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A DREAM OF RED MANSIONS





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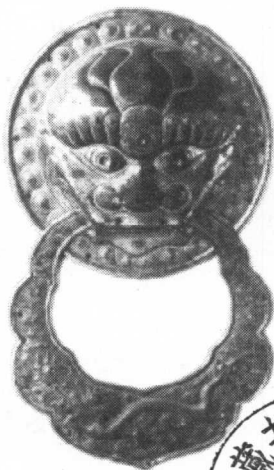
LIBRARY OF CHINESE CLASSICS

Chinese-English

红楼梦

A Dream of Red Mansions

IV



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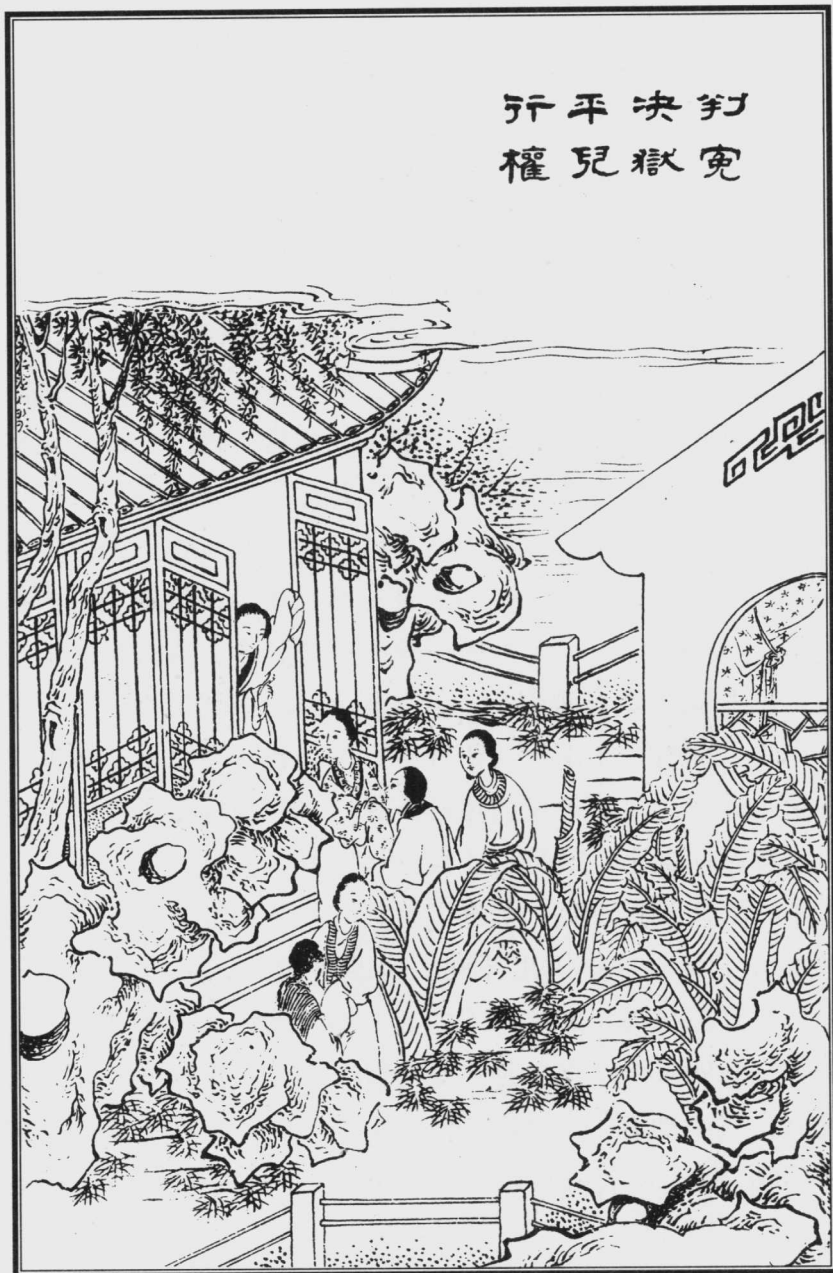


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第六十一回

投鼠忌器宝玉瞞脏 判冤决狱平儿行权

话说那柳家的笑道：“好猴儿崽子，你亲婶子找野老儿去了，你岂不多得一个叔叔，有什么疑的！别讨我把你头上的杓子盖似的几根黄毛捋下来！还不开门让我进去呢。”这小厮且不开门，且拉着笑说：“好婶子，你这一进去，好歹偷些杏子出来赏我吃。我这里老等，你若忘了时，日后半夜三更打酒买油的，我不给你老人家开门，也不答应你，随你干叫去。”柳氏啐道：“发了昏的，今年不比往年，把这些东西都分给了众奶奶了。一个个的不像抓破了脸的，人打树底下一过，两眼就似那鷲鸡似的，还动他的果子！昨儿我从李子树下走，偏有一个蜜蜂儿往脸上一过，我一招手儿，偏你那好舅母就看见了。他离的远看不真，只当我摘李子呢，就泼声浪噪喊叫起来，又是‘还没供佛呢’，又是‘老太太、太太不在家还没进鲜呢，等进了上头，嫂子们都有分的’，倒像谁害了馋痲等李子出汗呢。叫我也没好话，抢白了他一顿。可是你舅母、姨娘两三个亲戚都管着，怎么不和他们要去，倒和我来要。这可是‘仓老鼠和老鸱去借粮——守着的没有，飞着的有’。”小厮笑道：“哎哟哟，没有罢了，说上这些闲话！我看你老以后就用不着我了？就便是姐姐有了好地





Chapter 61

Baoyu Covers Up a Girl's Theft to Protect His Sister Pinger Wiolds Authority to Right a Wrong

"You monkey!" chuckled Mrs. Liu. "If your aunt goes to find a lover that means one more uncle for you — what's wrong with that? Don't make me tear out that tuft of mangy hair stuck on your head like the lid of chamberpot. Hurry up! Open the gate and let me in."

Instead of doing so, the young rascal went on teasing.

"When you go in, auntie, do filch a few apricots for me. I'll wait for you here. If you forget, don't expect me to open the gate for you in future, when you want to buy wine or oil in the middle of the night. I won't even *answer* you, just leave you to shout yourself hoarse."

Mrs. Liu spat.

"You're crazy!" she scoffed. "This year's not like the old days. Everything here has been put in the care of different women, every single one of them spoiling for a fight. Just walk under a tree, and they glare like broody hens. How can you touch their fruit?"

"The other day I was walking under a plum tree when a bee brushed past my face, and just as I flapped it away that aunt of yours spotted me. She was too far away to see what I was doing and thought I was picking plums, so she let out a screech, then started squawking at the top of her voice that this fruit hadn't yet been offered to Buddha, that Their Ladyships being away hadn't tasted it yet, and that after the best had been sent to the mistress the rest of us would get *our* share, carrying on as if I were dying for her plums! I didn't take it too kindly, so I gave her tit for tat.

"But you have several aunts in charge of things here. Why not ask them for what you want? Why apply to *me*? This is like the rat in the barn who asked a crow for grain, as if a bird on the wing had some while the rat living in the barn had none."



方，将来更呼唤着的日子多，只要我们多答应他些就有了。”柳氏听了，笑道：“你这个小猴精，又捣鬼吊白的，你姐姐有什么好地方了？”那小厮笑道：“别哄我了，早已知道了。单是你们有内牵，难道我们就没有内牵不成？我虽在这里听呵，里头却也有两个姊妹成个体统的，什么事瞒了我们？”

正说着，只听门内又有老婆子向外叫：“小猴儿们，快传你柳婶子去罢，再不来可就误了。”柳家的听了，不顾和小厮说话，忙推门进去，笑说：“不用忙，我来了。”一面来至厨房，——虽有几个同伴的人，他们俱不敢自专，单等他来调停分派——一面问众人：“五丫头那里去了？”众人都说：“才往茶房里找他们姊妹去了。”

柳家的听了，便将茯苓霜搁起，且按着房头分派菜馔。忽见迎春房里小丫头莲花儿走来说：“司棋姐姐说了，要碗鸡蛋，炖的嫩嫩的。”柳家的道：“就是这样尊贵。不知怎的，今年这鸡蛋短的很，十个钱一个还找不出来。昨儿上头给亲戚家送粥米去，四五个买办出去，好容易才凑了二千个来。我那里找去？你说给他，改日吃罢。”莲花儿道：“前儿要吃豆腐，你弄了些馊的，叫他说了我一顿。今儿要鸡蛋又没有



“*Aiyaya!*” chortled the boy. “If you can’t help, you can’t. Why all this palaver? Think you won’t need me in future? If your daughter *does* get a good post, seems to me she’ll be wanting our help even more often, and only if we give it will she do all right.”

“So you’re up to monkey tricks again, little wretch! What good post is my daughter going to get?”

The boy laughed.

“Don’t try to fool me. I know all about it. Think you’re the only ones with connections inside? We have ours too. Though my own post’s out here, I have a couple of sisters who count for something in the Garden too. So, how can any secret be kept from us?”

Just then another old woman inside called out, “Hurry up, you young rascals, and go and fetch your Aunt Liu before it’s too late.”

Not stopping to bandy any more words with the boy, Mrs. Liu hastily opened the gate and went in, saying:

“Don’t worry, I’m coming.”

She headed straight for the kitchen, where some other cooks shirking responsibility had been waiting for her to decide what dishes to send to the different apartments.

“Where’s Wuer?” Mrs. Liu asked.

“She’s just gone to the boiler-house to look for the other girls,” they told her.

Mrs. Liu, having put the *pachyma* flour away, was busy allotting the dishes for different quarters when Yingchun’s little maid Lianhua came in.

“Sister Siqi says she wants a bowl of beaten eggs very lightly steamed,” she announced.

“You *would* ask for a rarity!” remarked Mrs. Liu. “There’s such a shortage of eggs this year, goodness knows why, they cost ten cash each, and even at that price they’re hard to get. Yesterday the order came down to send food to the families of relatives, and several purveyors went out yet only managed to get two thousand eggs. So where am I to find eggs? Go and tell her she can have them some other time.”

“The other day when she asked for beancurd, you sent over some which was rancid,” protested Lianhua. “She gave me a scolding for that.”



了。什么好东西，我就不信连鸡蛋都没有了，叫我翻出来。”一面说，一面真个走来，揭起菜箱一看，只见里面果有十来个鸡蛋，说道：“这不是？你就这么利害！吃的是主子的，我们的分例，你为什么心疼？又不是你下的蛋，怕人吃了。”柳家的忙丢了手里的活计，便上来说道：“你少满嘴里混侵！你娘才下蛋呢！通共留下这几个，预备接急的。你们吃了，倘或一声要起来，没有还了得。你们深宅大院，水来伸手，饭来张口，只知鸡蛋是平常物件，那里知道外头买卖的行市呢？别说这个，有一年连草根子还没了的日子还有呢。我劝他们，细米白饭，每日肥鸡大鸭子，将就些儿也罢了。吃腻了膈，天天又闹起故事来了。鸡蛋、豆腐，又是什么面筋、酱萝卜炸儿，敢自倒换口味。只是我又不是答应你们的，一处要一样，就是十来样。我倒别伺候头层主子，只预备你们二层主子了。”莲花儿听了，便红了脸，喊道：“谁天天要你什么来？你说上这两车子话！叫你来，不是为便宜却为什么？前儿小燕来说‘晴雯姐姐要吃芦蒿’，你怎么忙的还问肉炒，鸡炒？小燕说‘因荤的不好才另叫你炒个面筋的，少搁油才好’，你忙的倒说‘自己发昏’，赶着洗手炒了，狗颠儿似的亲捧了去。今儿反倒拿我作筏子，说我给众人听。”柳家的忙道：“阿弥陀佛！这些人眼见的。别说前儿一



Now she wants eggs and you say you haven't any. What's so precious about eggs? I don't believe you haven't even got eggs, I'll have a look."

She marched over to open the chest containing provisions, and sure enough found a dozen eggs in it.

"There you are!" she cried. "Why should you be so tightfisted? What we eat is the share given us by our mistresses; why should it worry *you*? You didn't lay those eggs. Why take on so if people eat them?"

Mrs. Liu at once put down what she was holding and went over to confront her.

"Stop talking rubbish!" she cried. "Your mother's the one who lays eggs! These few are all we've got left for making sauce with. They're for emergencies. Unless the young ladies ask for some, I won't use them. If you've eaten them all up, there'll be a fine to do!

"You girls living shut away in the inner compounds take everything for granted. You may think eggs are easily come by, knowing nothing about conditions outside in the market. Not to say eggs, there are some days when there's not so much as a blade of grass to be had. Take my advice and be satisfied with the fine rice, fat hens and big ducks you get every day. You're so sated with all that rich food, though, that you pester us all the time for something different: eggs and beancurd, or gluten of wheat and salted turnips. You certainly know how to vary your menu! But it's not my job to cater specially for *you*. If each place asks for a different dish, that comes to over ten dishes. I'd better stop looking after our first-grade mistresses so as to devote myself to you second-grade mistresses."

"Who's been asking for new dishes every day?" shouted Lianhua, her face scarlet. "Are you never going to stop ranting? If we get you a job here, of course we expect a little consideration. The other day when Xiaoyan told you that Sister Qingwen would like some artemisia, you immediately asked whether she wanted it fried with pork or with chicken. Xiaoyan said anything with meat was no good; what was why she asked for artemisia fried with gluten of wheat with as little oil as possible. At once you cursed yourself for being so dense and hastily washed your hands to cook the dish, taking it there yourself — like a dog wagging its tail. Yet today you pick on me in front of all these people!"

次，就从旧年一立厨房以来，凡各房里偶然间不论姑娘姐儿们要添一样半样，谁不是先拿了钱来，另买另添。有的没的，名声好听，说我单管姑娘的厨房省事，又有剩头儿，算起账来，惹人恶心：连姑娘带姐儿们四五十人，一日也只管要两只鸡，两只鸭子，十来斤肉，一吊钱的菜蔬。你们算算，够作什么的？连本项两顿饭还撑持不住，还搁的住这个点这样，那个点那样，买来的又不吃，又买别的去。既这样，不如回了太太，多添些分例，也像大厨房里预备老太太的饭，把天下所有的菜蔬用水牌写了，天天转着吃，吃到一个月现算倒好。连前儿三姑娘和宝姑娘偶然商议了要吃个油盐炒枸杞芽儿来，现打发个姐儿拿着五百钱来给我，我倒笑起来，说：‘二位姑娘就是大肚子弥勒佛，也吃不了五百钱的去。这三二十个钱的事，还预备的起。’赶着我送回钱去，到底不收，说赏我打酒吃，又说‘如今厨房在里头，保不住屋里的人不去叨登，一盐一酱，那不是钱买的？你不给又不好，给了你又没的赔。你拿着这个钱，全当还了他们素日叨登东西的窝儿。’这就是明白体下的姑娘，我们心里只替他念佛。没的赵姨奶奶听了又气不忿，又说太便宜了我，隔不了十天，也打发个小丫头子来寻这样、寻那样，我倒好笑起来。你们竟成了例，不是这个，就是那个，我那里有这些赔的。”





“Gracious Buddha!” cried Mrs. Liu. “All those here can bear witness. Not to say the other day, but ever since this kitchen was set up last year, any apartment wanting something extra has always brought money to buy it. Sometimes we had what was wanted, sometimes we didn’t. It may sound as if I’ve got a cushy job, with perks too, just catering for the young mistresses. Just work it out, though, and it’s really sickening. The young ladies plus their maids come to forty or fifty people, yet each day we get only a couple of hens, a couple of ducks, some dozen cattles of meat and one string of cash worth of vegetables. Figure it out for yourselves: how far will that go. It’s not even enough for the two fixed meals, so how can it be stretched to cover extras ordered by you girls? And you won’t take what we’ve bought but want us to go out and buy other things.

“The way things are, we’d better ask the mistress for more money so that we can do as they do in the big kitchen catering for the old lady: put down all the known dishes on the menu, prepare different dishes every day, and settle the accounts at the end of each month.

“The other day Miss Tanchun and Miss Baochai took it into their heads to have some fried wolfberry sprouts, and sent over a maid with five hundred cash. I couldn’t help laughing and told her, ‘Even if the two young ladies had bellies as big as a Buddha, they couldn’t eat five hundred cash worth. It’ll only cost twenty to thirty cash and that we can afford.’

“So I sent the money back, but they wouldn’t take it, giving it to me as a tip to buy wine with. And they said, ‘Now that the kitchen’s inside the Garden, some of our people may go and pester you for things like salt or bean-sauce, all of which cost money. You can hardly refuse them; but if you give them what they want you’ll lose out. So take this money to make good the arrears they’ve let you in for.’

“They’re such considerate, understanding young ladies, those two, we can only pray to Buddha in our hearts to bless such kind mistresses. But when Concubine Zhao heard of this, she flew into a rage and fumed that I was getting too many perks. In less than ten days she kept sending over a maid to ask for this, that and the other. I laughed to myself: So you think this gives *you* the excuse to demand one thing after another. How



正乱时，只见司棋又打发人来催莲花儿，说他：“死在这里，怎么就不回去？”莲花儿赌气回来，便添了一篇话，告诉了司棋。司棋听了，不免心头起火。此刻伺候迎春饭罢，带了小丫头们走来，见了许多人正吃饭，见他势头不好，都忙站起来陪笑让坐。司棋便喝命小丫头子动手，“凡箱柜所有的菜蔬，只管丢出来喂狗，大家赚不成。”小丫头子们巴不得一声，七手八脚抢上去，一顿乱翻乱掷的。慌的众人一面拉劝，一面央告司棋说：“姑娘，别误听了小孩子的话。柳嫂子有八个头，也不敢得罪姑娘。说鸡蛋难买是真。我们才也说他不知好歹，凭是什么东西，也少不得变法儿去。他已经悟过来了，连忙蒸上了。姑娘不信瞧那火上。”

司棋被众人一顿好言，方将气劝的渐平。小丫头们也没得摔完东西，便拉开了。司棋连说带骂，闹了一回，方被众人劝去。柳家的只好摔碗、丢盘自己咕嘟了一回，蒸了一碗鸡蛋令人送去。司棋全泼在地下了。那人回来也不敢说，恐又生事。

柳家的打发他女儿喝了一碗汤，吃了半碗粥，又将茯苓霜一节说了。五儿听罢，便心下要分些赠芳官，遂用纸另包了一半，趁黄昏人稀之时，自己花遮柳隐的来找芳官。且喜无人盘问，一径到了怡红院门首，不好进去，只在一簇玫瑰花前站定，远远的望着。有一盏茶时，可巧小燕出来，忙上前叫住。小燕不知是那一个，至跟前方看真切，因问作什



can I afford so much?"

As they were arguing, Siqi sent someone over to find Lianhua. "Is she dead that she hasn't come back yet?" she asked.

Lianhua went back then in a huff to tell Siqi all that had been said, embroidering her account too. The result was that Siqi flared up. As soon as she had finished serving Yingchun's meal she took the young maids with her to the kitchen, where they found the kitchen-maids having their own meal. When Siqi stormed in, the women stood up and asked her to take a seat, but she ordered the younger maids to ransack the place.

"Just throw all the eatables in their chests and cupboards to the dogs," she cried, "so that no one gets any perks."

At the word of command, the young maids crowded forward and started turning the whole place upside down. The kitchen-maids tried frantically to stop them.

"Don't believe what those children say, miss," they begged Siqi. "Even if Mrs. Liu had nine lives she'd never dare offend you. Honestly, eggs are hard to buy this year. We've just been scolding her for being so stupid: whatever she's asked for, she ought to make shift to get it. Now she's realized her mistake and steamed the eggs. If you don't believe us, look on the stove."

This soft talk gradually mollified Siqi, and the young maids were led away before they could smash everything. Having continued to make a scene for a while, Siqi finally let herself be persuaded to leave. Mrs. Liu could only clatter bowls and dishes as she grumbled to herself; but when the bowl of eggs was steamed and sent over, Siqi emptied it on the ground. However, the maid who had taken it kept silent about this on her return, for fear of causing fresh trouble.

Mrs. Liu now gave her daughter some soup and half a bowl of porridge, then explained to her about the *pachyma* flour. Wuer decided to share the gift with Fangguan; so she wrapped up half of it in a piece of paper and as it was now growing dark, with few people about, slipped through the flowers and willows to find her friend. Luckily she was challenged by no one on her way to Happy Red Court. Once there, however, she was afraid to go in. She stood waiting in front of a rose bush some distance away until, after the time it would take for a cup of tea, Xiaoyan