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A DREAM OF RED MANSIONS





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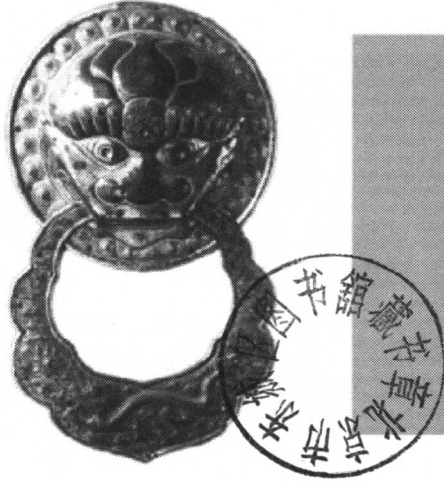
LIBRARY OF CHINESE CLASSICS

Chinese-English

红楼梦

A Dream of Red Mansions

II



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外文出版社

Foreign Languages Press

湖南人民出版社

Hunan People's Publishing House

RBE43/02

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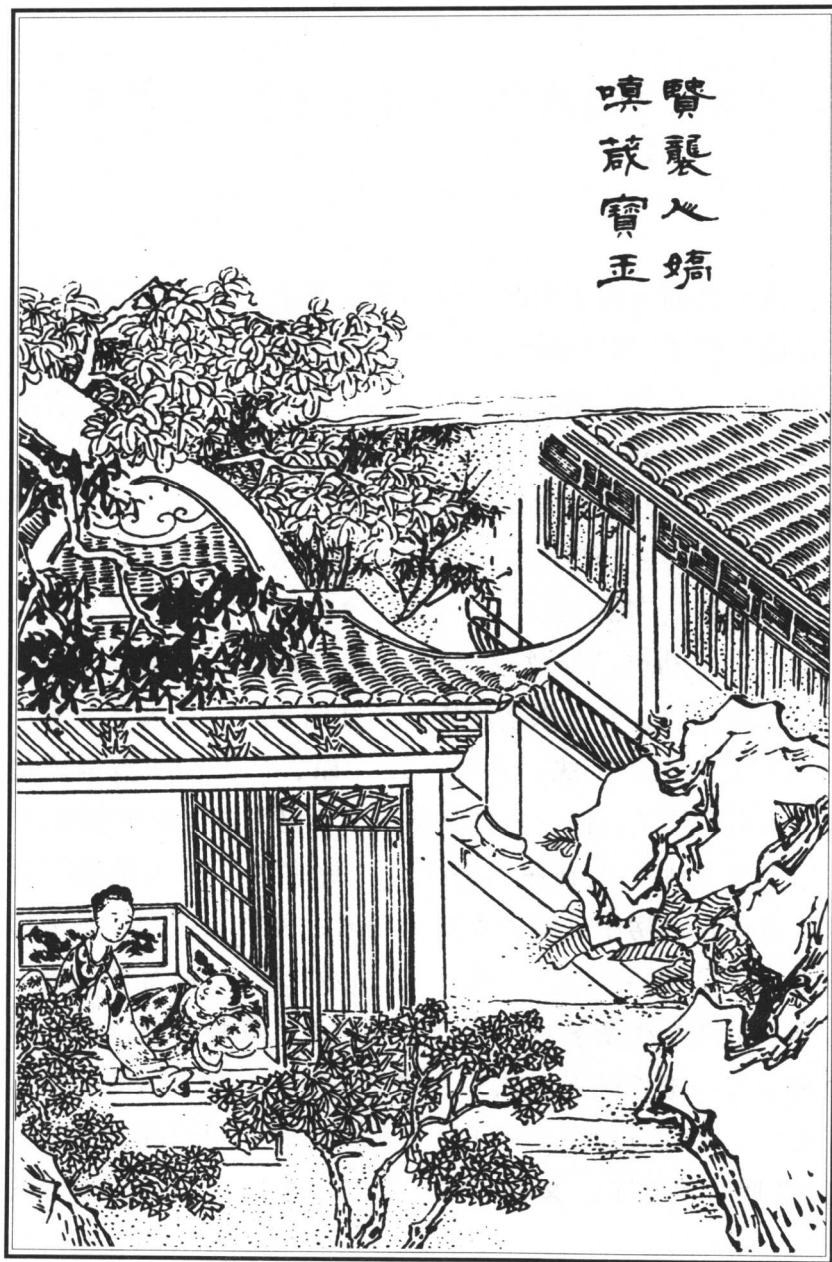


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賢襲心嬌
嘆葳寶玉



第二十一回

贤袭人娇嗔箴宝玉 俏平儿软语救贾琏

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

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

Chapter 21

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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





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

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



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

"I can't," she said.

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

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

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

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

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



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

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

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



"I lost it."

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

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

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

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

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

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

Baochai understood.

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

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

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

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

Xiren did not answer till he repeated the question.

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

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

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

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

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



the *kang* and closed her eyes.

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

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

“How should I know? Better ask yourself.”

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

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

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

This goaded Baoyu into sitting up.

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

“You know perfectly well without my telling you.”

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

“I wouldn’t think of troubling you.”

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

“What is your name?” he asked.

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

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

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



“Huixiang.”

“Who gave you that name?”

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

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

“Four.”

“And where do you come?”

“I’m the youngest.”

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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