大夫瞧后，秋纹给他煎药，他各自一个躺着，神魂未定，好像宝玉在他面前，恍惚又像是见个和尚，手里拿着一本册子揭着看，还说道：“你不是我的人，日后自然有人家儿的。”袭人似要和他说话，秋纹走来说：“药好了，姐姐吃罢。”袭人睁眼一瞧，知是个梦，也不告诉人。吃了药，便自己细细的想：“宝玉必是跟了和尚去。上回他要拿玉出去，便是要脱身的样子。被我揪住，看他竟不像往常，把我混推混揉的，一点情意都没有；后来待二奶奶更生厌烦；在别的姊妹跟前，也是没有一点情



## Chapter 120

### Zhen Shiyin Expounds the Illusory Realm Jia Yucun Concludes the Dream of Red Mansions

On hearing from Qiuwen that Xiren was dying, Baochai hurried to her bedside with Qiaojie and Pinger. Finding her unconscious after a heart attack they revived her with a drink of boiled water, then laid her down again and sent for a doctor.

“How did Sister Xiren fall so ill?” Qiaojie asked.

Baochai explained, “The other evening she wept so bitterly that she fainted away. The mistress made people help her back to sleep; but because of that commotion outside we didn’t get her a doctor.”

The doctor arriving just then, they withdrew. After taking her pulse he attributed her illness to anxiety and anger, and made out a prescription accordingly.

Now Xiren had heard it rumoured that if Baoyu failed to return all his maids would be dismissed, and anxiety on this score aggravated her illness. After the doctor had gone Qiuwen brewed medicine for her, but lying there alone she had no peace of mind. She seemed to see Baoyu before her, then had a hazy vision of a monk who was leafing through an album and who told her, “Don’t make a wrong decision. I’m having nothing more to do with you.”

Before she could question him, Qiuwen came over saying, “Here’s your medicine. Drink it up, sister.”

Xiren opened her eyes and kept to herself what she now knew had been a dream. When she had drunk the medicine she reflected, “Baoyu must have left with the monk. That time when he tried to take the jade out, he looked as if he wanted to escape. When I stopped him he wasn’t his usual self, the rough way he pushed and shoved me without any feeling at all; and later he had less patience with Madam Bao and not the least feeling for the other girls either, as if he’d awoken to the Truth. But



意：这就是悟道的样子。但是你悟了道，抛了二奶奶怎么好？我是太太派我服侍你，虽是月钱照着那样的分例，其实我究竟没有在老爷太太跟前回明，就算了你的屋里人。若是老爷太太打发我出去，我若死守着，又叫人笑话；若是我出去，心想宝玉待我的情分，实在不忍！”左思右想，万分难处。想到刚才的梦，“说我是别人的人，那倒不如死了干净！”岂知吃药以后，心痛减了好些，也难躺着，只好勉强支持。过了几日，起来服侍宝钗。宝钗想念宝玉，暗中垂泪，自叹命苦。又知他母亲打算给哥哥赎罪，很费张罗，不能不帮着打算。暂且不表。

且说贾政扶贾母灵柩，贾蓉送了秦氏、凤姐、鸳鸯的棺木到了金陵，先安了葬。贾蓉自送黛玉的灵，也去安葬。贾政料理坟墓的事。一日，接到家书，一行一行的看到宝玉贾兰得中，心里自是喜欢；后来看到宝玉走失，复又烦恼。只得赶忙回来。在道儿上又闻得有恩赦的旨意，又接着家书，果然赦罪复职，更是喜欢，便日夜趲行。

一日，行到昆陵驿地方，那天乍寒，下雪，泊在一个清静去处。贾政打发众人上岸投帖，辞谢朋友，总说即刻开船，都不敢劳动。船上只留一个小厮伺候，自己在船中写家书，先要打发人起早到家。写到宝玉的事，便停笔。抬头忽见船头上微微的雪影里面一个人，光着头，赤着脚，身上披着一领大红猩猩毡的斗篷，向贾政倒身下拜。贾政尚未认



even so, how can you abandon your wife? I was sent by the mistress to wait on you, and though I've been getting the monthly allowance of a concubine, this was never publicly announced to the masters and mistresses. If they dismiss me and I insist on staying, people will laugh at me; yet if I leave I shan't be able to bear it, remembering how good Baoyu was to me." She could not resolve this dilemma until recalling her dream in which it had been implied that she and Baoyu were destined to part she decided, "Better die and be done with it."

The medicine had eased the pain in her heart, yet she had to lie there in discomfort for several days before getting up again to wait on Baochai. The latter secretly shed tears of longing for Baoyu, lamenting her wretched fate; however, since her mother was preparing to ransom her brother, there was much to attend to and she had to help out. But no more of this for the present.

Jia Zheng escorting the old lady's coffin, and Jia Rong those of Keqing, Xifeng and Yuanyang, had now reached Jinling where they had them interred. Then Jia Rong took Daiyu's coffin to be buried in her ancestral graveyard, leaving Jia Zheng to supervise the building of the tombs. One day he received a letter from home, and the news that Baoyu and Jia Lan had passed the examination delighted him; but Baoyu's disappearance so perturbed him that he felt constrained to hurry back at once. On the way he heard of the general amnesty and received another letter from home confirming his pardon and official reinstatement. Much heartened, he pressed on rapidly day and night.

The day they reached the Piling post station, it suddenly turned cold and began to snow, and their boat moored in a secluded spot. Jia Zheng sent servants ashore to deliver cards to friends in that locality, and to explain that he had no time to call and they should not trouble to call on him either, as the boat would be leaving again immediately. Only one page remained to wait on him as he wrote a letter to send home by a messenger travelling ahead by road. Before broaching the subject of Baoyu he paused. Looking up through the snow, he glimpsed at the prow of the boat a figure with a shaven head and bare feet, draped in a red felt cape. This man prostrated himself before Jia Zheng, who hurried out of



清，急忙出船，欲待扶住问他是谁。那人已拜了四拜，站起来打了个问讯。贾政才要还揖，迎面一看，不是别人，却是宝玉。贾政吃一大惊，忙问道：“可是宝玉么？”那人只不言语，似喜似悲。贾政又问道：“你若是宝玉，如何这样打扮，跑到这里来？”宝玉未及回言，只见船头上来了两人，一僧一道，夹住宝玉道：“俗缘已毕，还不快走？”说着，三个人飘然登岸而去。贾政不顾地滑，疾忙来赶，见那三人在前，那里赶得上？只听得他们三人口中不知是哪个作歌曰：

我所居兮，青埂之峰；我所游兮，鸿蒙太空。谁与我逝兮，吾谁与从？渺渺茫茫兮，归彼大荒！

贾政一面听着，一面赶去，转过一小坡，倏然不见。贾政已赶得心虚气喘，惊疑不定。回过头来，见自己的小厮也随后赶来，贾政问道：“你看见方才那三个人么？”小厮道：“看见的。奴才为老爷追赶，故也赶来。后来只见老爷，不见那三个人了。”贾政还欲前走，只见白茫茫一片旷野，并无一人。贾政知是古怪，只得回来。

众家人回船，见贾政不在舱中，问了船夫，说是老爷上岸追赶两个和尚一个道士去了。众人也从雪地里寻踪迎去，远远见贾政来了，迎上去接着，一同回船。贾政坐下，喘息方定，将见宝玉的话说了一遍。众人回禀，便要在这地方寻觅。贾政叹道：“你们不知道！这是我亲眼见的，并非鬼怪。况听得歌声，大有玄妙。宝玉生下时，衔了玉来，便有古

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the cabin, meaning to raise him up and see who he was, but the man had already kowtowed four times, then stood up and made him a Buddhist salutation. Jia Zheng was about to bow in return when he recognized his son.

“Is it Baoyu?” he asked in amazement.

The other made no answer, looking torn between grief and joy.

“If you are Baoyu, what are you doing here, and in this costume?” Jia Zheng asked again.

Before Baoyu could reply, a monk and a Taoist priest appeared, each taking one of his arms. “Your worldly obligations have been fulfilled,” they declared. “Why delay your departure?” Then all three of them glided ashore.

Though it was slippery underfoot, Jia Zheng hurried after them but could not overtake them. However, he heard one of them chant:

My home is Blue Ridge Peak,  
I roam the primeval void.  
Who will go with me to keep me company,  
Returning to the Great Waste of infinity!

Jia Zheng pursued them round a slope, only to find they had vanished. Limp and out of breath, his heart misgave him. Turning, he found that the page had followed him.

“Did you see those three men just now?” Jia Zheng asked.

“Yes, sir. As you were running after them I came too. But then I lost sight of those three.”

Jia Zheng was tempted to go on, but in the white wilderness there was no one in sight. Marvelling, he had to turn back.

When the servants returned and found their master gone, the boatman told them that he had gone ashore in pursuit of two monks and a Taoist priest. They followed his footprints in the snow and, seeing him approaching in the distance, went to meet him and escorted him back to the boat. After he had sat down and caught his breath he told them of his encounter with Baoyu. They suggested searching the vicinity.

“You don’t understand,” he sighed. “I saw them with my own eyes, they were not apparitions. And I heard them chanting a most occult poem. When Baoyu was born with jade in his mouth, I knew it was uncanny and





怪，我早知是不祥之兆，为的是老太太疼爱，所以养育到今。便是那和尚道士，我也见了三次：头一次，是那僧道来说玉的好处；第二次，便是宝玉病重，他来了，将那玉持诵了一番，宝玉便好了；第三次，送那玉来，坐在前厅，我一转眼就不见了。我心里便有些诧异，只道宝玉果真有造化，高僧仙道来护佑他的。岂知宝玉是下凡历劫的，竟哄了老太太十九年！如今叫我才明白！”说到这里，掉下泪来。

众人道：“宝二爷果然是下凡的和尚，就不该中举人了。怎么中了才去？”贾政道：“你们那里知道？大凡天上星宿，山中老僧，洞里的精灵，他自具一种性情。你看宝玉何尝肯念书？他若略一经心，无有不能的。他那一种脾气，也是各别另样！”说着，又叹了几声。众人便拿兰哥得中、家道复兴的话解了一番。贾政仍旧写家书，便把这事写上，劝谕合家不必想念了。写完封好，即着家人回去，贾政随后赶回。暂且不提。

且说薛姨妈得了赦罪的信，便命薛蝌去各处借贷，并自己凑齐了赎罪银两。刑部准了，收兑了银子，一角文书，将薛蟠放出。他们母子姊妹弟兄见面，不必细述，自然是悲喜交集了。薛蟠自己立誓说道：“若是再犯前病，必定犯杀犯剐！”薛姨妈见他这样，便握他的嘴，说：“只要自己拿定主



boded no good; but because the old lady doted on him we brought him up all these years. As for the monk and the priest, I have seen them three times. The first time was when they came to explain the miraculous nature of the jade; the second time, when Baoyu was so ill and the monk took the jade in his hand and intoned some incantation to cure him; the third time, when he brought back the jade and I saw him sitting in the front hall, then all of a sudden he vanished. Although that increased my misgivings, I thought Baoyu fortunate to have the protection of these Buddhist and Taoist saints. Little did I know that Baoyu was a spirit who had come to earth to undergo certain trials, and who managed to fool the old lady for nineteen years! Only now is it clear to me.” He shed tears.

“If Master Bao was really a Buddhist saint, he shouldn’t have become a *juren*,” they objected. “Why take the official examination then leave?”

“You don’t understand that all the stars in the heavens, the saints in the mountains and the spirits in caves have each their own different nature. Baoyu never showed any inclination to study, yet he’d only to glance at a book to master it. By temperament, too, he was different from other people.” He sighed again.

They consoled him with talk of Jia Lan’s success and the improvement in the family’s fortunes. Then Jia Zheng went on with his letter, describing this incident and urging the family not to grieve. He sealed the letter and sent it off with a servant, then continued on his way. No more of this.

Aunt Xue, after hearing of the amnesty, told Xue Ke to raise loans in various quarters until she had enough to ransom her son. The Board of Punishments sanctioned this and after receiving the money issued an order for Xue Pan’s release. We need not dwell on their family reunion with its natural intermingling of joy and sorrow.

“If I ever run amuck again,” swore Xue Pan, “may I be killed and disembowelled!”

His mother stopped his mouth. “Just make up your mind to it instead of raving. Why must you swear such a blood-curdling oath?” she scolded. “Now I’ve a proposal to make. Xiangling’s had so much to put up with



意，必定还要妄口巴舌血淋淋的起这样恶誓么？只是香菱跟你受了多少苦处，你媳妇儿已经自己治死自己了，如今虽说穷了，这碗饭还有得吃：据我的主意，我便算他是媳妇了。你心里怎么样？”薛蟠点头愿意。宝钗等也说：“很该这样。”倒把香菱急得脸胀通红，说是：“伏侍大爷一样的，何必如此？”众人便称起“大奶奶”来，无人不服。

薛蟠便要去拜谢贾家。薛姨妈宝钗也都过来。见了众人，彼此聚首，又说了一番的话。正说着，恰好那日贾政的家人回家，呈上书子，说：“老爷不日到了。”王夫人叫贾兰将书子念给听。贾兰念到贾政亲见宝玉的一段，众人听了，都痛哭起来，王夫人、宝钗、袭人等更甚。大家又将贾政书内叫家内不必悲伤，原是借胎的话解说了一番：“与其作了官，倘或命运不好，犯了事，坏家败产，那时倒不好了，宁可咱们家出一位佛爷，倒是老爷太太的积德，所以才投到咱们家来。不是说句不顾前后的话：当初东府里太爷，倒是修炼了十几年，也没有成了仙。这佛是更难成的！太太这么一想，心里便开豁了。”王夫人哭着和薛姨妈道：“宝玉抛了我，我还恨他呢！我叹的是媳妇的命苦，才成了一二年的亲，怎么他就硬着肠子，都撂下了走了呢！”薛姨妈听了，也甚伤心。

宝钗哭得人事不知。所有爷们都在外头。王夫人便说道：“我为他担了一辈子的惊，刚刚儿的娶了亲，中了举人，又知道媳妇作了胎，我才喜欢些，不想弄到这样结局！早知

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since becoming your concubine, that now that your wife has killed herself and poor though we are we can still make ends meet, I suggest making her my daughter-in-law. What do you think?"

Xue Pan nodded his agreement.

"Quite right and proper," agreed Baochai and the rest.

Xiangling flushing crimson protested, "I shall go on serving the master as his maid. There's no need to raise my status."

Thereupon they started addressing her as the young mistress, and none of the household objected.

Then Xue Pan went to thank the Jia family, and Aunt Xue and Baochai went over too. When all were assembled and they had talked for a while, Jia Zheng's messenger arrived and presented his letter, announcing that the master would soon be home. Lady Wang made Jia Lan read the letter out, and when he reached the passage describing the encounter with Baoyu the whole family wept, Lady Wang, Baochai and Xiren being the most affected. They discussed Jia Zheng's injunction to them not to mourn for Baoyu because he was a reincarnated spirit.

One said, "If he'd become an official then had the misfortune to get into trouble and ruin the family, that would have been worse. It's better to have produced a Bodhisattva, thanks to the virtue of our master and mistress. In fact, Lord Jing of the East Mansion practised alchemy for more than ten years yet never became an immortal. It's harder still to become a Bodhisattva! If you look at it this way, madam, you'll feel better."

Lady Wang confided tearfully to Aunt Xue, "I don't blame Baoyu for deserting me, it's my daughter-in-law's cruel fate that upsets me most. When they'd only just been married a couple of years, how heartless it was of him to abandon her!" This made Aunt Xue's heart ache too.

Baochai, weeping, was oblivious to all around her; and as the men of the family had withdrawn to the outer apartments, Lady Wang went on, "He kept me on tenterhooks all those years, till he got married and passed the examination and I was pleased to hear that Baochai was pregnant. To think it should end like this! If I'd known, I wouldn't have found him a wife or ruined your daughter's life!"

"This was their fate," Aunt Xue answered. "What else could fami-

这样，就不该娶亲，害了人家的姑娘！”薛姨妈道：“这是自己一定的。咱们这样人家，还有什么别的说的吗？幸喜有了胎，将来生个外孙子，必定是有成立的，后来就有了结果了。你看大奶奶，如今兰哥儿中了举人，明年成了进士，可不是就做了官了么？他头里的苦也算吃尽的了，如今的甜来，也是他为人的好处。我们姑娘的心肠儿，姐姐是知道的，并不是刻薄轻佻的人，姐姐倒不必耽忧。”

王夫人被薛姨妈一番言语说得极有理，心想：“宝钗小时候，便是廉静寡欲，极爱素淡的，他所以才有这个事。想人生在世，真有个定数的！看着宝钗虽是痛哭，他那端庄样儿，一点不走，却倒来劝我，这是真真难得！不想宝玉这样一个人，红尘中福分，竟没有一点儿！”想了一回，也觉解了好些。又想到袭人身上：“若说别的丫头呢，没有什么难处的：大的配了出去，小的伏侍二奶奶就是了。独有袭人，可怎么处呢？”此时人多，也不好说，且等晚上和薛姨妈商量。

那日薛姨妈并未回家，因恐宝钗痛哭，住在宝钗房中解劝。那宝钗却是极明理，思前想后：宝玉原是一种奇异的人，夙世前因，自有一定，原无可怨天尤人。更将大道理的话告诉他母亲了，薛姨妈心里反倒安慰，便到王夫人那里，先把宝钗的话说了。王夫人点头叹道：“若说我无德，不该有这样好媳妇了！”说着更又伤心起来。

薛姨妈倒又劝了一会子，因又提起袭人来，说：“我见袭人近来瘦的了不得，他是一心想着宝哥儿。但是正配呢，理应守的；屋里人愿守也是有的。惟有这袭人，虽说是算个屋里人，到底他和宝哥儿并没有过明路儿的。”王夫人道：“我才刚想着，正要等妹妹商量商量。若说放他出去，恐怕



lies like ours have done? It's lucky that she's with child. If she gives birth to a son, he's bound to make good and all's well that ends well. Look at your elder daughter-in-law: now Lan's *juren* and next year he'll be a court scholar — doesn't that mean that he'll become an official? After all that bitterness, she's having a taste of sweetness now to reward her for her goodness. You know my daughter, sister. She's not flighty or petty-minded; you needn't worry about her."

Lady Wang, convinced of the truth of this, reflected, "Baochai was always a quiet, unassuming child with simple tastes; that's why this has happened to *her*. It seems that everyone's lot in life is predestined! Though she wept so bitterly, she retained all her dignity and even tried to console me — she's really one in a thousand. What a pity, though, that a boy like Baoyu lost out on his share of good fortune in this dusty world!" Comforted by these reflections she went on to consider Xiren's case and thought, "The other maids are easily disposed of: the older ones can be married off and the younger ones kept here to wait on Baochai. But what's to be done about Xiren?" As there were others present, she decided to discuss this with Aunt Xue that evening.

Aunt Xue did not go home that day, staying with her heart-broken daughter to comfort her. However, Baochai showed her usual good sense, saying that it was no use complaining as Baoyu had been someone quite unique and this had been fated to happen. When she spoke so reasonably her mother, much relieved, went over to tell Lady Wang what she had said.

Lady Wang nodded. "I wouldn't deserve such a good daughter-in-law if I hadn't done some good deeds!" she sighed, giving way to grief again.

Aunt Xue consoled her for a while then raised another question. "Xiren's only the shadow of her old self, what with pining for Baoyu," she said. "The proper wife should stay at home as a widow, and sometimes a concubine wants to do the same; but in Xiren's case, her relationship with Baoyu was never made public."

"Exactly," said Lady Wang. "This is just what I wanted to talk over with you. If we dismiss her, I'm afraid she'll be unwilling, or threaten to kill herself; but I doubt whether my husband would agree to keeping her



他不愿意，又要寻死觅活的；若要留着他也罢，又恐老爷不依：所以难处。”薛姨妈道：“我看姨老爷是再不肯叫守着的。再者，姨老爷并不知道袭人的事，想来不过是个丫头，那有留的理呢？只要姐姐叫他本家的人来，狠狠的吩咐他，叫他配一门正经亲事，再多多的陪送他些东西。那孩子心肠儿也好，年纪儿又轻，也不枉跟了姐姐会子，也算姐姐待他不薄了。袭人那里，还得我细细劝他。就是叫他家的人来，也不用告诉他；只等他家里果然说定了好人家儿，我们还打听打听，若果然足衣足食，女婿长的像个人儿，然后叫他出去。”王夫人听了，道：“这个主意很是。不然，叫老爷冒冒失失的一办，我可不是又害了一个人了么？”薛姨妈听了，点头道：“可不是么？”又说了几句，便辞了王夫人仍到宝钗房中去了。看见袭人泪痕满面，薛姨妈便劝解譬喻了一会。袭人本来老实，不是伶牙利齿的人，薛姨妈说一句，他应一句，回来说道：“我是做下人的人，姨太太瞧得起我，才和我说这些话。我是从不敢违拗太太的。”薛姨妈听他的话，“好一个柔顺的孩子！”心里更加喜欢。宝钗又将大义的话说了一遍，大家各自相安。

过了几日，贾政回家，众人迎接。贾政见贾赦贾珍已都回家，弟兄叔侄相见，大家历叙别来的景况。然后内眷们见了，不免想起宝玉来，又大家伤了一会子心。贾政喝住道：“这是一定的道理！如今只要我们在外把持家事，你们在内相助，断不可仍是从前这样的散漫！别房的事，各有各家料理，也不用承总。我们本房的事，里头全归于你，都要按理而行。”王夫人便将宝钗有孕的话也告诉了，“将来丫头们都放出去。”贾政听了，点头无语。



on. That's our dilemma."

"I'm sure he would never agree, especially as he doesn't know her position and thinks her simply a maid, with no reason to stay on here. You'll have to get one of her family to come, insist on them finding her a respectable husband, then give her a generous dowry. Being a sensible girl and still young, she should realize that she hasn't served you for nothing and that you've treated her quite handsomely, sister. I shall have a good talk with her too. Even after you've sent for one of her family, you needn't tell her about it until a good match has been fixed up and we've made sure that the family's well-off and the man's presentable. Then we can send her away."

"That's an excellent idea. Otherwise, if I let the master dispose of her off-hand wouldn't that be the ruin of her?"

Aunt Xue nodded her agreement and after some further talk went to see Baochai. Finding Xiren still in tears there she tried to console her; and the good-hearted girl, not being acrimonious, agreed to all she said.

"It's good of you to talk like this to a serving-maid, madam," said Xiren. "I should never dream of disobeying the mistress."

Aunt Xue felt even more drawn to her, finding her so submissive. Baochai also spoke of a woman's duties in life, and so they found themselves in complete accord.

A few days later, Jia Zheng arrived home and all the men went out to welcome him. By now Jia She and Jia Zhen were also back and, meeting again, they described their experiences since parting. But the women of the house, when they saw Jia Zheng, could not help grieving at the thought of Baoyu.

Jia Zheng urged them not to be distressed, telling Lady Wang, "This was fated. From now on those of us outside will have to manage the family affairs with your assistance inside, on no account letting things slide as we did before. The different households can see to their own affairs; there is no need for a general manager. You can decide, as you think right, on everything done in our family's inner apartments."

When Lady Wang told him that Baochai was with child and suggested dismissing Baoyu's former maids, he simply nodded in silence.

The next day Jia Zheng went to court to ask the chief ministers how



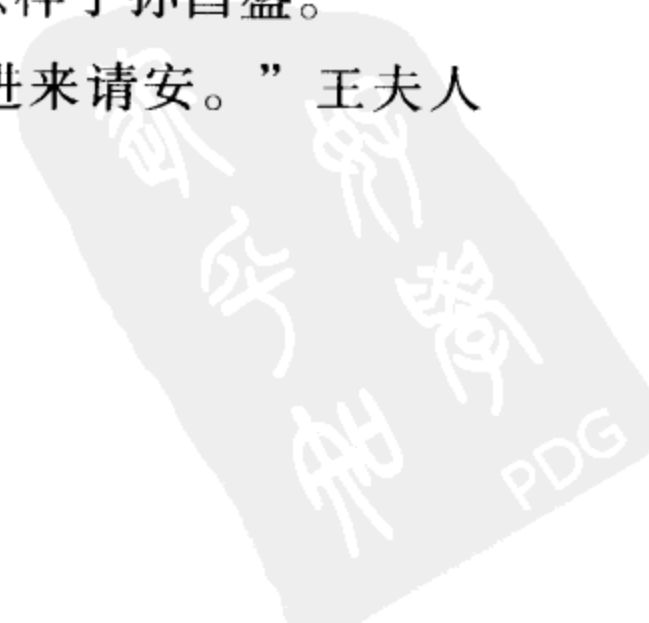


次日，贾政进内请示大臣们，说是：“蒙恩感激。但未服阙，应该怎么谢恩之处，望乞大人们指教。”众朝臣说是代奏请旨。于是圣恩浩荡，即命陛见。贾政进内谢了恩。圣上又降了好些旨意，又问起宝玉的事来。贾政据实回奏。圣上称奇，旨意说：宝玉的文章固是清奇，想他必是过来人，所以如此。若在朝中，可以进用；他既不敢受圣朝的爵位，便赏了一个“文妙真人”的道号。

贾政又叩头谢恩而出，回到家中，贾琏贾珍接着。贾政将朝内的话述了一遍，众人喜欢。贾珍便回说：“宁国府第，收拾齐全，回明了要搬过去。栊翠庵圈在园内，给四妹妹养静。”贾政并不言语，隔了半日，却吩咐了一番仰报天恩的话。

贾琏也趁便回说：“巧姐亲事，父亲太太都愿意给周家为媳。”贾政昨晚也知巧姐的始末，便说：“大老爷太太作主就是了。莫说村居不好，只要人家清白，孩子肯念书，能够上进。朝里那些官，难道都是城里的人么？”贾琏答应了“是”，又说：“父亲有了年纪，况且又有痰症的根子，静养几年，诸事原仗二老爷为主。”贾政道：“提起村居养静，甚合我意，只是我受恩深重，尚未酬报耳。”贾政说毕进内，贾琏打发请了刘姥姥来，应了这件事。刘姥姥见了王夫人等，便说些将来怎样升官，怎样起家，怎样子孙昌盛。

正说着，丫头回道：“花自芳的女人进来请安。”王夫人





he should express his gratitude for the Imperial favour while still in mourning. They petitioned the Emperor on his behalf, and the Sovereign in his great goodness granted him an audience. When Jia Zheng had expressed his thanks and received various instructions, the Emperor asked what had become of Baoyu and marvelled at the account which Jia Zheng gave him.

The Emperor decreed, "The brilliance of Baoyu's writing must be due to his being an immortal. Were he at court we could have promoted him. Now, since he would never accept a noble rank, let him be given the title 'The Immortal of Literary Genius.' "

Jia Zheng kowtowed his thanks and withdrew, to be welcomed home by Jia Lian and Jia Zhen. When told of the Emperor's decree, the whole household was overjoyed.

Jia Zhen reported, "The Ning Mansion has been cleaned up, and with your permission we shall move over now. Sister Xichun can have Green Lattice Nunnery in the Garden for her devotions."

Jia Zheng made no comment, but after a pause he urged them to do their best to repay the Imperial favour.

Then Jia Lian informed him that his parents were willing to marry Qiaojie to the Zhou family. Jia Zheng, who had heard the previous night of all that had happened to her, said, "That's for the Elder Master and Elder Mistress to decide. We shouldn't despise country people, providing they are honest folk and their son is studious and seems promising. Not all the officials at court are city bred, are they?"

"No, sir," agreed Jia Lian. "But as my father is growing old and suffers from chronic asthma, he hopes to live quietly for a few years, leaving you in overall charge."

"I only wish I could live as a recluse in the country myself," Jia Zheng answered. "But I haven't yet repaid our Sovereign's great kindness." With that he went inside.

Jia Lian sent for Granny Liu to tell her the match was agreed on, after which she called on Lady Wang to predict that now they would win official promotion and all the family's sons and grandsons would prosper.

Just then, a maid announced Xiren's sister-in-law, from whom Lady Wang elicited that some relatives had proposed a match for Xiren with a



问几句话，花自芳的女人将亲戚作媒，说的是城南蒋家的，现在有房有地，又有铺面。姑爷年纪略大几岁，并没有娶过的，况且人物儿长的是百里挑一的。王夫人听了愿意，说道：“你去应了，隔几日进来，再接你妹子罢。”王夫人又命人打听，都说是好。王夫人便告诉了宝钗，仍请了薛姨妈细细的告诉了袭人。

袭人悲伤不已，又不敢违命的，心里想起宝玉那年到他家去，回来说的死也不回去的话，“如今太太硬作主张，若说我守着，又叫人说我不害臊；若是去了，实不是我的心愿！”便哭得咽哽难鸣。又被薛姨妈宝钗等苦劝，回过念头想道：“我若是死在这里，倒把太太的好心弄坏了，我该死在家里才是。”于是袭人含悲叩辞了众人。那姐妹分手时，自然更有一番不忍说。

袭人怀着必死的心肠，上车回去，见了哥哥嫂子，也是哭泣，但只说不出来。那花自芳悉把蒋家的聘礼送给他看，又把自己所办妆奁一一指给他瞧，说：“那是太太赏的，那是置办的。”袭人此时更难开口，住了两天，细想起来：“哥哥办事不错。若是死在哥哥家里，岂不又害了哥哥呢？”千思万想，左右为难，真是一缕柔肠，几乎牵断，只得忍住。

那日已是迎娶吉期，袭人本不是那一种泼辣人，委委屈屈的上轿而去，心里另想到那里再作打算。岂知过了门，见那蒋家办事，极其认真，全都按着正配的规矩。一进了门，丫头仆妇，都称“奶奶”。袭人此时欲要死在这里，又恐害



certain Jiang family in the south city who owned houses, land and shops. The prospective bridegroom was a few years older but he had never been married and, as far as appearances went, was one in a hundred.

Lady Wang was favourably inclined and replied, "You can agree to it. Come back in a few days' time to fetch your sister-in-law." She also sent to make inquiries and, on being assured that it would be a good match, informed Baochai and asked Aunt Xue to break the news gently to Xiren.

Xiren was desolated yet dared not disobey. She remembered, that year Baoyu called on her family, she had sworn to them that she would rather die than be redeemed and go home. "Now the mistress is set upon this," she thought. "If I ask to stay they'll say I have no sense of shame; yet I really don't want to leave here!" She started sobbing. When Aunt Xue and Baochai reasoned with her she reflected, "If I died here that would be a poor return for Her Ladyship's kindness. I'd better die at home." So suppressing her grief she bade them all farewell, heart-rending as she found it to leave the other maids.

She mounted the carriage determined to kill herself, and when she saw her brother and sister-in-law she could not speak for sobbing. Her brother showed her one by one the betrothal gifts sent by the Jiang family as well as the dowry he had prepared, telling her which items had been given by Lady Wang, which they had bought themselves, so that Xiren was even more at a loss for words. After a couple of days at home she thought, "My brother's done things so handsomely, how can I cause him trouble by killing myself in his house?" In a dilemma, she felt her heart would break yet had to bear up.

The day came to fetch the bride, and not being the type to make a scene however wronged she felt, she let herself be carried off in the sedan-chair, deferring her decision till her arrival. However, once over their threshold, she found that the Jiangs had made scrupulous preparations according to all the correct wedding etiquette, and as soon as she entered the house she was addressed by the maid-servants as "Mistress." All treated her so well that, once again, she did not like to bring trouble on them by committing suicide there. That night she wept and refused her husband's advances, yet he very tenderly deferred to her



了人家，辜负了一番好意。那夜原是哭着不肯俯就的，那姑爷却极柔情曲意的承顺。

到了第二天开箱，这姑爷看见一条猩红汗巾，方知是宝玉的丫头。原来当初只知是贾母的侍儿，益想不到是袭人。此时蒋玉菡念着宝玉待他的旧情，倒觉满心惶愧，更加周旋；又故意将宝玉所换那条松花绿的汗巾拿出来。袭人看了，方知这姓蒋的原来就是蒋玉菡，始信姻缘前定。袭人才将心事说出。蒋玉菡也深为叹息敬服，不敢勉强，并越发温柔体贴，弄得个袭人真无死所了。

看官听说：虽然事有前定，无可奈何，但孽子孤臣，义夫节妇，这“不得已”三字也不是一概推委得的。此袭人所以在“又副册”也。正是前人过那桃花庙的诗上说道：

千古艰难惟一死，伤心岂独息夫人！

不言袭人从此又是一番天地；且说那贾雨村犯了婪索的案件，审明定罪，今遇大赦，递籍为民。雨村因叫家眷先行，自己带了一个小厮，一车行李，来到急流津觉迷渡口，只见一个道者，从那渡头草棚里出来，执手相迎。雨村认得是甄士隐，也连忙打恭。士隐道：“贾老先生，别来无恙？”雨村道：“老仙长到底是甄老先生！何前次相逢，靛面不认？后知火焚草亭，鄙下深为惶恐。今日幸得相逢，益叹老仙翁道德高深。奈鄙人下愚不移，致有今日！”甄士隐道：“前者老大人





wishes.

The next day when her chests were opened and he saw his old scarlet sash, he realized that this was Baoyu's maid. At first he had thought her one of the old lady's attendants, never dreaming that she was Xiren. Now, abashed by the memory of Baoyu's past friendship with him, he treated her even more kindly, deliberately showing her the pale green sash which Baoyu had given him in exchange. Only then did Xiren understand that he was Jiang Yuhan. Convinced that their marriage must have been predestined, she told him how she had meant to kill herself. Deeply impressed by her loyalty, Jiang Yuhan showed her even more consideration so that Xiren felt she had really nowhere to die.

Now, Honourable Readers, though certain things are predestined and "cannot be helped," it is wrong for sons of concubines or ministers of vanquished states as well as for men of principle and chaste women to keep using this phrase as a handy excuse. That was why Xiren was ranked in the *Third Register*. As a former poet passing the Temple of Lady Peach-blossom wrote:

Since time immemorial, the hardest thing is to die;  
It is not the Lady of Xi<sup>1</sup> alone who was broken-hearted.

But let us leave Xiren embarking on a new life and return to Jia Yucun, who had been found guilty of embezzlement and condemned to punishment. He was pardoned under the general amnesty, but ordered back to his native place and reduced to the status of a common citizen. Having sent his family home first, he was making his way there with a baggage-cart and a page when, by the Ford of Awakening in the Stream of Rapid Reversal, he saw a Taoist priest emerge from a thatched shed to greet him. Recognizing his old friend Zhen Shiyin, he promptly returned the greeting.

"How have you been, worthy Mr. Jia?" asked Shiyin.

"So you are Master Zhen, Immortal One!" replied Yucun. "How is it that last time we met you refused to recognize me? Later I was very worried to hear that your temple had been burned down. Now that I am lucky enough to meet you again, I am sure your virtue must be even greater. As for me, owing to my own inveterate folly, I've now been reduced to this."



高官显爵，贫道怎敢相认？原因故交，敢赠片言，不意老大人相弃之深！然而富贵穷通，亦非偶然。今日复得相逢，也是一桩奇事！这里离草庵不远，暂请膝谈，未知可否？”雨村欣然领命。

两人携手而行，小厮驱车随后，到了一座茅庵。士隐让进，雨村坐下，小童献茶上来。雨村便请教仙长超尘始末。士隐笑道：“一念之间，尘凡顿易。老先生从繁华境中来，岂不知温柔富贵乡中有一宝玉乎？”雨村道：“怎么不知！近闻纷纷传述，说他也遁入空门。下愚当时也曾与他往来过数次，再不想此人竟有如是之决绝。”士隐道：“非也！这一段奇缘，我先知之。昔年我与先生在仁清巷旧宅门口叙话之前，我已会过他一面。”雨村惊讶道：“京城离贵乡甚远，何以能见？”士隐道：“神交久矣。”雨村道：“既然如此，现今宝玉的下落，仙长定能知之？”士隐道：“宝玉，即‘宝玉’也。那年荣宁查抄之前，钗黛分离之日，此玉早已离世：一为避祸，二为撮合。从此夙缘一了，形质归一。又复稍示神灵，高魁贵子，方显得此玉乃天奇地灵锻炼之宝，非凡间可比。前经茫茫大士渺渺真人携带下凡，如今尘缘已满，仍是此二人携归本处：便是宝玉的下落。”

雨村听了，虽不能全能明白，却也十知四五，便点头叹





“Last time you were a high official, so how could a poor priest claim acquaintance with you? As an old friend I ventured to offer you some advice, but you ignored it. However, wealth and poverty, success and failure are predestined. How amazing that we should meet again today! My humble temple is not far from here. Would you care to come for a chat?” Yucun agreed willingly.

They walked off hand in hand, followed by the page with the cart till they reached a thatched temple. Shiyin invited Yucun in to sit down, and a boy served tea.

Asked how he had come to renounce the world, Shiyin said with a smile, “It’s easily done, with the speed of thought. Coming from the great world, sir, don’t you know of a certain Baoyu who used to live in the lap of luxury?”

“Of course I do! Recently it has been rumoured that he has entered Buddhist orders too. I met him several times, but never dreamed he would take such a decision.”

“That’s where you were wrong! I knew his strange story in advance, and had already met him at the time when the two of us talked before the gate of my old house in Renqing Lane.”

“How could that be?” exclaimed Yucun in surprise. “With the capital so far from your honourable district!”

“I met him in spirit a long time ago.”

“Then you know, no doubt, where he is now?”

“Baoyu means ‘divine jade.’ Before the raid on the Rong and Ning Mansions, on the day when Baochai and Daiyu separated, that jade had already left the world of men to escape from calamity and effect a reunion. Then, former ties of affection severed, form and essence once more became one. It further showed its miraculous origin by passing the examination with distinction and begetting a noble son, proving that this jade is a treasure tempered by the divine powers of nature, not to be compared with ordinary objects. It was taken to the mortal world by the Buddhist of Infinite Space and the Taoist of Boundless Time. Now that its mortal course is run, they have carried it back to its original place: this is what has happened to Baoyu.”

Yucun, though he understood barely half of this, nodded and mar-





道：“原来如此，下愚不知！但那宝玉既有如此的来历，又何以情迷至此，复又豁悟如此？还要请教。”士隐笑道：“此事说来，先生未必尽解。太虚幻境，即是真如福地。两番阅册，原始要终之道，历历生平，如何不悟？仙草归真，焉有‘通灵’不复原之理呢？”

雨村听着，却不明白，知是仙机，也不便更问。因又说道：“宝玉之事，既得闻命。但敝族闺秀，如是之多，何元妃以下，算来结局俱属平常呢？”士隐叹道：“老先生莫怪拙言！贵族之女，俱属从情天孽海而来。大凡古今女子，那‘淫’字固不可犯，只这‘情’字，也是沾染不得的！所以崔莺苏小，无非仙子尘心；宋玉相如，大是文人口孽。但凡情思缠绵，那结局就不可问了！”

雨村听到这里，不觉拈须长叹。因又问道：“请教仙翁：那荣宁两府，尚可如前否？”士隐道：“福善祸淫，古今定理。现今荣宁两府，善者修缘，恶者悔祸，将来兰桂齐芳，家道复初，也是自然的道理。”雨村低了半日头，忽然笑道：“是了，是了！现在他府中有一个名兰的，已中乡榜，恰好应着‘兰’字。适间老仙翁说‘兰桂齐芳’，又道‘宝玉高魁贵子’，莫非他有遗腹之子，可以飞黄腾达的么？”士隐微微笑道：“此系后事，未便预说。”





velled, "So that's the way it was! I was too ignorant to know. But why, with such a spiritual origin, was Baoyu so enamoured of girls before he became so enlightened? Would you explain that?"

"This may be hard for you to grasp fully, sir. The Illusory Land of Great Void is the Blessed Land of Truth. By reading the registers twice, he saw the beginning and the ending too all set down there in detail. How could that fail to enlighten him? Since the fairy herb has reverted to her true form, shouldn't the jade of 'spiritual understanding' do the same?"

Yucun was mystified, but knowing that this was some divine secret he did not press for a fuller explanation. "You have told me about Baoyu," he said. "But there are many ladies in our humble clan; how is it that apart from the Imperial Consort all the others came to such undistinguished ends?"

"You must allow me to speak bluntly, sir. All noble ladies come from the realm of love and retribution. From time immemorial, carnal desire has been their cardinal sin, and they must not even immerse themselves in love. Thus Cui Yingying and Su Xiaoxiao<sup>2</sup> were immortals with earthly desires, while Song Yu and Sima Xiangru<sup>3</sup> were writers of genius whose works were wicked. Anyone ensnared by love can come to no good end!"

Yucun absently stroked his beard and sighed. "I have one more question, Reverend Immortal," he ventured. "Will the Rong and Ning Mansions be restored to their former prosperity?"

"It is an immutable law that the good are favoured by fortune while the dissolute meet with calamity. In these two mansions now, the good are laying up virtue, the bad repenting their crimes; so naturally their houses will prosper again with the orchid and fragrant osmanthus blooming together."

Yucun lowered his head in thought, then suddenly laughed, "I get it! One of the sons of their house called Lan<sup>4</sup> has passed the examination; so that prediction of yours has come true. But just now, Reverend Immortal, you spoke of 'the orchid and fragrant osmanthus blooming together,' and you mentioned that Baoyu has begotten a noble son. Is this as yet unborn son going to advance rapidly in his official career?"

"This belongs to the future," said Shiyin with a smile. "It's not for me to predict."

雨村还要再问，士隐不答，便命人设具盘飧，邀雨村共食。食毕，雨村还要问自己的终身。士隐便道：“老先生草庵暂歇。我还有一段俗缘未了，正当今日完结。”雨村惊讶道：“仙长纯修若此，不知尚有何俗缘？”士隐道：“也不过是儿女私情罢了。”雨村听了，益发惊异：“请问仙长何出此言？”士隐道：“老先生有所不知：小女英莲，幼遭尘劫，老先生初任之时，曾经判断；今归薛姓，产难完劫，遗一子于薛家，以承宗祧。此时正是尘缘脱尽之时，只好接引接引。”士隐说着，拂袖而起。雨村心中恍恍惚惚，就在这急流津觉迷渡口草庵中睡着了。

这士隐自去度脱了香菱，送到太虚幻境，交那警幻仙子对册。刚过牌坊，见那一僧一道缥缈而来，士隐接着说道：

“大士、真人，恭喜，贺喜！情缘完结，都交割清楚了么？”那僧道说：“情缘尚未全结，倒是那蠢物已经回来了。还得把他送还原所，将他的后事叙明，不枉他下世一回。”士隐听了，便拱手而别。那僧道仍携了玉到青埂峰下，将“宝玉”安放在女娲炼石补天之处，各自云游而去。从此后：

天外书传天外事，两番人作一番人。

这一日，空空道人又从青埂峰前经过，见那补天未用之





Yucun had more questions on the tip of his tongue but the other, unwilling to answer them, ordered his servant to prepare food and invited Yucun to share it. After the meal, Shiyin forestalled further questions about Yucun's own future by urging him to have a rest in his temple.

"I still have some worldly affairs to settle and must attend to them today," he explained.

"What worldly affairs can you have, Immortal One, you whose life is given to cultivating virtue?" asked Yucun in surprise.

"Simply some private business concerned with family affection."

"What do you mean?" Yucun was yet more amazed.

"You are unaware, sir, that my daughter Yinglian met with misfortune as a child, and at the start of your official career you judged a case in which she was involved. She has married into the Xue family, but is dying now in childbirth leaving behind her a son to carry on the Xues' line. Since the time has come for her to sever all mortal ties, I must go to guide her spirit." With a flick of his sleeve he rose.

Yucun, left dazed, fell asleep in this thatched temple by the Ford of Awakening in the Stream of Rapid Reversal, while Shiyin went to conduct Xiangling to the Illusory Land of Great Void to enter her name in the record of the Goddess of Disenchantment. As he passed the archway, he saw a monk and a priest come drifting towards him.

"Congratulations, holy men!" he called. "Have you severed all their entanglements of love?"

"Not completely," they replied. "But we have brought that stupid object back with us. We still have to return him to his original place and record his experiences in the world, so that he won't have descended there for nothing."

Shiyin saluted and left them, whereupon the monk and the priest took the divine jade to Blue Ridge Peak and left it in the place where Nü Wa had melted down stones to repair heaven. This done, they went their different ways. Thus:

A book not of this world records events not of this world;

A man with two lives reverts to his first form.

One day the Taoist immortal the Reverend Void, coming to Blue Ridge



石仍在那里，上面字迹依然如旧，又从头的细细看了一遍，见后面偈文后又历叙了多少收缘结果的话头，便点头叹道：“我从前见石兄这段奇文，原说可以闻世传奇，所以曾经抄录，但未见返本还原。不知何时，复有此段佳话？方知石兄下凡一次，磨出光明，修成圆觉，也可谓无复遗憾了！只怕年深日久，字迹模糊，反有舛错，不如我再抄录一番，寻个世上清闲无事的人，托他传遍，知道奇而不奇，俗而不俗，真而不真，假而不假。或者尘梦劳人，聊倩鸟呼归去，山灵好客，更从石化飞来，亦未可知。”想毕，便又抄了，仍袖至那繁华昌盛地方遍寻了一番：不是建功立业之人，即系糊口谋衣之辈，那有闲情去和石头饶舌？直寻到急流津觉迷渡口草庵中，睡着一个人，因想他必是闲人，便要将这抄录的《石头记》给他看看。那知那人再叫不醒。空空道人复又使劲拉他，才慢慢的开眼坐起。便接来草草一看，仍旧掷下道：“这事我已亲见尽知，你这抄录的尚无舛错。我只指与你一个人，托他传去，便可归结这段新鲜公案了。”空空道人忙问何人，那人道：“你须待某年，某月，某日，某时，到一个悼红轩中，有个曹雪芹先生，只说贾雨村言，托他如此如此。”说毕，仍旧睡下了。





Peak again, found there the stone left unused when heaven was repaired, with the same inscription on it that he had seen before. On reading it carefully once more, he discovered that appended to the epilogue-poem were more accounts of the denouement.

He nodded and sighed, "When I first read this strange story of Brother Stone, I said that it could be made known to the world and therefore had it transcribed. But at that time I hadn't read how he returned to his original form and place. This is quite a story — I wonder when it was added? Apparently Brother Stone after his descent to the world of men was burnished and awoke to the truth, which is highly gratifying! If too many years pass and the inscription is blurred, it may be misconstrued. I had better transcribe it again and find someone with the leisure to circulate it, to show the illusory nature of marvels, mundane matters, truth and falsehood. Then perhaps some men tired of mortal vanity may return to the truth, or some friendly mountain spirit may enable the Stone to descend again to the world."

Thereupon he copied out the inscription again, tucked it into his sleeve and searched the haunts of splendour and wealth; but he found there only men striving to advance thier careers or to feed and clothe themselves — not one had time for the story of the Stone. However, when he reached the thatched temple by the Ford of Awakening in the Stream of Rapid Reversal, he discovered a man sleeping there and felt that here was someone sufficiently leisured to be given this *Story of the Stone*. The sleeper did not wake when called, but when the Reverend Void tugged at him he sat up slowly and opened his eyes, then leafed through the manuscript before putting it down again.

"Yes, I witnessed this whole business myself," he said. "The account you have copied out is quite correct. I'll tell you someone who will circulate it, so that this extraordinary case can be concluded."

The Reverend Void at once asked whom he had in mind.

"Wait till such-and-such a year, month, day and hour, then go to Mourning-the-Red Studio where you will find a certain Mr. Cao Xueqin," was the answer. "Just give him Jia Yucun's name, and tell him what you want of him." With that he lay down and went to sleep again.

The Reverend Void bore these instructions in mind and, after no one

那空空道人牢牢记着此言，又不知过了几世几劫，果然有个悼红轩，见那曹雪芹先生正在那里翻阅历来的古史。空空道人便将贾雨村言了，方把这《石头记》示看。那雪芹先生笑道：“果然是‘贾雨村言’了！”空空道人便问：“先生何以认得此人，便肯替他传述？”那雪芹先生笑道：“说你空空，原来肚里果然空空！既是‘假语村言’，但无鲁鱼亥豕以及背谬矛盾之处，乐得与二三同志，酒余饭饱，雨夕灯窗，同消寂寞，又不必大人先生品题传世。似你这样寻根究底，便是刻舟求剑、胶柱鼓瑟了！”那空空道人听了，仰天大笑，掷下抄本，飘然而去。一面走着，口中说道：“原来是敷衍荒唐！不但作者不知，抄者不知，并阅者也不知；不过游戏笔墨，陶情适性而已！”后人见了这本传奇，亦曾题过四句偈语，为作者缘起之言更进一竿云：

说到辛酸处，荒唐愈可悲。

由来同一梦，休笑世人痴！





knows how many generations or aeons, sure enough he found Mourning-the-Red Studio, where Mr. Cao Xueqin was reading an ancient history. He gave him Jia Yucun's message and handed him the *Story of the Stone*.

Cao Xueqin laughed, "This certainly sounds like Jia Yucun!"<sup>5</sup>

"How did you come to know him, sir?" asked the Reverend Void. "What makes you willing to pass this tale on for him?"

Mr. Cao chuckled, "They call you Void, and you really are devoid of sense! Since this is a fictitious rustic tale, provided it contains no clerical errors or perverse contradictions, it will serve to while away the time with a couple of friends after wine and food, or to dispel loneliness some rainy evening under the lamp by the window. It doesn't have to be vouched for or launched by men of consequence. All these questions you ask show that you're a pig-headed pedant and won't get you anywhere!"

The Reverend Void threw back his head and laughed, then tossed him the manuscript and left saying to himself, "So it's all hot air — fantastic! Neither author, transcriber, nor readers can tell what it is about. It is nothing but a literary diversion to entertain readers."

When this tale later came to be read, someone wrote four lines of verse to elucidate the author's meaning, as follows:

A tale of grief is told,  
Fantasy most melancholy.  
Since all live in a dream,  
Why laugh at others' folly?









## NOTES

### Chapter 98

<sup>1</sup> See Chapter 1. The Goddess of Disenchantment granted her attendant Shen Ying's wish to assume human form, and gave the Vermilion Pearl Plant this chance to repay her debt of gratitude to him by a lifetime of tears in the world of men. Shen Ying was reincarnated as Baoyu, Vermilion Pearl as Daiyu.

### Chapter 109

<sup>1</sup> A couplet from Bai Juyi's *Song of Eternal Sorrow*.

### Chapter 115

<sup>1</sup> A quotation from *The Analects* of Confucius and his disciples.

### Chapter 116

<sup>1</sup> *Shang* (尚) meaning "monk" bears a resemblance to the upper half of *shang* (赏) meaning "reward."

### Chapter 117

<sup>1</sup> The characters for "fake wall" are *jia qiang*.

### Chapter 118

<sup>1</sup> Legend had it that the sage kings Yao and Shun wanted to make over the country to these men, but they declined.

<sup>2</sup> Bo Yi and Shu Qi refused to cooperate with King Wu and the Duke of Zhou, becoming hermits instead.

### Chapter 120

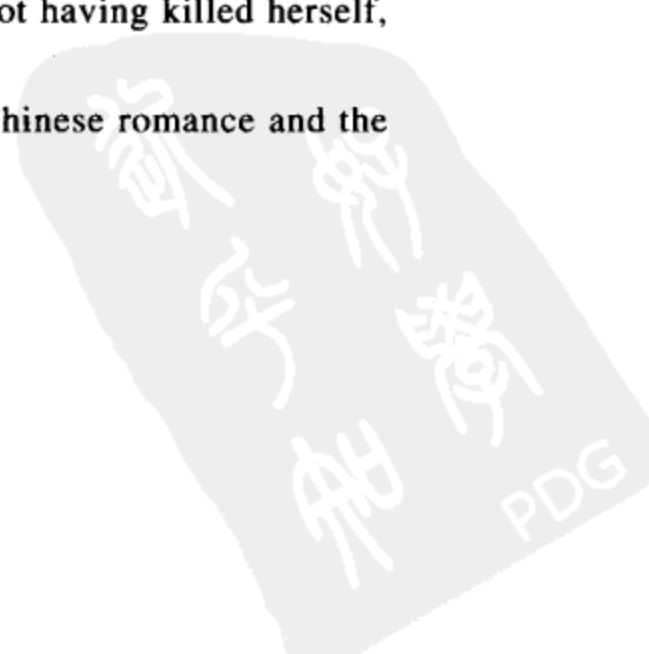
<sup>1</sup> Lady Wei of Xi who was captured in 683 B.C. by King Wen of the State of Chu when he conquered the Xi State. She bore him two sons, but regretted not having killed herself, saying, "If a woman serves two husbands, she should die!"

<sup>2</sup> The first was a talented and beautiful girl in a well-known Chinese romance and the second a courtesan in Hangzhou at the end of the sixth century.

<sup>3</sup> Brilliant and romantic poets of ancient times.

<sup>4</sup> Lan means "orchid."

<sup>5</sup> Homophone for "fiction in rustic language."







## ABOUT THE TRANSLATORS

Yang Xianyi was born in Tianjin in 1915. His wife Gladys Yang was born in England in 1919. They both graduated from Oxford University in England in the 1930s. They were married in 1940 in China.

After teaching at several universities, they went to work for the National Compilation and Translation Bureau in 1943, in charge of translation of literary works. In 1952, they joined the Foreign Languages Press (now the China International Publishing Group) in Beijing, where Yang Xianyi worked as the chief editor of the magazine *Chinese Literature*. At the same time, he was a foreign literature research fellow of the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, a council member of the Chinese Writers Association and a council member of the Chinese Translators Association.

For many decades, Yang Xianyi and Gladys Yang have devoted themselves to translating and research into Chinese and foreign literary legacies. Their translations of classical Chinese works of literature especially have brought them global fame, making a great contribution to the cultural exchanges between China and the rest of the world. Apart from their monumental translation of *A Dream of Red Mansions*, they have translated the *Elegy of Chu*, *Selections from the Records of the Historian*, *The Dragon King Daughter*, *The Courtesan's Jewel-box*, *The Man Who Sold a Ghost*, *Palace of Eternal Youth*, *The Scholars* and a number of works by the famous modern Chinese writer Lu Xun.