

英譯中國三大名劇

(中文註解)

曹 禺：雷 雨

林 語 堂：子 見 南 子

田 漢：湖 上 的 悲 劇

THREE FAMOUS CHINESE PLAYS

英譯中國三大名劇

(全一冊·附中文註解)

中國文學之巨著 英文翻譯之偉構

研究文學者不可不讀

研究翻譯者不可不讀

研究英文者不可不讀

本書所選三大名劇（雷雨，子見南子，湖上的悲劇），係二十年來新文學運動中最成功的作品，原著者曹禺，林語堂，田漢，俱為中國文壇巨子，聲譽遠達海外，所選三劇皆曾震動全國文壇，擁有數百萬觀眾及讀者，足證此三大劇本之價值。本書譯筆流暢，印刷鮮明，並附有中文註釋，實為愛好文學，研究翻譯，自修英文者之唯一參考書。

英譯中國三大名劇

(中文註釋)

雷 雨

曹 禺 著

姚 莘 農 譯

子 見 南 子

林 語 堂 著

作 者 譯

湖 上 的 悲 劇

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關於「雷雨」

「雷雨」一劇，爲中國劇作家曹禺「三家寶」三部曲的第一部。也是二十年來戲劇運動中最成功的一部作品。劇情暴露了中國社會和大家庭的罪惡。結構嚴密生動，自初次演出後，即轟動一時，吸引着無數觀眾，博得各界好評。中旅的聲譽，也可說是由於上演此劇而日漸響著，爲一般觀眾一直擁護到現在。近來各地劇團也隨之而起，紛紛排演「雷雨」，這可知道「雷雨」的價值了。

原作者對於寫作本劇的動機會說過下面的話：『……寫「雷雨」是一種情感的迫切的需要。我念起人類是怎樣可憐的動物，帶着躊躇滿志的心情，彷彿是自己來主宰自己的運命，而時常不是自己來主宰着。受着自己——情感，或者理解的——捉弄，一種不可知的力量的一一棧遇的，或者環境的捉弄；生活在狹的籠裏而洋洋地驕傲着，以爲是徜徉在自由的天地裏，稱爲萬物之靈的人物，不是做着最愚蠢的事麼？我用一種悲憫的心情來俯視這羣地上的人們……在「雷雨」裏，宇宙正像一口殘酷的井，落在裏面，怎樣呼號也難逃脫這黑暗的坑。……』

雷雨劇情說明：礦主周樸園。他有兩個兒子，長子周萍是前妻所生。次子周冲是繼妻周繁漪所出。但是在他離家的兩年中。他的長子與他的繼妻發生了戀愛。這種戀愛，當然是違乎道德，爲環境所不容許的。因此周萍到後來整日爲此事痛苦，陷在矛盾混亂的狀態中。這時他家裏僕人魯貴，送他的女兒四鳳來宅服役。周萍在她的活潑天真的身上發現了安慰。然而他的後母還是像鬼般的逼住他不放鬆。迫得他不得不設法想離開這個家庭。遍逢他的父親樸園回來。他便請求到礦山上去服務。在某地學校中做女僕的四鳳的母親魯侍萍，即魯貴之妻，也於是時間回家探望。繁漪因妬四鳳。便約來侍萍。示意令她將四鳳帶回去。侍萍在那古老莊嚴的廳上。遇見了宅主樸園，發現

了他就是二十年前佔有了她又奪了她的人。樸園也就發現了她就是使得他終身都在感受着良心責備的人；同時知道現在代表礦工，向他請願的工頭魯大海就是他的次子。侍萍的唯一的要求就是見她的長子周萍。樸園因他的身份地位，便將魯家的人全數開除。侍萍回家以後，因為繁漪的示意，恐怕她的女兒又蹈她的覆轍，對四鳳反覆加以盤問。四鳳怕傷母親的心，不敢將她和周萍戀愛的事情說出來。然而周萍晚間來與她私會，被侍萍與大海撞見。四鳳便在狂風暴雨的半夜奔了出去，侍萍與大海追到周家去找。周萍與四鳳此時不得不在她的母親面前說出實在情形。侍萍是明白的。這兩個正是同胞兄妹。所以無論如何是不允許。然而四鳳已懷了孕。侍萍不得不將自己的痛苦咽下，成全了他們，應允四鳳隨着周萍同走。正在這時。門開了。發現了繁漪與周冲。繁漪熱熾着妬憤的火。將樸園呼出來。她的原意是要關心四鳳與周萍。不料樸園將一切關係道出。於是四鳳出去，自己去觸走了電的電線上，周冲去拉她，兩人一起死了，周萍用手鎗自擊。繁漪，魯侍萍因此瘋了。魯大海不肯承認有着這樣一個父親，出去自謀生路。剩下一手造成罪惡的周樸園。

THUNDER AND RAIN

雷 雨

四 幕 悲 劇
(A Tragedy in Four Acts)

By TSAO YU (曹禺著)

Translated by YAO HSIN-NUNG (姚莘農譯)

Scenes 景

- Prologue (序幕): A special parlour in the branch hospital of a certain Catholic church, on a winter afternoon
在教堂附屬醫院的一間特別客廳內——冬天的一個下午
- Act I: A sultry morning in summer, ten years back; in the parlour of Mr. Chou's residence (the same parlour as the one in the Prologue, and the settings are practically identical).
第一幕; 十年前,一個夏天,鬱熱的早晨。——周公館的客廳內(即字幕的客廳,景與前大致相同)
- Act II: Afternoon of the same day; the scene being also the same.
第二幕; 景同前——當天的下午
- Act III: The small inner room in Lu Kwei's home, after 10 p.m. of the same day.
第三幕; 在魯家,一個小套間——當天夜晚十時許
- Act IV: The parlour of Mr. Chou's residence (identical with the one in Act I), at 2 o'clock in the morning of the next day.
第四幕; 周家的客廳(與第一幕同)——當天半夜兩點鐘
- Epilogue: Time and scene as in the Prologue.
尾聲 又回到十年後,一個冬天的下午——景同序幕

The length of time from Act I to Act IV is within 24 hours.

(由第一幕至第四幕為時僅一天)

Dramatis Personae 人物

(In prologue and Epilogue.)

(序幕與尾聲)

Sister A (Catholic nun) 姑奶奶甲 (教堂尼姑)

Sister B (Catholic nun) 姑奶奶乙 (教堂尼姑)

The Sister—15 years old. 姊妹——十五歲

The Brother—12 years old. 弟弟——十二歲

(In the body of the play)

(第一幕至第四幕)

Chou P'u-yuan—President of the Board of Directors of a certain coal mine; 55 years of age

周樸園——某煤礦公司董事長，五十五歲

Chou Fan-yi—his wife; 35 years of age

周繁漪——其妻，三十五歲

Chou P'ing—his elder son by his former wife; 28 years of age.

周萍——其前妻生子，年二十八

Chou Ch'ung—his younger son by Fan-yi; 17 years of age

周冲——繁漪生子，年十七

Lu Kwei—servant at Chou's residence; 48 years of age.

魯貴——周宅僕人，年四十八

Lu Shih-p'ing—his wife, maid in a certain girls' school; 47 years of age.

魯侍萍——其妻某校女傭，年四十七

Lu Ta-hai—Shih-ping's son by her former husband; a foreman in a certain coal mine, aged 27

魯大海——侍萍前夫之子，煤礦工人，年二十七

Lu Shih-feng—daughter of Lu Kwei and Shih-p'ing, aged 18, a maid in the Chou household.

魯四鳳——魯貴與侍萍之女，年十八，周宅使女

Servants of the Chou family, including Servant A, Servant B, Old Servant. and so forth.

周宅僕人等：僕人甲，僕人乙——老僕

PROLOGUE

SCENE:—*A spacious parlour in a branch hospital of a certain Catholic church, at three o'clock on a winter afternoon.*

In the middle of the back wall of the room, there are two brown doors opening to the outside. They are clumsy doors with carvings of an old semi-Western pattern and a thick dark-purple curtain, tarnished and full of stains, draping the front. The decorative designs woven into the curtain are frayed, having a hole at one place. On the right-hand side—the left and the right sides are those of the actor upon entrance—there is a door leading up to the room now used by patients. The varnish on it has fallen off, and its once golden brass knob winks in dull drowsiness. With its nodular boards and the high, broad, yellow-patterned gray door-frame, it makes one think that the former owner of the house was probably out of China's early returned students, that had enjoyed pomp and riches for a time after his coming back. In front of this door is also hung a worn-out dark-purple velvet curtain, half drawn aside; its lower corners, torn into threads, squat on the floor. There is a double door on the left, opening to the dining room outside. One may go upstairs from there, or go outside through the dining room. This door is comparatively more sumptuous than the one in the centre, having a more mellow colour. Should one pass through, it balances itself heavily on its hinges and emits a squeak, like a very quiet, good-natured old man who has seen much of the world. Having no curtain in front, it betrays distinctly the cicatrices of splints, corrosions and varnish-mends on it. The wall to the right of the door in the centre is hollowed like a niche of an idol. The concavity is polyangular on the top and semi-circular below. The upper half of the recess is fully adorned with cute, long, narrow French windows, one in each of the polyangles. Down below and a little elevated from the floor is a semi-circular surface on which one may sit or deposit things. The entire front is hidden behind a thick, pleated, velvet curtain which, when drawn up, completely shuts up the "niche" from sight as well as its windows and the sunshine that comes through them, so that the room would look gloomy and stuffy. This curtain is pulled up when the stage curtain rises.

The wall is of a dark grayish shade, dulled and tarnished as a result of many years' disrepair. The decorations of the room are on the whole luxurious in a great way, but now showing

signs of going to the dogs. In the right wall, to the front, there is a fireplace decorated all around with rectangular pieces of marble and a star-shaped piece of coloured stone right above its centre. Not a single thing decks the empty mantelpiece, except for a crucifix hanging over it. The fireplace is glowing with burning coal; its leaping flames shine on an old arm-chair that reflects a flood of red light. This wee streak of warmth gives the ancient room a whiff of life. An uncouth-looking coal box and a bunch of firewood are laid by the side of the fire. A scroll of painting is hung to the left of the door on the right-hand side. Further left, near the back, the junction of the walls forms a hypotenuse surface of about three or four feet in width, against which stands a small, old-fashioned, clothespress of red sandalwood, with brass platings around the corners of its doors. A hot water pot and two white rice-bowls are put on top of the press in an old brass tray. In front of the press is spread a small rectangular rug, over which a very low long-table of red sandalwood crouches parallel with the press. Formerly, this table was probably used for displaying small articles of cunning workmanship, such as porcelains and curios, but now it is loaded with piles of freshly-washed white table-cloths, bed sheets and so forth, that have not yet been put into the press. A round stool stands in the front between the press and the recess. To the left of the "niche" and the right of the door in the centre, there is a rectangular redwood tea table, on which a pair of old candlesticks lie. A time-honoured large oil painting covers up the wall above. On the left side of the central door and behind a long low-stool, stands a cleverly wrought cabinet of red sandalwood with glass doors, originally for keeping curios but now empty. Not far from the left-side wall corner and leaning back against its hypotenuse line, is a broad, portly, dark-coloured sofa, with a long table behind and a short table in front, both being unoccupied. A yellow standing-lamp is planted beside the sofa to its left. The front section of the left wall is a little indented, forming a right angle with the width of the rear section. The indentation is occupied by a teapoy, over which a small oil painting hangs low on the wall. The door leading to the dining room is by the side of the teapoy, a little further in front. In the centre of the room there is a carpet, on which two large sofas squat slantingly opposite each other, with a white table-cloth spreading over a round table between them.

When the curtain rises, one hears the ringing of a distant bell and the sounds of a huge organ and the chorus of a hymn in the church—the best is Bach's High Mass in B Minor, "Blessed be he that cometh in the Name of the Lord." The room is all quiet and deserted.

After awhile, the central door is pushed open, heavy and slow. SISTER A, a nun of the church, enters in the same dress as those of the nuns one frequently sees in a Catholic church—head hidden beneath the fluttering, snow-white guimpe, like a Dutch village lass, and clad in a dark blue robe of coarse stuff with a long skirt that almost laps over the ground. A crucifix dangles over her bosom; and a ring of keys from her waist tinkles as she walks. She comes in calmly with a placid face, and turns about toward the doorway.

SISTER A. (*Amicably*) Please come in.

Enters a grey-headed old man in a very elegant yet time-worn fur overcoat. He takes off his hat after entrance—his hair grey, his eyes mute and sad, a short hoary beard on his chin, and wrinkles all over his face. He also removes his gold-rimmed glasses after entering and places them into their case with slight'y trembling hands. He wrings his hands for a moment and coughs weakly a couple of times. The sounds of music and song outside come to a stop.

SISTER A. (*Smiling*) Very cold outside!

OLD MAN. (*Nods*) Yes— (*Concernedly*). Is she all right now?

SISTER A. (*Sympathetically*) Yes.

OLD MAN. (*Pauses for a moment then points at his head*) How is her—? (*He means to say how is her insanity?*)

SISTER A. (*Pitifully*) It—it's still as usual. (*She heaves a whispering sigh*).

OLD MAN. (*With composure*) I think it is not easy to cure.

SISTER A. (*Compassionately*) Please sit down first and warm yourself for awhile, and then go to see her.

OLD MAN. (*Shaking his head*) No, thanks. (*Makes for the patient's room on the right side*).

SISTER A. (*Goes forward*) You are going the wrong way. That is Mrs. Lu's room. Your wife is upstairs.

OLD MAN. (*Halts, conforundedly*) I—I know. (*Points at the room on the right side.*) May I take a look at her now?

SISTER A. (*Good-humouredly*) I don't know. Mrs. Lu's room is under the supervision of another sister. I think you had

better first go upstairs to have a look and come back later to see the old lady. Is that all right?

OLD MAN. (*Confusedly*) Well, all right.

SISTER A. Then, please follow me upstairs.

SISTER A *leads the old man into the dining room on the left side. Exit both.*

For a moment the room is quiet. Then, there is a footfall from outside. SISTER B enters with two children behind her. But for her youth and greater vivacity, she is extremely like SISTER A. The two kids at the entrance are an elder sister and a younger brother, both clad in new winter garments and having faces very chubby and rosy like apples. The sister is fifteen years of age, wearing two little queues that dangle over her back; the brother wears a red cap of woollen yarn. The two enter in high spirits. Taken together, the elder child is comparatively more reserved, and she leads her brother at the time of entrance.

SISTER B. (*Amicably*) Come in, little brother. (*The brother comes in and looks at his sister; both warming their hands with their own breath.*) It is cold outside, isn't it? Little sister, will you sit here with your brother for awhile?

THE SISTER. (*Smiling*) Yes.

THE BROTHER. (*Pulls his sister's hand and whispers to her.*) Sister, where is mamma?

SISTER B. Your mamma will come as soon as she is finished with the doctor. Sit here, little brother, and warm yourself a bit. All right?

THE BROTHER *glances at his sister.*

THE SISTER. (*Very sensibly*) Brother, I have been here before. It's all right for us to sit here, and I will tell you some funny stories. (*THE BROTHER curiously looks around.*)

SISTER B. (*Looking at them with interest*) That's right, ask your sister to tell you funny stories. (*Points at the fire.*) Sit by the fireside, the two of you together, and tell you stories.

THE BROTHER. No, I want to sit on that small stool! (*Points at the small low-stool in front of the press to the left of the central door.*)

SISTER B. (*Kindly*) All right, you sit on it, then. But (*in a low voice*), little brother, you must sit there like a good boy, and don't make trouble! There are patients upstairs—(*points at the patient's room on the right side*) and there also.

THE TWO CHILDREN. (*Nod together obediently*) All right.

THE BROTHER. (*Suddenly to SISTER B*) Will my mamma come back soon?

SISTER B. Yes, soon. No, please sit down, (*the sister and the brother sit down together on the low-stool, looking at SISTER B*) and don't stir! (*Casts a glance at them*) I'll go in now, and will come back in a moment.

SISTER B *enters the patient's room on the right side and disappears.*

THE BROTHER *suddenly stands up.*

THE BROTHER. (*To his sister*) Who is she? Why does she wear such clothes?

THE SISTER. (*In the manner of one who has seen a lot of the world*) She's a nun, looking after the patients in the hospital. Sit down, brother.

THE BROTHER. (*Paying no heed to her*) Sister, you look, you look! (*Proudly*) Look at the new gloves mamma has bought me.

THE SISTER. (*With scorn*) I have seen them. Sit down, you! (*Drags him down onto the stool. The two again sit like good children.*)

SISTER A *comes in from the dining room on the left side and makes for the clothespress at the right corner without seeing the children in the room.*

THE BROTHER. (*Rises again and whispers to his sister*) Another one, sister!

THE SISTER. (*In suppressed voice*) Hush! don't talk. (*Again pulls him to sit down.*)

SISTER A *opens the press and puts the white bed sheets, tablecloths and so forth into it, one pile after another.*

SISTER B *re-enters from the patient's room on the right side, and meets SISTER A. They nod to each other quietly. SISTER B helps SISTER A to put away the washed things.*

SISTER B. (*Abruptly to SISTER A*) Through?

SISTER A. (*Not seeing the point*) With whom?

SISTER B. (*Quickly and obviously points at the ceiling*) The one upstairs.

SISTER A. (*Pitifully*) Through. She has now again fallen asleep.

SISTER B. (*Curiously*) Hasn't beaten anybody?

SISTER A. No. Only laughed wildly for a moment and broke some glass again.

SISTER B. (*Puffs out a breath*) That's not so bad.

SISTER A. (*To SISTER B*) How about her?

SISTER B. (*You mean the one downstairs?*) (*Points at the patient's room on the right side*) She is always like that, weeping most of the time and keeping her mouth shut. I have been here a year now, but have never heard her speak a word.

THE BROTHER. (*Urgently and in low voice*) Sister, tell me funny stories.

THE SISTER. (*Whisperingly*) No, Brother. Listen to them talking.

SISTER A. (*Pitifully*) What a pity! She has been here for nine years, only one year less than the one upstairs, but both are not yet cured. (*Joyfully*) Oh yes, Mr. Chou, the husband of the one upstairs, has just come.

SISTER B. (*Amazed*) What!

SISTER A. Today is the thirtieth of the Twelfth Moon of the old calendar.

SISTER B. (*Surprisedly*) Ah, today the thirtieth? Then, the one downstairs will also come out into this room.

SISTER A. What? Is she coming out also?

SISTER B. Yes, (*loquaciously*) on the thirtieth of the Twelfth Moon of every year, the one downstairs will come out into this room and stand right in front of the window there.

SISTER A. What for?

SISTER B. Probably she is looking out for her son to come back. He went away one night ten years ago, and has never come back. Pity, her husband is also dead. (*In low voice*) I heard that he was empolyed in Mr. Chou's home as a servant and one night, after drinking too much, died of intoxication.

SISTER A. (*Making herself out to be in the know*) That's why every time Mr. Chou comes to see his wife, he would always enquire after the one downstairs. I think after awhile Mr. Chou will come downstairs to see her.

SISTER B. (*Piously*) The Holy Mother bless him! (*Begins to put away the washeld articles again.*)

THE BROTHER. (*Implores with a whisper.*) Sister, will you not even tell me half of a funny story?

THE SISTER. (*Being absorbed in eavesdropping, quickly shakes her head and speaks to him tyrannically in a low voice.*) Brother!

SISTER B. (*Thinking of something new*) Strange, the Chous

had such a fine house. Why should they sell it to the hospital?
SISTER A. (*Quietly*) I am not clear. It is said that in this house three persons, two men and a woman, met their death in one night.

SISTER B. (*Surprised*) Really?

SISTER A. Yes.

SISTER B. (*The thought comes to her naturally.*) Then, why should Mr. Chou keep his invalid wife upstairs, instead of taking her out?

SISTER A. You are quite right. But it was on that very floor upstairs that she went insane. She said herself that she won't move out at any cost.

SISTER B. Ah!

THE BROTHER *suddenly stands up.*

THE BROTHER. (*Lifts his voice protestingly.*) Sister, I don't like listening to this.

THE SISTER. (*Persuading him to stop, in a low voice*) Good brother.

THE BROTHER. (*Lifts his voice at a higher pitch, imperatively*) No, sister, I want you to tell funny stories to me!

SISTER A and B *turn their heads to look at them.*

SISTER A. (*Astonished*) Whose children are these? I didn't see them when I came in.

SISTER B. They are the children of a lady patient. I brought them here to sit for awhile.

SISTER A. (*Cautiously*) Don't let them be here. They may be scared.

SISTER B. Where else then? It is cold outside and the whole hospital is full.

SISTER A. I think you had better go and get their mother to come here. If perchance the one upstairs should come down here, there's no telling how she would frighten them!

SISTER B. (*Compliantly*) All right. (*To the sister and brother, who are both staring at them*) You wait here just a moment longer like good children. I am going to find your mamma, and will be back in an instant.

SISTER B *goes out through the central door.*

THE BROTHER. (*Expectantly*) Sister, is mamma coming soon?

THE SISTER. (*Still reproachful*) Yes.

THE BROTHER. (*In high spirits*) Mamma coming! We'll go home soon, (*clapping his hands*) to have our New Year

dinner.

THE SISTER. Brother, don't make any noise, but sit down.
(*Push him to his seat.*)

SISTER A. (*Closes the doors of the clothespress and turns to the sister and brother*) Little brother, you sit here with your sister quietly for awhile. I am going upstairs.

SISTER A *disappears into the dining room on the left side.*

THE BROTHER. (*Suddenly stands up with a flash of interest*) Sister, what is she going to do?

THE SISTER. (*Feeling that this is unworthy of questioning*) Of course, she is going to look at the one upstairs.

THE BROTHER. (*Anxiously*) Who is upstairs?

THE SISTER. (*Whisperingly*) A lunatic.

THE BROTHER. (*Guessing intuitively*) A man?

THE SISTER. (*Decidedly*) No, a woman—a rich lady.

THE BROTHER. (*Abruptly*) How about the one downstairs?

THE SISTER. (*Again decidedly*) Also a lunatic. (*Knowing that her brother would ask more and more*) Don't ask any more.

THE BROTHER. (*Curiously*) Sister, just now they said that three persons died in this house.

THE SISTER. (*Nervously*) Yes—brother, let me tell you a funny story. Once there was a king—

THE BROTHER. (*Already interested*) No, tell me how those three person died, and who they were.

THE SISTER. (*Chicken-heartedly*) I don't know.

THE BROTHER. (*Knowingly sceptical*) Oh, yes! You know it, but you are not willing to tell me.

THE SISTER. (*Involuntarily*) Don't ask any question in this room. This room is haunted.

All of a sudden the sound of articles thrown on the floor, the clinking of iron chains, footfalls, weird laughter of a woman and a strange shrieking, are heard from upstairs.

THE BROTHER. (*A bit scared*) Listen!

THE SISTER. (*Holding her brother's hands tightly*) Brother!
(*Both of them lift their heads and stare at the ceiling, in tension.*)

The noises cease.

THE BROTHER. (*Calming down, and speaking very clearly*) Sister, that must be the one upstairs!

THE SISTER. (*Full of fear*) Let's go.

THE BROTHER. (*Obstinately*) No, if you don't tell me how

those three persons died in this house, I won't go.

THE SISTER. Don't be naughty! If Ma knows, she'll beat you.

THE BROTHER. (*Doesn't mind at all*) Oh, yes?

The door on the right side yields to a grey-haired old woman, who enters tottering, pauses for awhile as if her eyes are blind. She moves slovenly to the front of the window, peeping out through the crack between the curtains, and staggers towards the front stage, seeming to be listening to something. The two children looked at her excitedly

THE BROTHER. (*In his normal voice*) Who is she?

THE SISTER. (*In a whisper*) Hush! Don't talk, she is a lunatic.

THE BROTHER. (*Whispers stealthily*) This is probably the one downstairs.

THE SISTER. (*Her voice trembling*) I—I—I don't know. (*The strength ebbing away from her body, the old woman gradually sinks down*) Brother, look! she is falling down.

THE BROTHER. (*Undauntedly*) Let us help her up.

THE SISTER. No, don't go!

The old woman suddenly slants downwards, kneeling at the centre of the stage with her face to the side. The stage grows dim, the sound of the chorus at a distance is heard again.

THE BROTHER. (*Pulls his sister to the front to look at the old woman*) Sister, tell me what it is all about in this house, and what do these lunatics do?

THE SISTER. (*Scared*) No, you ask her. (*Points at the old woman*) She knows.

THE BROTHER. (*Urging*) No, sister, please tell me how was it that three persons died in this house. Who were they?

THE SISTER. (*Hurriedly*) I told you to ask her. She must know everything.

The old woman gradually falls down to the floor. The stage becomes completely dark, the sounds of the chorus of the Messiah and the huge organ are heard from afar.

VOICE OF THE BROTHER. (*Very distinctly*) Sister, you go and ask her.

VOICE OF THE SISTER. (*At a low pitch*) No, you ask her. (*The curtain falls*). You ask her!

The sound of the chorus of the Messiah

—Curtain—

ACT I.

When the curtain rises, the stage is completely dark; after ten seconds, it grows bright.

SCENE:—*Generally identical with that in the Prologue, except that the whole room assumes a comparatively more sumptuous appearance. It is a summer morning, ten years back in time, in the parlour of the Chou residence.*

The curtain of the recess is closely drawn up, as in the Prologue, with a pot of gorgeous flowers behind it. The door in the centre is open, its aperture being covered by a wire-gauze screen, through which one may peep out and see the shady verdure of the trees and plants in the garden, or hear the chirping of cicadas. The top of the clothes-press on the right side, over which is spread a yellow tablecloth, is occupied by cute little ornamental articles. An old photograph stands out most prominently in their midst, but it is strikingly out of harmony with the superb miniatures all around it. A smoking set de luxe and a few sundry articles lie on the low-table in front of the clothes-press. To its right, on the mantel-piece, there is a clock and a flower pot, with an oil painting hanging on the wall above. Two elbow-chairs stand in front of the fireplace, with their backs to the wall. The glass-doored cabinet to the left of the central door is packed with curios. The small long-stool in its front has a cushion with a green pattern, and in the left corner there are three or four thick satin cushions on the long sofa, which has not yet taken on the look of being time-worn. On the low-table before the sofa, a smoking set and a few other things are placed. The two small sofas and the round table, on which lie a box of Manila cigars and a fan, in the centre of the stage, are of a very luxurious make.

All the curtains are brand new. Everything betrays the signs of prosperity. The furniture in the room is unusually clean, and there is lustre wherever a piece of metal is to be found.

The room is stuffy with oppressive humid heat and heavy atmospheric pressure. Outside, there is no sunshine—a storm is brewing in the gloomy grey sky.

The rise of the curtain shows SHIH-FENG beside the tea-table to the right of the central door, with her back to the audience, filtering some medicinal broth. She fans herself with a rush fan and wipes the sweat off her face, every now and then. Her father LU KWEI by the side of the sofa in the left corner is

polishing the silverware on the low-table, in a very operose manner, his forehead exuding beads of perspiration.

SHIH-FENG is about 17 or 18 years of age, having a rosy sheen on her face indicative of her robust maidenhood. Her whole body is well developed. Her hands are fairly white and sizable, and her overgrown breasts quiver tremulously beneath her clothes as she walks. She wears an old white crêpe de chine coat, a pair of coarse Shantung silk drawers and a pair of cloth slippers that are no longer new. But she is neat and tidy from head to heel, and her movements are exceedingly brisk. As a result of two years' training at the Chou house, she speaks in a free and outspoken way, yet within the bounds of propriety. Her large, long-lashed, swimming eyes are capable of moving actively, or gazing respectfully with a comely frown. She has a conspicuous mouth and fairly broad and thick lips of a natural red colour. When smiling, she shows her symmetrical teeth as well as the two dimples beside her mouth. However, the general outline of her features is noble and reveals earnestness. Her complexion is not very white. As the weather is hot, there is a little sweat on the tip of her nose, which she wipes with her handkerchief at frequent intervals. She is very fond of smiling, and is conscious of her good looks, but at the moment, she is knitting her brows.

Her father, weary and wizened, looks more than forty years. brows and swollen eye-lids. His loose, drooping lips and the dark sunken arcs below his eyes, both suggest his extreme sensual abandon. His body is comparatively fatter in proportion. The muscles of his face are slack and disinclined to move, yet always capable of wearing humbly a flattering smile, like many servants of great houses. He is all understanding, especially in the matter of etiquette. His back is slightly bent, as if he is perpetually bowing to his master and answering "yes". Having a pair of exceedingly keen eyes, he frequently peeps greedily behind the curtain like a wolf, and is also steeped in calculation. Nevertheless, he is not sufficiently lion-hearted and, to take him on the whole, still looks weary and wizened. His clothes, though quite showy, are by no means neat and well-groomed. At the moment, he is scouring something with a piece of cloth; at his feet lies a pair of tan shoes, which he has just polished. Now and then, he wipes off the grease and sweat from his face with his clothes.

LU KWEL. (Gasping) Shih-fêng! (SHIH-FENG pretends not to hear him and continues to filter her medicinal broth.)

SHIH-FENG. (*Casts a glance at her father*) Phew! So hot!
(*Moves to the right side of the clothes-press, searches for a
rush fan, and returns to the tea-table in the centre, fanning
herself.*)

LU KWEI. (*Stops working and looks at her.*) Shih-fêng, do
you hear me?

SHIH-FENG. (*Wearily and coldly glances at her father.*) Yes,
father! What do you want?

LU KWEI. I am asking whether you heard what I said awhile
ago.

SHIH-FENG. I heard.

LU KWEI. (*Having always been so treated by his daughter, he
can only remark protestingly*) Mother's! This child!

SHIH-FENG. (*Turns her head to face the audience.*) Would you
please talk less of such nonsense! (*Fans herself and heaves
a sigh.*) Oh, the weather is so sultry. Most probably it will
rain after awhile. (*Abruptly*) Have you finished polish-
ing the master's leather shoes for travelling? (*Moves to the
front of LU KWEI and picks up one of the shoes, smiling
callously.*) So this is your polishing! Merely scouring it
carelessly like that—you ought to know the master's temper.

LU KWEI. (*Snatches the shoe from her.*) It's my business, and
there is no need of your minding it. (*Throws the shoe on
the floor*) Shih-fêng, you listen: let me tell you once more:
when you see your mother later in the day, don't forget to
show her all your new dresses.

SHIH-FENG. (*With disgust*) I have heard it.

LU KWEI. (*Proudly*) Just to make her think, who is the more
farsighted in doing things—she or your father.

SHIH-FENG. (*Laughs contemptuously*) Of course, *you* are the
more farsighted!

LU KWEI. Don't forget also to tell your mother that in the Chou
residence here, you have good things to eat and drink—only
attending on the mistress and the young-masters in the day,
whereas in the night you still follow her advice to go home
and sleep.

SHIH-FENG. This needs **no** telling. Mother will ask about it as a
matter of course.

LU KWEI. (*Proudly*) And what is more, money. (*Smiling
greedily*) You have also saved a lot of money!

SHIH-FENG. Money!

- LU KWEL. These two years' wages, tips and (*slowly*) those extras, they. . . .
- SHIH-FENG. (*Cuts in, being unwilling to hear what he intends to say.*) Those—haven't you taken them all away from me, sometimes one dollar and sometimes two, and spent them all on drinking and gambling?
- LU KWEL. (*Smiles to keep up countenance*) Look, look, you are again in such a mood. Getting so anxious. Anxious for what? I am not asking you for money. Hey, I say—what I say is—(*in a low voice*) he—hasn't he been giving you money continuously in secret?
- SHIH-FENG. (*Startled*) He? Who is he?
- KWEL. (*Speaks out bluntly*) The elder young-master.
- SHIH-FENG. (*Blushes and moves to the front of LU KWEL, her voice at a higher pitch*) Who says that the elder young-master has given me money? Father, you must have been driven crazy by poverty to talk such nonsense.
- LU KWEL. (*Smiles meanly*) All right, all right, he hasn't given you any. But in any case, haven't you saved some money in these two years? (*Jewishly*) I'm not asking you for money, you may rest assured. I only say that when your mother comes, show her your money and let her eyes grow bright.
- SHIH-FENG. Humph! Mother is not like you. When you see money, you even forget about your life. (*Returns to the teatable in the centre to filter the medicinal broth.*)
- LU KWEL. . . . (*Seats himself on the long sofa*) Money or no money, would it do without your father? Had you listened to your mother's advice and not come to get employment here at the Chou residence, would you be able to eat and drink everyday and wear *crêpe de chine* in such hot weather?
- SHIH-FENG. (*Turns her head away from him.*) Humph! Ma is a woman who knows where she stands. She has read books and cares for face, and wouldn't have let her own daughter attend on others.
- LU KWEL. What is face or no face? It's again your mother's slogan! Are you a lady of some illustrious family?
Mother's! Only a servant's daughter and you think you'll lose your standing through serving others!
- SHIH-FENG. (*Greatly angered, looks at her father and suddenly bursts out with disgust*) Father, look at the oil on your

- face—You had better polish the master's shoes all over again.
- LU KWEI. (*Quarrelsomely*) Care for face, eh? You are again following the ways of that pauperish bone of your mother. Just look at her. She wants to save her face, and has run her *mother's* distance of more than eight hundred *li* to become a maid-servant in a girl's school and cannot return home more than once in two years—merely for eight dollars a month. And you call this "knowing where she stands" and "having read books", eh? It's simply good-for-nothingness.
- SHIH-FENG. (*Suppressing her anger*) Father, you had better save a part of your speech and deliver it to me back home. This is their home the Chou residence!
- LU KWEI. Even if this is the Chou residence, that is no reason why I should not talk about my family affairs with my own daughter! Now let me tell you, your mother. . . .
- SHIH-FENG. (*Suddenly*) I have tolerated all this for a good while already. Let me tell you beforehand, mother seldom comes home once in an age. And this time she is merely coming back to see Brother and me. If you should give her any cause to be unpleasant, I will tell Brother about all the things you have done in these two years.
- LU KWEI. I—I—I—what have I done? (*Feeling that he has lost his prestige in the eyes of his daughter*) Drink a little, gamble a little, and play about a little—these three things—well, I'm a man of nearly fifty years, what have I to fear?
- SHIH-FENG. You think he would bother himself about those things! But the money he has been sending to Ma from the coal mine every month has been thievishly spent by you. If he knows it, he wouldn't let you go!
- LU KWEI. What dare he do? (*Loudly*) His mother having married me, I am his father.
- SHIH-FENG (*In shame*) Hold down your voice a little! There is no need of shouting. The mistress is upstairs, and is ill.
- LU KWEI. Humph! (*Loquaciously*) Let me tell you. I married your mother with great reluctance. You see, I am such a clever man. These scores of persons, high and low, in this Chou house . . . which one of them wouldn't say that Lu Kwei is a wonder? I had scarcely worked here for two months when my daughter gets a job in this mansion. Even speaking of your brother, could he ever have become a foreman at the coal mine of the Chous without me? Ask

your mother, could she have done it? But even so, I have been consistently opposed by your mother and brother. If your mother comes back this time wearing that widow's face of hers, I will disown her right front of your brother. I might even divorce her—you can never tell—in spite of her having given birth to a daughter for me and bringing with her from outside that luckless brother of yours, as something extra.

SHIH-FENG. (*Unwilling to hear*) Oh, father!

LU KWEL. Humph! (*Growing high-spirited from his denunciation*) Who knows which absurd egg was responsible for the birth of such a son.

SHIH-FENG. I don't see in what way Brother has done any injustice to you. Why should you curse him like that?

LU KWEL. But in what way has he done me any injustice? Enlisting as a soldier, pulling private rickchaws, becoming a mechanic, going to school to read books—in which of those professions has he done well? It wasn't easy for me to recommend him to the coal mine of the Chous and for him to work his way up to be a foreman. And then he quarrelled with the inspector of the mine and man-handled him.

SHIH-FENG. (*cautiously*) Didn't I hear that it was our master who had ordered the mine police to shoot the workers first, and that only then were the miners provoked and raised their hands?

LU KWEL. At any rate, that boy is an absurd egg. Eating other's rice, one should listen to other's words. While everything was going well he wanted to start a strike. Now he has to rely on my old face to beg the master's mercy.

SHIH-FENG. You must have made a mistake. Brother said he wanted to see the master today himself, not to ask you to beg his mercy.

LU KWEL. (*Proudly*) But what else can I do, being his father? Could I stand aside and do nothing?

SHIH-FENG. (*Looks at her father disdainfully and heaves a sigh*) Well, you had better take a rest. I have to go upstairs to take the medicine to the mistress. (*Takes up the bowl of medicinal broth and moves toward the dining room on the left side.*)

LU KWEL. Just a minute. I have one more word with you.

SHIH-FENG. (*Interrupts him*) The tiffin will be ready soon

- Have you prepared the master's Yunnan tea?
- LU KWEL. I needn't do that. The under-servants have long attended to it.
- SHIH-FENG. (*Evasively*) Ah, very well then. I am going.
- LU KWEL. (*Obstructing her*) Shih-fêng, there is no hurry. I have something to consult you about.
- SHIH-FENG. What is it?
- LU KWEL. Listen. Yesterday was the master's birthday, wasn't it? The elder young-master also tipped me with four dollars.
- SHIH-FENG. Very well. (*Bullyingly*) If I were the elder young-master, I wouldn't give you even a cent.
- LU KWEL. (*Smiles meanly*) You are quite right! Four dollars—what are they good for? After clearing up a few accounts, there is nothing left of them.
- SHIH-FENG. (*Smiles cunningly*) Then, you may ask Brother for some money later.
- LU KWEL. Shih-fêng, don't—has your father ever borrowed money otherwise than for clearing up accounts? Now that you are well off, you may as well let me have seven or eight dollars, as you please. Is that all right?
- SHIH-FENG. I have no money. (*Pauses to put down the bowl of medicinal broth.*) Are you really going to clear up your accounts?
- LU KWEL. (*Resorts to swearing*) If I am telling a lie to my own daughter, I am a son of a tortoise.
- SHIH-FENG. Don't deceive me. Tell me the truth and I may think of a way out for you.
- LU KWEL. Really! To tell the truth, I am not to be blamed. The handful of money I had yesterday was insufficient to cover the larger accounts, but a little more than necessary for the smaller ones. That's why I indulged in a little gambling. If I had won, wouldn't I have been able to clear up everything? But who ever knew that my luck would be so bad that after drinking and losing I owed people more than ten dollars.
- SHIH-FENG. So this is the truth, eh?
- LU KWEL. (*In earnest*) There is not a bit of lie in this.
- SHIH-FENG. (*Wilfully sarcastic*) Then let *me* tell you the truth: I don't have any money either. (*As she finishes the sentence, she proceeds to take up the bowl.*)
- LU KWEL. (*Anxiously*) But Feng, my child, what's wrong

- with you? You are my own child.
- SHIH-FENG. (*Mockingly*) Even your own child has no way to sell herself in order to clear up your gambling I.O.U.'s, my dear old sir.
- LU KWEL. (*Seriously*) Child, you had better see things clearly. Your mother's love for you is merely lip service. But I have been thinking over all your important affairs for you.
- SHIH-FENG. (*Understands him, but fails to see what he is driving at*) What have you in your heart to say?
- LU KWEL. (*Pauses, looks around cautiously, and goes nearer to SHIH-FENG, putting on a false smile.*) I say, the elder young-master has always mentioned you before me. He says—
- SHIH-FENG. (*Unable to control herself*) Elder young-master! Elder young-master! Are you crazy! I am going. The mistress will call me soon.
- LU KWEL. Don't go. Let me ask you one thing more. The day before yesterday, I saw the elder young-master buying some dress material—
- SHIH-FENG. (*Pulls a long face*). What now? (*Casts a cold glance at her father.*)
- LU KWEL. (*Scans SHIH-FENG's whole body.*) Um-m. (*Slowly picks up SHIH-FENG's hand.*) This ring on your finger— (*with a wily smile*) is this also given to you by him?
- SHIH-FENG. (*Disgusted*) The way you talk truly makes me feel nauseated.
- LU KWEL. (*Somewhat angry, bluntly*) Don't be so hypocritical. After all, you are my daughter. (*Suddenly smile greedily.*) For a servant's daughter to accept a few things or a little money from people, nothing can be said against her. It is all right. I understand it all.
- SHIH-FENG. Well, then, just speak out: how much money are you actually in need of?
- LU KWEL. Very little. Thirty dollars would do.
- SHIH-FENG. Ah! (*Maliciously*) Then you had better go and ask the elder young-master for them. I am leaving.
- LU KWEL. (*Angry from shame*) Good child, do you think I am really muddle-headed and do not know what you have been doing with that damned elder young-master?
- SHIH-FENG. (*Provoked into a fury*) Are you my father? Could there be such a thing as a father talking to his daughter like that?

LU KWEI. (*Villainously*) Since I am your father, I'll exercise control over you. Now let me ask you, the night before last—

SHIH-FENG. The night before last?

LU KWEI. I was not at home and you didn't go back until midnight. What had you been doing till that time?

SHIH-FENG. (*Evasively*) I was searching for something for the mistress.

LU KWEI. Why was it, then, that you returned home so late?

SHIH-FENG. (*Disdainfully*) A father like you is not qualified to question me.

LU KWEI. What a fashionable way of saying it! You just can't tell where you were!

SHIH-FENG. What was there that I can't tell?

LU KWEI. What then? Speak!

SHIH-FENG. It was like this. The mistress heard that the master had just come back, and wanted me to find the master's clothes.

LU KWEI. Ah! (*In a low voice, threateningly*) But who was the gentleman who saw you home at midnight? Who was he that was dead drunk in the motor-car, and talking nonsense to you?

SHIH-FENG. (*Frightened*) That—

LU KWEI. (*Laughs heartily*) Oh, there is no need of your explaining. That was the swell son-in-law of our Lu family! Humph! Ours is a wretched two-and-a-half-room house, yet there came a motor-car-owner boy-friend to call on the daughter of a poor servant like me! (*Suddenly turns severe*) I ask you, who is he? Speak!

SHIH-FENG. He...he...he is—

Enters LU TA-HAI, half-brother of SHIH-FENG, and stepson of LU KWEI. He is stout and strong, with thick black brows that almost shade his piercing eyes. His cheeks are slightly sunburnt, showing his extrarodinarily projecting cheek-bones, which together with his long, pointed chin, betrays his strong obstinate character. He has broad, thin lips, which are a contrast to his sister's passionate, thick, red lips of the Southern type. He stammers a little when he speaks, but when his feelings are excited, he is eloquent and sharp. At present, he has just come back from the coal mine six hundred li away. There has been a strike in the mine, and he is one of the "inciters". Several months of mental

tension have now made him look a little weary. His beard is all shaggy and, at a glance, he seems old enough to be LU KWEI's brother. On examining him at close range, one is able to notice that his eyes and voice are just as young and vigorous as his sister's, for both of them are like a volcano in eruption, full of energy and white heat. He wears the ordinary, blue-cloth short-coat of a worker, his grease-stained straw hat in hand, and a pair of black leather shoes, one of which has its lace missing. When he enters, he feels slightly uneasy, exposes part of his chest, and then clumsily buttons up one or two buttons. He speaks tersely and outwardly seems to be cold and indifferent.

LU TA-HAI. Sister Fêng!

SHIH-FENG. Brother!

LU KWEI. (To SHIH-FENG) Now you speak! Don't act dumb.

SHIH-FENG. (Looks at LU TA-HAI and begins insinuatingly.)
Brother!

LU KWEI. (Recklessly) Even in the presence of your brother you have to speak out.

LU TAI-HAI. What is the matter?

LU KWEI. (Throws a leer at LU TA-HAI and then turns his head to SHIH-FENG again.) None of your business.

SHIH-FENG. Nothing important, Brother. (To LU KWEI) All right father, we'll talk it over later. Is that all right?

LU KWEI. (Understandingly) Talk it over later? (Looks at SHIH-FENG once more to make sure.) All right then, let it be so. (Turns his head contemptuously to look at LU TA-HAI.) Say, how could you come in here so freely?

LU TA-HAI. (Tersely) I waited in the gate-keeper's shack for a long while, and there was no one to pay any heed to me. So I had to come in.

LU KWEI. Ta-hai, after all you are a rough miner, not knowing a bit of the discipline of a great house.

LU TA-HAI. But I'm no servant of the Chous.

LU KWEI. (Feeling himself justified) What you eat at the mine is also the Chous' rice.

LU TAI-HAI. (Coldly) Where is he?

LU KWEI. (Intentionally) He? Whom do you mean?

LU TA-HAI. Chairman of the Board of Directors.

LU KWEI. (In the manner of a headmaster to his pupil) If you mean the master, then say "master". What do you mean by "Chairman of the Board of Directors"? Since you have

come here to this house, you had better refer to him as the master.

LU TA-HAI. All right then, please go and tell him that a foreman of the mine wants to see him.

LU KWEI. In my opinion, you had better go home first. (*With confidence*) As regards your business at the mine, here is your father to make arrangements for you. You may stay here and enjoy reunion with your mother and sister for a couple of days. When your mother leaves, you may go back to the mine and the foreman's job there will still be yours.

LU TA-HAI. Do you mean to say that regardless of the strike put up by us mine workers as a whole, I should ask you to do some talking so that I may go back to work again?

LU KWEI. There is nothing awkward in this.

LU TA-HAI. (*Helplessly*) All right. But, please first go and ask him. I have something else to say to him.

SHIH-FENG. (*Expecting her father to go*) Father, see if the master's guest has left or not, and then show Brother in to see the master.

LU KWEI. (*Shakes his head at LU TA-HAI.*) Humph! I am afraid he won't see you.

LU TA-HAI. (*With courage and justification*) He ought to see me. I am also one of the representatives of the mine workers. The day before yesterday, we saw him once at the office of the Mining Corporation here.

LU KWEI. (*Dubiously*) Then let me go and make enquiry for you.

SHIH-FENG. Go ahead then. (*LU KWEI goes to the door of his master's study.*)

LU KWEI. (*Turns back*) If he allows you to see him, you should speak none of your rough speeches. Do you hear me? (*LU KWEI walks dexterously in the style of a "swell" lackey, and enters the study.*)

LU TA-HAI. (*His eyes following LU KWEI into the study*) Humph! He has forgotten that he is also a man.

SHIH-FENG. Don't talk like that, Brother. (*Pauses, sighing*) After all, he is our father.

LU TA-HAI. (*Looking at SHIH-FENG*) He is your father, I don't recognize him.

SHIH-FENG. (*Looks nervously at her brother. Then, suddenly something comes into her mind, and she runs to the door of*

- the study and peeps in.*) You had better speak in a lower voice. The master is right there in the adjacent room.
- LU TA-HAI. (*Looks at SHIH-FENG with contempt*) All right. . . . Mother is coming back soon. I think you had better quit the job here and go home like a good girl.
- SHIH-FENG. (*Surprised*) But why?
- LU TA-HAI. (*Briefly*) This is no place for you.
- SHIH-FENG. Why?
- LU TA-HAI. I—I—I hate them.
- SHIH-FENG. Ah!
- LU TA-HAI. (*Bitterly*) The Chous are mostly bad people. During these two years at the mine, I have seen all that they have done. (*Pauses, slowly*) I hate them.
- SHIH-FENG. What have you seen?
- LU TA-HAI. Sister Fêng, don't think that this is such a magnificent house It is nothing but the price of the sweat of those poor workers condemned to the hell of a mine.
- SHIH-FENG. Don't talk such nonsense. I have heard that this house is haunted.
- LU TA-HAI. (*Abruptly*) Say, I just saw a young man lying there in the garden, with pale face and closed eyes, as if he was dying. I have heard that this is the elder young-master of the Chou House, son of the Chairman of the Board of Directors. H'm, a just punishment, a just punishment.
- SHIH-FENG. (*Angrily*) You— (*Suddenly*) He is very kind to people, do you know that?
- LU TA-HAI. His father has played the rôle of the villain and made money through that. He can, of course, afford to do a little good.
- SHIH-FENG. (*Looks at LU TA-HAI*) I haven't seen you for two years. You have changed.
- LU TA-HAI. I have merely worked at the mine for two years. I haven't changed, but I see that you have changed.
- SHIH-FENG. I don't understand what you say. It seems that somehow you speak like the younger young-master.
- LU TA-HAI. Do you mean to insult me? "Young-master"! Humph! There should be no such expression in this world! (*LU KWEI re-enters from the study on the left side.*)
- LU KWEI. (*To LU TA-HAI*) Just as the master's guest had left and I was about to speak, there came another guest. I think we may as well go to the servants' quarters to sit for awhile.

LU TA-HAI. Then I would rather go in by myself.

LU KWEI. (*Obstructing him*) What are you doing?

SHIH-FENG. No, no.

LU TA-HAI. All right. Don't let them think that we workers are ignorant of etiquette.

LU KWEI. You see, these pauper's bones of yours! The old head says that he won't see you, and that's that. What does it matter if you wait for awhile at the servants' quarters? Let me go with you. Such a big house, this—you are liable to stumble into the wrong way. (*Moves to the door in the centre and turns his head.*) Shih-fêng, don't go away. I'll be back in a minute. Do you hear me?

SHIH-FENG. You go ahead. (*Exit LU KWEI and LU TA-HAI. She feels her forehead wearily and speaks to herself.*) Oh, Mother!

From the garden outside comes the lively voice of a young man, calling "SHIH-FENG!" His quick footsteps are intermingled with the thuds of his leaps and bounds, as he gradually approaches the door in the centre.

SHIH-FENG. (*Somewhat surprised and nervous*) Ah, the younger young-master.

The voice is at the doorway.

THE VOICE. Shih-fêng, Shih-fêng! Where are you? (*SHIH-FENG hurriedly hides herself behind the sofa.*) Shih-fêng, are you in this room?

Enters CHOU CH'UNG. In spite of his adolescent body, he has a full-grown heart as well as all childish fancies. He is young, only seventeen years of age, and has dreamt of numerous intangible things. He is living in beautiful dreams. At the moment, his eyes are moving in rapture; his face is all flushed and moist with sweat. He is smiling. Holding a tennis racket under his left arm, he is rubbing off the perspiration from his face with a piece of white towel in his right hand. He wears a white tennis outfit. He calls SHIH-FENG's name in a low voice.

CHOU CH'UNG. Shih-fêng, Shih-fêng. (*SHIH-FENG steals a look at him.*) Humph! Where has she gone? (*Moves to the dining room on the right side on tip-toe, opens the door and calls in a suppressed voice*) Shih-fêng, please come out. Shih-fêng, I've something to tell you. Shih-fêng, happy news. (*He goes to the door of the study and calls in a still lower voice.*) Shih-fêng! *A voice issues from the study.*

THE VOICE. (*Severely*) Is that Ch'ung?

CHOU CH'UNG. (*Nervously*) Yes, Father.

THE VOICE. What are you doing here?

CHOU CH'UNG. (*Nervously*) Yes, Father.

THE VOICE. (*Imperatively*) Go away from here, quick. She is not here. (CHOU CH'UNG *turns his head away from the door and makes a wry face.*)

CHOU CH'UNG. H'm! Strange. (*In despair, he moves toward the dining room on the right side, faintly calling SHIH-FENG as he goes.*)

SHIH-FENG. (*Seeing that the younger young-master has gone, she heaves a sigh of relief.*) He has gone! (*Anxiously stares at the door leading to the garden.*)

LU KWEI *comes in from the door in the centre.*

LU KWEI. (*To SHIH-FENG*) Who was calling you just now?

SHIH-FENG. The younger young-master.

LU KWEI. What for?

SHIH-FENG. Who knows?

LU KWEI. (*Reproachfully*) Why didn't you answer him?

SHIH-FENG. Oh, I—(*wipes off her tears*) didn't you ask me to wait here for you?

LU KWEI. (*Consolingly*) What? You have cried?

SHIH-FENG. I haven't cried.

LU KWEI. Why do you cry, child? What is there to be sad about? (*As if at a theatrical performance*) What of it, since we are poor? Poor men can't afford to be punctilious. It just can't be helped. You have to tolerate everything a little bit. Everybody knows that my child is a good child.

SHIH-FENG. (*Lifts her head*) Well, would you please speak out straightforwardly?

LU KWEI. (*Feels embarrassed*) You see, awhile ago, I went to the servants' quarters. Those sons of a tortoise have come to this mansion to demand payment of my accounts. In the presence of all the people here, both high and low, I don't think I can save my face without twenty dollars.

SHIH-FENG. (*Takes out her money*) My money is all here. I intended to buy some clothes for Mother. Now, you may take this first to meet your expenses.

LU KWEI. (*Feigns to decline the offer*) But wouldn't you then be left penniless?

SHIH-FENG. Well, well, now don't be so polite.

LU KWEL. (*Receives the money with a smile and counts it.*)
Only twelve dollars?

SHIH-FENG. (*Frankly*) I have only this much in cash.

LU KWEL. But how can I send off my creditors who have blocked up the gate for my payment?

SHIH-FENG. (*Suppressing her anger*) You tell them to go to our home and collect it in the evening. Let's think a way out later, when we see Mother. As to this sum of money, you may keep it for your own expenses.

LU KWEL. (*In high spirits*) This given to me? Well then, I'll take it as a token of your filial piety to your father. Ah, good child, I have known for a long time that you are a filial child.

SHIH-FENG. (*Helplessly*) That's that. Now, please let me go upstairs.

LU KWEL. Look here, who has ever tried to discipline you? Go ahead now, and mention to the mistress that Lu Kwei has been concerned about her health.

SHIH-FENG. I know. I won't forget. (*Takes the bowl of medicinal broth and starts to go.*)

LU KWEL. (*Buoyantly*) Oh yes, Shih-fêng, I have still one more thing to tell you.

SHIH-FENG. You had better reserve it and tell me later. I have to take this medicinal broth to the mistress.

LU KWEL. (*Insinuatingly*) You see it's your own business. (*Puts on a false smile.*)

SHIH-FENG. (*Pulls a long face.*) What business do I have? (*Lays down the bowl.*) Well, let's clear up all our accounts today before I go.

LU KWEL. Look, you are again getting anxious. Truly, you'd become a real lady in no time—so good at playing up your temper!

SHIH-FENG. I am perfectly able to control myself. You go ahead and speak.

LU KWEL. Child, don't behave like this. (*Seriously*) I advise you to be more careful.

SHIH-FENG. (*Mockingly*) Why should I be more careful, now that I have no more money left?

LU KWEL. Let me tell you, there has been something wrong with the mistress's countenance these days.

SHIH-FENG. What has that to do with me?

LU KWEL. I am afraid the mistress is annoyed to see you.

SHIH-FENG. Why?

LU KWEL. Why? Let me warn you. The master is much older than the mistress, and the mistress does not like the master. The elder young-master was not borne by this mistress, and there is not much difference between their ages.

SHIH-FENG. I know all about that.

LU KWEL. But the mistress has a warmer love for the elder young-master than for her own son.

SHIH-FENG. As a step-mother, she has to act like that.

LU KWEL. Do you know why no one would come to this room in the evening? Even when the master is away at the mine, there is not a single person here even in the day-time?

SHIH-FENG. Isn't it that this room is haunted by ghosts at midnight?

LU KWEL. Do you know what those ghosts look like?

SHIH-FENG. I have only heard that sometime ago people used to hear the sound of sighing in this room, sometimes it's crying and sometimes laughing. It is said that some people died in this house and became ghosts.

LU KWEL. Ghosts! There can be no mistake. But I have seen them on the sly.

SHIH-FENG. What? Did you see them? What did you see? Ghosts?

LU KWEL. (*Proudly*) That's your father's good luck.

SHIH-FENG. Speak on.

LU KWEL. At that time, you had not yet come here. The master was at the mine, and in such a large gloomy house, there were only the mistress, the younger young-master and the elder young-master living in it. The house was then already haunted by ghosts. The younger young-master was chicken-hearted and asked me to sleep outside his bedroom. It was autumn, and one midnight the younger young-master suddenly aroused me, saying that were ghosts in the parlour, and asked me to go and make an investigation. His face had turned blue and even I felt my hair standing on end. But then I was a new servant and since the young-master had asked me to go, how dare I disobey him?

SHIH-FENG. Did you go?

LU KWEL. I swallowed two gulps of *shaochiu*, passed by the lotus pond, and stealthily picked my way to the verandah outside

that door. I heard a sobbing in the house, as if some female ghost was crying. The sobbing was só sad. The more I was afraid, the more I liked to steal a look. So I risked my head and peeped in through the crack in the window.

SHIH-FENG. (*Gasping*) What did you see?

LU KWEI. On this table here, there was a candle light just about to flicker out. I saw hazily two ghosts in black garments sitting side by side, one seeming to be a male and the other a female, with their backs towards me. The female ghost appeared to be leaning against the male ghost's side and weeping. The male ghost drooped his head and sighed all the time.

SHIH-FENG. Ah! Really this house is haunted!

LU KWEI. Isn't it? Emboldened by wine, I coughed lightly through the window crack. Then, immediately I saw the two ghosts separate and look in my direction, so that their faces straight faced me. And all at once I actually saw ghosts!

SHIH-FENG. Ghosts? What did they look like? (*Pauses, while LU KWEI looks around.*) Who—?

LU KWEI. It was then that I saw that female ghost. (*Turns his head and speaks in a low voice.*) It was our mistress!

SHIH-FENG. Our mistress? Who was the male one?

LU KWEI. That male ghost,—now don't be scared. It was none other than the elder young-master.

SHIH-FENG. He!

LU KWEI. Precisely. He was playing the ghost with his step-mother in this room.

SHIH-FENG. I don't believe it. You must have made a mistake.

LU KWEI. Don't deceive yourself. That's why you, child, had better be philosophic and not be absurd. These Chous are all like that.

SHIH-FENG. (*Shakes her head.*) No, you are wrong. He could never be like that.

LU KWEI. Have you forgotten? The elder young-master is only six or seven years younger than the mistress?

SHIH-FENG. I do not believe it. It—it—it is not likely.

LU KWEI. All right, it is up to you to believe it or not. Anyway I have given you the clue. The reason why there is something wrong with the mistress's attitude toward you is because of you . . . because you and—

SHIH-FENG. (*Unwilling to hear him say that there was actually such a thing*) If the mistress had known that you were eaves-dropping at the door, she would never have let you go.

LU KWEI. Exactly. I was sweating all over my body from the shock, and I ran away before they went out.

SHIH-FENG. But didn't the younger young-master ask you about it later?

LU KWEI. He asked me, but I told him that I had not seen anything. So the matter dropped.

SHIH-FENG. Hum! But, the mistress being the type of woman she is, I don't think she would let the matter drop?

LU KWEI. Of course, she was very shrewd, and tried to get something out of me by means of word-tactics. But I did not let out a word. These two years have gone by, and possibly they think that it was actually some ghost coughing that night.

SHIH-FENG. (*Speaking to herself*) No, no. I don't believe it. Had there been such a thing, he would have told me.

LU KWEI. You say that he would tell you, but just think, who are you and who is he? If you hadn't got a good father to be their servant, do you think they would treat you with a good heart? Now, you are again dreaming of becoming a lady, you! Even if you. . . .

SHIH-FENG. (*Suddenly bursts out as though from suffocation.*) You stop! (*Suddenly rises*) Mother is coming back today. You have talked all this nonsense—all this nonsense!—because you think I am overwhelmed with joy? Oh, will you please leave me alone?

LU KWEI. Look here, I am telling you the truth and advising you to be wiser. But instead of appreciating this, you have turned angry. Oh, you! (*He scans SHIH-FENG callously with his eyes, and is visibly scornful, seeming to be satisfied with the effect of what he has just said and feeling that he is wiser than all men. He goes to the tea-table and picks up a cigarette from the box; as he is about to light the cigarette, he suddenly remembers that he is in the Chou residence. Hence, he changes his mind and steals like an old hand a few cigarettes and cigars, and puts them in his own silver-plated cigarette case, which is so worn-out that the brass underneath is exposed.*)

SHIH-FENG. (*Watches with disgust LU KWEI completing his thievish enterprise. Contemptuously.*) Well, is this all you

have to say? If so, I have already known all about it. (*She takes up the bowl of medicinal broth and leaves.*)

LU KWEL. Don't go. I haven't finished my word yet.

SHIH-FENG. You haven't finished?

LU KWEL. I have just come to the main issue.

SHIH-FENG. I am sorry, old man, but I am unwilling to listen any more. (*She turns to go.*)

LU KWEL. (*Holds her hand.*) You have got to listen!

SHIH-FENG. Leave me alone! (*Anxiously*) I am going to yell!

LU KWEL. Let me tell you one thing before you raise your voice again. (*Breathing into SHIH-FENG'S ear*) Later your mother will come here to see you. (*Releases her hand.*)

SHIH-FENG. (*Her face turning pale*) What?

LU KWEL. As soon as she alights from the train, she'll come straight to this house.

SHIH-FENG. It's against mother's will for me to serve in a big house. Why did you tell her to come here to see me? When I go home in the evening, I'll naturally see her. What is your purpose in asking her to come here?

LU KWEL. It's not I, lady Shih-fêng. It's the mistress who wanted me to ask her to come here.

SHIH-FENG. The mistress wants her to come here?

LU KWEL. Yes. (*Mysteriously*) Strange, isn't it? Without any relationship or friendship, yet, you see, the mistress insists on asking her to come here to have a chat.

SHIH-FENG. Oh, good heavens! Would you please be frank about it?

LU KWEL. Do you know why it is the mistress stays upstairs alone, composing verses and practicing calligraphy, and feigns to be sick, and doesn't want to come down?

SHIH-FENG. As soon as the master comes home, the mistress always behaves like that.

LU KWEL. But there is something wrong this time, isn't there?

SHIH-FENG. Then tell me, quick.

LU KWEL. Haven't you sensed it at all? Hasn't the elder young-master made any remark about it?

SHIH-FENG. I know that in the past half a year or so, he seldom talked to the mistress.

LU KWEL. Really? Well, what has been the mistress's attitude towards you?

SHIH-FENG. She is unusually good to me these days, better than

ever before.

LU KWEL. That's it! Let me tell you, the mistress knows that I am unwilling to see you leave here. This time she is going to talk to your mother herself, to ask her to roll up your bedding and take you away with her—to roll out of here like an egg!!

SHIH-FENG. (*In a low voice*) She wants me to go—but why?

LU KWEL. Humph! You know that yourself. And besides—

SHIH-FENG. (*Whispers.*) What does she want Mother to come here for?

LU KWEL. Precisely. She wants to speak to your mother on a very important matter.

SHIH-FENG. (*Suddenly divines the truth*) Oh, Father. But in any case I should never let Mother know of my affair here. (*With the mingled feeling of fear and regret, she bursts into painful tears.*) Oh, Father, just think: when Mother left me the year before last, she bade you to take good care of me and warned you against sending me to any big house to be a maid. You ignored her, and you wanted me to come here. Mother doesn't know all these things. She loves me and pities me. I am her good child. I can never let her know these things—not even till my death. (*She flings herself over the table.*) Oh, my mother!

LU KWEL. Child! (*He knows what is the proper thing to do when his drama develops to a certain situation. He lightly caresses his daughter.*) Now you can see that your father is good to you, eh? Father loves you. Don't fear, don't fear! The mistress won't dare do anything. She won't dismiss you.

SHIH-FENG. Why not? She hates me, she hates me.

LU KWEL. She hates you, but—humph! It's impossible for her not to know that there is a man whom she has reason to be afraid of.

SHIH-FENG. How can she be afraid of anyone?

LU KWEL. Humph! She is afraid of your father! Have you forgotten about the two ghosts I told you about? Your father knows how to handle ghosts. Last night I asked her to give you a day off. She said, when your mother comes back she wants me to tell her to come here. Judging from her attitude in the last few days, I could half guess her intention. So I seized an opportunity to say a word or two with reference to that midnight incident. She is a clever woman and, of

course, understood what I meant. Humph! If she were to play the innocent with me, I would become a trouble to her now that the master is at home. I know she is a woman difficult to deal with, but whoever does any wrong to my daughter, I'll stake my life against him.

SHIH-FENG. Father! (*Lifts her head*) But you shouldn't be rash!

LU KWEI. In this house I have no esteem for anybody except the old head. Don't get anxious. Here is your father. Moreover, possibly it's merely my guessing at random. She may not have such an intention. On the face of it, however, she merely tells me that she wants to meet your mother and have a chat with her, because she has heard that your mother knows how to read and write.

SHIH-FENG. (*Suddenly pricks up her ears at something.*) Father, don't talk. I seem to hear someone coughing in the dining room. (*Point to the left side.*)

LU KWEI. (*Listens*) I wonder if it is the mistress. (*Goes to the door leading to the dining room, peeps through the keyhole, and hurriedly comes back.*) It's she. Strange, she has come downstairs.

SHIH-FENG. (*Wipes off her tears.*) Father, have I dried my tears?

LU KWEI. Don't be scared. Don't let your face betray anything. And make no remark about anything. I am going.

SHIH-FENG. By the way, when Mother comes, please let me know first.

LU KWEI. Oh yes, when you see your mother, be sure to pretend that you know nothing. Do you hear me? (*Goes to the door in the centre and then turns his head.*) Don't forget to tell the mistress that Lu Kwei is concerned about her health.

LU KWEI goes out hurriedly through the door in the centre. SHIH-FENG moves to the dining room, the medicine bowl in hand. When she reaches the door, CHOU FAN-YI enters. The incomer is obviously a courageous yet sulky woman. Her face is all pallid, except for her faintly red lips. Her big, gloomy, grey eyes and the high bridge of her nose make one feel that she is somewhat awe-inspiring. But from her eyes and brows one may detect that she is melancholy. Whenever her heart is burning with the fire of pent-up misery, her eyes beneath her quiet long eye-lashes would

flash with a young woman's pain and from despair. The corners of her lips, slightly curving backwards, show an oppressed woman exercising control over herself. When she coughs lightly, her thin, long, snow-white hands are wont to press against her weak, flat breast till she is able to take a breath, and then she would feel her flushed cheeks and gasp. She is a woman of the old Chinese type, with all the refined fragility, sad quietness, charming brilliance, and the love for poetry and literature. But she also has something of the primitive savage nature in her heart, in her courage, in her fervent crazy thoughts, and in the strength that comes to her when making a mystifyingly sudden decision. Taken as a whole, she seems to be a piece of crystal that can only give spiritual comfort to a man. Her prominent forehead indicates a mellow power of comprehension, seeming to be only good for refined conversation. But when she is lost in the vast sea of emotive fancy and suddenly smiles happily, or when upon seeing her beloved one, a blush suffuses her cheeks, and her two dimples deepen their vortices, you will come to realize that she is a woman capable of being loved and deserving to be loved. You will also realize that after all she is a woman, and like all young women, she could love you like a dog chewing its favourite bone after three days' starvation. Should she hate you, she would bawl at you like a mad dog, nay, she would most probably devour you up in sullenness and with hatred. But outwardly she is quiet, reserved, vexed and sad. She is like a leaf that drifts lightly to the ground beside you in the twilight of an autumn evening. She feels that her summer has already gone by—the luminous sunset in the horizon has long dimmed in the falling shadows.

She is dressed entirely in black. Her gown is trimmed with silver-grey pipings. A moon-fan hangs on her finger as she comes in. The sockets of her eyes are slightly sunken. She looks at SHIH-FENG with perfect composure.

SHIH-FENG. (*Curiously*) Mistress, how is it that you have come downstairs? I am just ready to send the medicine to you.

CHOU FAN-YI. (*Coughs*) Is the master in the study?

SHIH-FENG. Yes, the master is receiving a guest there.

CHOU FAN-YI. Who has come?

SHIH-FENG. Awhile ago it was the architect of our new house.

But I don't know who is the guest now. Do you want to see the master?

CHOU FAN-YI. No. The old maid servant told me that this house has been sold to a church to be converted into a hospital. Is that true?

SHIH-FENG. Yes, the master has given orders to pack up the small things. The larger furniture has been partly moved to the new residence.

CHOU FAN-YI. Who says we are going to move?

SHIH-FENG. The master has been pressing us to do the removing since his return.

CHOU FAN-YI. (*Halts suddenly.*) Why is it that I was not informed?

SHIH-FENG. The master says that since you are indisposed, he is afraid that you will be annoyed.

CHOU FAN-YI. (*Pauses again and looks around.*) I haven't come downstairs for two weeks and this room seems to have changed.

SHIH-FENG. Yes, the master says the original arrangement was uncomely. And besides, several pieces of your new furniture have been moved away. The present arrangement is made by the master himself.

CHOU FAN-YI. (*Looks at the clothes-press on the right side*) This is the clothes-press he loves best. It's again put up here, eh? (*Sighs*) Of course, everything has to be in compliance with his will. He is a man who won't let anything slip through his fingers. (*Coughs and sits on the soft.*)

SHIH-FENG. Mistress, your face looks as if you have a fever. I think it is better for you to go upstairs and take a rest.

CHOU FAN-YI. No, it's too hot upstairs. (*Coughs.*)

SHIH-FENG. The master says your sickness is quite serious, and has given us orders to request you to lie down in your room up-stairs.

CHOU FAN-YI. I don't want to lie in bed. By the way, I have forgotten; when did master come back from the mine?

SHIH-FENG. The night before last. Master noticed that you had a high fever, so he bade us not to arouse you, and slept alone downstairs.

CHOU FAN-YI. I remember so far I haven't seen the master come in the day-time.

SHIH-FENG. Yes, in these two days the master has been busy attending meetings with members of the Board of Directors of the mine. Only in the night does he come upstairs to see

you. But then you would already have locked your door.

CHOU FAN-YI. (*Paying no heed to her*) Ah, ah! How is it that it's also so sultry downstairs.

SHIH-FENG. Yes, it is very oppressive. Early in the morning, the sky was completely covered up by dark clouds. Most probably there will be a shower today.

CHOU FAN-YI. Will you give me a larger fan? Really, I somehow feel that I can't even breathe. (*SHIH-FENG gives her a moonfan. CHOU FAN-YI glances at SHIH-FENG and then intentionally turns her head away from her.*) Why is it that I haven't seen the elder young-master these days?

SHIH-FENG. Probably he is very busy.

CHOU FAN-YI. I have heard that he is also going to the mine. Is he?

SHIH-FENG. I don't know.

CHOU FAN-YI. Haven't you heard the news?

SHIH-FENG. Only that the servants attending on the elder young-master have been busy packing up his clothes these days.

CHOU FAN-YI. What is your father doing now?

SHIH-FENG. Probably he is buying some sandalwood for the master. He asked me to enquire after your health, madam.

CHOU FAN-YI. So, he's concerned about me, is he? (*Pauses, then suddenly*) Hasn't he got up yet?

SHIH-FENG. Who?

CHOU FAN-YI. (*It was out of her expectation that SHIH-FENG would ask such a question, but she immediately composes herself.*) Well, the elder young-master, of course.

SHIH-FENG. I don't know.

CHOU FAN-YI. (*Casts a glance at her*) Eh?

SHIH-FENG. I haven't seen him all this morning.

CHOU FAN-YI. When did he return last night?

SHIH-FENG. (*Blushing*) Please consider, every evening I go home to sleep. How can I know?

CHOU FAN-YI. (*Beyond herself, speaks sharply and with jealousy.*) Ah, every evening you go home to sleep! (*Feels that she has made a slip in her speech.*) Now that the master has come back, there is no one else in the house who can attend on him satisfactorily. How could you go home every evening?

SHIH-FENG. But madam, didn't you tell me to go home to sleep?

CHOU FAN-YI. But then, master was not at home.

SHIH-FENG. I am afraid that the master, being accustomed to chanting the Buddhist canons and observing vegetarian practices, would not like to have us attending on him. I have heard that the master has always loathed women.

CHOU FAN-YI. Ah! (*Looks at SHIH-FENG, thinking of her own experiences.*) Well, (*in a low voice*) it is difficult to say. (*Suddenly lifts her head and opens her eyes wide.*) As you have said, he is leaving in a few days. But where is he going to after all?

SHIH-FENG. (*Nervously*) Do you mean the elder young-master?

CHOU FAN-YI. (*Looks askance at SHIH-FENG*) Yes!

SHIH-FENG. I don't know. (*Stammeringly*) He . . . he used to return home at two or three o'clock in the morning. I seem to have heard my father grumbling this morning about opening the gate for him in the early hours of the morning.

CHOU FAN-YI. Has he been indulging in drinking?

SHIH-FENG. I am not clear. (*Tries to think of some new subject for conversation.*) Madam, do you want to drink the medicinal broth?

CHOU FAN-YI. Who says that I am to take medicine?

SHIH-FENG. It's the master's order.

CHOU FAN-YI. I haven't invited any doctor. Where comes the medicine?

SHIH-FENG. The master says that your disease is a liver trouble. This morning he recalled an old prescription for you some-time ago, and gave us orders to fetch the medicine as prescribed. He said that as soon as you woke up, the medicinal broth should be ready for you.

CHOU FAN-YI. Has it been brewed already?

SHIH-FENG. Yes, it has been here for cooling a long time already. (*She takes the bowl over to her mistress.*) Will you please drink this?

CHOU FAN-YI. (*Takes a sip*). Very bitter. Who brewed it?

SHIH-FENG. I.

CHOU FAN-YI. It tastes too bad. Throw it away!

CHOU FAN-YI. Yes. (*Recalls the stern face of CHOU P'U-YUAN, her husband.*) If not, you may leave it there. Oh, no, (*with disgust*) you had better throw it away.

SHIH-FENG. (*Hesitates*) Yes?

CHOU FAN-YI. All these years I have been swallowing such bitter medicine. I am fed up with it.

SHIH-FENG. (*The bowl in hand*) You had better tolerate it a bit and drink a little. After all, it's bitter medicine that cures sickness.

CHOU FAN-YI. (*Anger suddenly rises from her heart.*) Who wants you to persuade me? Throw it away! (*Feels that her behaviour has gone beyond the bounds of her position.*) I have heard the old maid say that the master has come back much thinner this time.

SHIH-FENG. Yes, much thinner, and much darker. It is said that the strike at the mine is still going on and the master has been extremely anxious.

CHOU FAN-YI. Isn't the master very much displeased?

SHIH-FENG. The master is still as usual. Besides seeing guests, chanting the Buddhist canons, and keeping up physical culture, he scarcely speaks one word.

CHOU FAN-YI. Hasn't he talked to the young-masters?

SHIH-FENG. When he saw the elder young-master, he merely nodded to him without a word. But he asked the younger young-master about his affairs at the school. Oh, by the way, the younger young-master enquired after your health this morning.

CHOU FAN-YI. At the moment I am not inclined to talk. You may just tell him that I am quite well, and that's all. Later, you may ask our accountant to give the younger young-master forty dollars, saying that amount is for him to buy books.

SHIH-FENG. The younger young-master has been longing to see you.

CHOU FAN-YI. Then tell him to come upstairs to see me. (*Stands up and walks a few paces.*) Humph! this old house is eternally so suffocating. The furniture has all mildewed, and everyone in the house seems to be gohst-like!

SHIH-FENG. (*With deliberation*) Madam, may I ask you to give me a day off to-day?

CHOU FAN-YI. Your mother is coming back from Tsinan, isn't she? Yes, your father has told me so.

In the garden, CHOU CH'UNG is again calling "SHIH-FENG, SHIH-FENG!"

CHOU FAN-YI. You go and see. The younger young-master is

calling you.

CHOU CH'UNG *calls* "SHIH-FENG."

SHIH-FENG. I am here.

CHOU CH'UNG *comes in from the door in the centre, wearing a white coat.*

CHOU CH'UNG. (*Upon entering, he only sees SHIH-FENG*) Shih-fêng, I have been looking for you all morning. (*See CHOU FAN-YI.*) Mother, how is it that you have come downstairs?

CHOU FAN-YI. Ch'ung, why is your face so red?

CHOU CH'UNG. I have just played tennis with a schoolmate. (*Warmly*) I have a lot of things to talk to you. Are you better now? (*Sits beside his mother.*) These two days I been paying you visits upstairs. Why do you lock your door all the time?

CHOU FAN-YI. I want to be in peace. Look at me, how do I look? Shih-fêng, fetch a bottle of aerated water for the younger young-master. (*To CHOU CH'UNG*) Look, your face is all red.

SHIH-FENG *goes out through the dining room door.*

CHOU CH'UNG. (*In high spirits*) Thank you. Let me look at you. I think you are quite well, not a bit ill. Why do they always say that you are sick? But you hide yourself alone in your room. You see, Father has been back for three days and you haven't even seen him yet.

CHOU FAN-YI. (*Looks at CHOU CH'UNG sadly.*) I am indisposed at heart.

CHOU CH'UNG. Oh, Mother, please don't be so. Father has been unjust to you, but he is old. I am your future. I'll marry the best girl. Mother, you will live together with us and I am sure we'll make you happy.

CHOU FAN-YI. (*The shadow of a faint smile flashes across her face.*) Happy? (*Abruptly*) Ch'ung, you are already seventeen, aren't you?

CHOU CH'UNG. (*He likes his mother to be so abrupt and strange sometimes.*) Mother, you see, if you should again forget about my age, I would certainly be angry with you!

CHOU FAN-YI. Your mother is not a good mother. Sometimes she even forgets where she herself is. (*Meditates*) Yes, it's eighteen years now—in this old house. You see, your mother has grown old, hasn't she?

CHOU CH'UNG. No, Mother. What are you thinking of?

CHOU FAN-YI. I am not thinking of anything.

CHOU CH'UNG. Mother, do you know that we are going to change our house? Father told me yesterday that we're going to move into the new house day after to-morrow.

CHOU FAN-YI. Do you know why Father wants to move?

CHOU CH'UNG. Just think—has Father ever told us anything before it is carried out? But I think he is old. He says that from now on he will no longer do his business at the mine. And besides, this old house is somewhat unlucky. By the way, Mother, don't you know that this house is haunted? At midnight, in the autumn of the year before last, I seemed to have heard something.

CHOU FAN-YI. Now, don't talk any more.

CHOU CH'UNG. Mother, do you also believe it, then?

CHOU FAN-YI. I don't believe it. But this old house is very strange. I like it very much. I have always felt that there is something about this house that holds me and won't let me go.

CHOU CH'UNG. (*Suddenly buoyant*) Mother—

SHIH-FENG *re-enters with a bottle of aerated water.*

SHIH-FENG. Younger young-master.

CHOU CH'UNG. (*Rises*) Thank you. (SHIH-FENG *blushes and pours out the aerated water.*) Please fetch another glass for the lady, will you? (SHIH-FENG *goes out.*)

CHOU FAN-YI. (*Looking at them without moving an eyelid*) Ch'ung, why are both of you so polite to each other?

CHOU CH'UNG. (*Drinks the water*) Mother, I have intended to tell you that it's because of— (SHIH-FENG *re-enters*) —I'll tell you later. Mother, how about the fan you promised to paint for me?

CHOU FAN-YI. Have you forgotten that I have been sick?

CHOU CH'UNG. Oh, yes, please excuse me. I—I—why is this room so hot?

CHOU FAN-YI. Probably it is because the windows are not open.

CHOU CH'UNG. Let me open them.

SHIH-FENG. The master has told us not to open them. He says that the heat outside is even greater than inside.

CHOU FAN-YI. No, Shih-fêng, open them. He has been away for two years at a stretch. How can he know the dead atmosphere in this house? (SHIH-FENG *draws aside the curtain in front of the recess.*)

- CHOU CH'UNG. (*Seeing that SHIH-FENG has difficulty in moving the flower pot in front of the windows.*) Shihfêng, leave it alone and let me do it. (*Goes over to her.*)
- SHIH-FENG. I can do it alone, younger young-master.
- CHOU CH'UNG. (*Argues*) Let me— (*The two lift the flower pot and, when laying it down, it crushes SHIH-FENG's hand. A weak cry of pain escapes SHIH-FENG's lips.*) How is it, Shih-fêng? (*Holds her hand.*)
- CHOU CH'UNG. Never mind. I'll go and fetch some plaster for you.
- CHOU FAN-YI. Ch'ung, there is no need. (*Turns to SHIH-FENG*) Go to the kitchen and take a look, and ask them if the vegetarian dishes for the master have been prepared.
- SHIH-FENG *leaves*; CHOU CH'UNG *watches her disappearing through the door in the centre.*
- CHOU FAN-YI. Ch'ung, (*CHOU CH'UNG returns*) sit down. Now tell me.
- CHOU CH'UNG. (*Looks at his mother with beaming hope and happiness on his face.*) Mother, I have been happy these few days.
- CHOU FAN-YI. It's a good thing that you are able to be happy in this house.
- CHOU CH'UNG. Mother, I have never concealed anything from you. You are not an ordinary mother. You are most courageous, and full of imagination, and most sympathetic with my thoughts.
- CHOU FAN-YI. I'm glad.
- CHOU CH'UNG. Mother, I want to tell you one thing. . . . Oh, I want to consult you about one thing.
- CHOU FAN-YI. Tell it to me first.
- CHOU CH'UNG. Mother, (*mysteriously*) you won't blame me?
- CHOU FAN-YI. I won't blame you, child. Now go ahead.
- CHOU CH'UNG. (*Joyfully*) Yes, Mother— (*Again pauses, hesitantly*) No, no, no, I won't speak.
- CHOU FAN-YI. (*Laughs*) But why?
- CHOU CH'UNG. I— I am afraid that you will be angry with me. (*Pauses*) After my telling you, would you still love me as usual?
- CHOU FAN-YI. Crazy child, Mother will love you always.
- CHOU CH'UNG. (*Smiles*) My good mother, really you will still love me and won't be angry with me?

- CHOU FAN-YI. Yes, really. Now speak.
- CHOU CH'UNG. Mother, after I have finished telling you, I won't allow you to tease me.
- CHOU FAN-YI. No, I won't tease you.
- CHOU CH'UNG. Really?
- CHOU FAN-YI. Really.
- CHOU CH'UNG. Mother, I am in love with someone.
- CHOU FAN-YI. Ah! (*Her fear and suspicion being confirmed.*) Ah!
- CHOU CH'UNG. (*Examining his mother's fixed eyes*) Mother, you see, from your looks you seem to say that I should not?
- CHOU FAN-YI. No, no, this remark of yours reminds me . . . it makes me think that I must . . . Ah! no, no, no, you go ahead. You go ahead and tell me who the girl is?
- CHOU CH'UNG. She is the world's most—(*Casts a glance at his mother.*) No, Mother. You see, you may laugh at me again. Well, anyway, she is what I recognize to be the most satisfactory girl. She has a simple heart. She knows the joy and happiness of living. She understands sympathy. She comprehends the meaning of labour, and the best thing, she is not born with a silver spoon in her mouth and brought up in luxury in the rank and file of ladies.
- CHOU FAN-YI. But you like an educated girl, don't you? Has she read any books?
- CHOU CH'UNG. Of course she hasn't. That is her—I may as well say, that is her only defect. But she is not to be blamed.
- CHOU FAN-YI. Ah! (*Her eyes grow dim. She cannot help asking further and gravely.*) Ch'ung, do you mean Shih-fêng?
- CHOU CH'UNG. Yes, Mother. I know, Mother, people would laugh at me, and you won't sympathize with me.
- CHOU FAN-YI. (*Astonished; pauses and speaks to herself.*) What? Even my own child also . . .
- CHOU CH'UNG. (*With anxiety*) You don't approve of it? Do you think that I have done the wrong thing?
- CHOU FAN-YI. No, no, not that. I am afraid that girl won't give you happiness.
- CHOU CH'UNG. Yes, she is a girl of intelligence and feeling. Besides, she understands me.
- CHOU FAN-YI. Are you not afraid of your father's disappointment with you?

- CHOU CH'UNG. That's my own business.
- CHOU FAN-YI. What if people criticize you?
- CHOU CH'UNG. I mind that still less.
- CHOU FAN-YI. In this respect, you are like my own child. But I am afraid you have gone the wrong way. First, she is after all an uneducated girl of low class. Since you like her, of course, she deems it her good luck.
- CHOU CH'UNG. Mother, do you think that she has no principle of her own?
- CHOU FAN-YI. Ch'ung, you are over-estimating people irrespective of what they are.
- CHOU CH'UNG. Mother, I reckon that this statement of yours does not apply to her. She is the purest and most thoughtful good girl. Yesterday, I proposed to her—.
- CHOU FAN-YI. (*Greatly shocked*) What? You 'proposed'? (*The word "proposed" makes her want to laugh.*) You 'proposed' to her?
- CHOU CH'UNG. (*Very seriously. He doesn't like the attitude of his mother.*) Don't laugh at me, Mother! She has turned me down. But I am very happy, because it makes me feel that she is all the more noble. She says she is unwilling to marry me.
- CHOU FAN-YI. Ah! 'Turned you down!' (*This phrase also sounds ridiculous to her.*) She has even turned you down. Hum! I understand her.
- CHOU CH'UNG. Do you think that her refusal is calculated hypocrisy? No, no. She says that she has another man in her mind.
- CHOU FAN-YI. She did not say who he was?
- CHOU CH'UNG. I did not ask her. Probably he is her neighbour or someone she sees frequently. But real love is bound to meet with obstacles and difficulties. I love her, and she will gradually understand me and love me.
- CHOU FAN-YI. My son can never marry her, even if he desires it.
- CHOU CH'UNG. Mother, why do you hate her like that, Shih-fêng is a good girl. Behind you, she always admires and respects you.
- CHOU FAN-YI. What do you intend to do now?
- CHOU CH'UNG. I mean to tell Father of my intention.
- CHOU FAN-YI. Have you forgotten what sort of man your

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at once forced me to get out of his room.

CHOU FAN-YI. What else did he say?

CHOU CH'UNG. Nothing else. He seemed to be very lonesome, and I was sorry for him. Why has he remained single up to the present?

CHOU FAN-YI. (*Murmuring*) Who knows? Who knows?

CHOU CH'UNG. (*Hearing a footfall outside, he turns to look.*)

Hey, here comes Brother.

The door in the centre opens. Enters CHOU P'ING. He is about 28 or 29 years old, pale faced, and a little taller than his half-brother. His features are fair enough to merit the description of "handsome", but he is by no means a man whom a woman would fall for at first sight. He has broad black brows, thick ear-lobes, and large fleshy palms, so that sometimes he makes people feel at a cursory glance that he is imbecile. But, if you sit face to face with him for a longer while, you will feel that he is not so lovably naive as you imagine. He has been chiselled, so to speak. Though the crude part of his character has become refined and delicate through the process of education, yet that flaming savage strength, which is a part of the rudimentary life of primitive man and is able to refine steel and smelt iron, has turned him sceptical, cowardly and mysterious, as a result of melancholy and seclusion from life. After exchanging two or three sentences with him, you will know that he is a handsome but empty form, like a wheat sprout in the wilderness transplanted into a nursery, which though it may also flower and yield fruit is void and fragile, and unable to stand the wind and frost of realities. In the grey gloomy look of his eyes, you can see unsteadiness, dubiousness, cowardice and contradiction. When his eyes grow dim and their pupils slightly glitter, you will know that he is introspecting his errors and blunders in his innermost heart, but he is afraid of people detecting that he is useless and merely living in a small psychic sphere of his own. But don't think that he is incapable of doing something surprising, or that he hasn't the courage of a man! No, when the tide of his emotion surges up in him—yes, just look at the exciting and constantly changing curves in the corners of his eyes, and at the keen and impulsive thick red lips of his—you will see that at such times he would recklessly do something for which he would have to curse himself for life, and that it is impossible for his life to be well planned out at all. The corners of his lips are

slack and drooping. The slightest fatigue would make his pupils turn dull, so that they will give you the impression that he is incapable of self-control or doing anything regularly throughout his life. But he is fully aware of his own weakness and he has been trying to reform. Nay, it is better to say that he is eternally repenting for his instinctive errors. For whenever a new impulse comes to him, his passion and lust would rush on him en masse like the tide and overwhelm him. The speck of his reasoning power is merely a withered twig of a tree that is being drifted into a whirlpool, and in a stupor he does things which he himself recognizes as not being quite the thing. In such a way, one great blunder is quite spontaneously succeeded by a still greater one. It follows, then, that he is by no means a man devoid of the sense of morality and love, yet at the same time, he is yearning for "life", feeling that he is also made of flesh and blood. As a result, he feels uncomfortable, he despises himself, and he admires all people who dare to do evil without restraint, so that he even has sympathy for LU KWEL. He also admires all people who are able to lay hold of one undertaking and go ahead with it, who lead what is commonly called a moral life, to be model citizens or exemplary elders of families, so that he also has admiration for his father. In his experience, his father seems to be a flawless man except for his obstinacy and inhumanity, but these characteristics are also to his liking, because he hasn't got them himself. He feels that he is wrong to deceive his father in that particular respect, not that he loves his father so much (of course, he cannot say that he doesn't love him), but that he thinks he himself is mean like a rat that stealthily bites a lion when it is asleep. On the other hand, like all people who are impulsive and yet fond of introspection, he bitterly hates himself all the more, whenever his instinct releases him and his rationality returns and cools him down; he would then realize even more deeply that it is an outrage against human nature, and he would make himself the target of the aftermath of all his sins. He wants to save himself. He wants new strength, and is willing to seek for anything that may help him to save himself from the miserable sea of contradiction. When he meets SHIH-FENG, he at once feels that she is fresh and full of vitality, which he has discovered to be flowing in her veins—just the thing he needs most. She has youth, beauty, and is full-blooded. Of course, he also sees that she is crude, but then he intuitively feels that such is exactly

what he wants. Gradually he loathes all women who are being overwhelmed with melancholy, which has eaten up his own heart. He also hates all women who have been cultured by education (because they would remind him of his own defects), as well as all feelings that are refined and delicate. He feels "fed-up".

However, these ripples of feeling are secretly weaving and lurking in his heart, and he is merely drifting along with the current. He can no longer analyse himself rationally and in cold blood. He is afraid, for at times he fears to look into the infirmities of his heart. Now, he cannot but love SHIH-FENG. He wants to love her wholeheartedly, in the hope that in that way he may forget himself. Naturally, he also knows that his love this time is not merely for curing his soul, for there is also a thirst for it in him. But he does not feel that there is any contradiction such as in the case of his previous affaire d'amour. He contemplates treating her nicely, feeling that by so doing he will be at peace with his conscience. Having experienced her virgin warmth and sweetness, he feels anew that his heart has turned bright and clear, and sees the sunshine in his innermost soul. And he thinks: "She is probably the woman who can save me!" Hence, he gives her his life. But the memory of yesterday still grips his heart like a huge iron hand. Now and then, especially in the presence of CHOU FAN-YI, he feels the pain like needle-pricks in his bosom, and he yearns to leave the place for good—to get away from this old house that reminds him of his endless nightmares, and go somewhere else. Before he is able to break off from "the cramped cage", when SHIH-FENG is unable to understand him and console his penitential anguish, he cannot help indulging in wine, in extravagant sensual pleasures, and in all external excitements. Consequently, his spirit becomes downcast and gloomy, giving him the look of being restless and unsteady.

At the moment, he wears a navy blue silk gown, a pair of Western trousers and patent leather shoes. He is unshaved, untidy as a whole, and yawning.

CHOU CH'UNG. Brother.

CHOU P'ING. So, you are here.

CHOU FAN-YI. (Sensitive of his indifference to her) P'ing!

CHOU P'ING. Yes? (Lowers his head, and then lifts it again.)

You—you are also here.

CHOU FAN-YI. I've just come downstairs.

CHOU P'ING. (*Turns to CHOU CH'UNG.*) Hasn't Father gone out?

CHOU CH'UNG. No. Do you want to see him?

CHOU P'ING. I desire to have a talk with Father before I go away. (*Goes toward the study.*)

CHOU CH'UNG. Don't go there.

CHOU P'ING. What is he doing?

CHOU CH'UNG. He's probably talking business with someone. I saw him a minute ago. He said that he would come here in a moment, and asked us to wait for him.

CHOU P'ING. Then, I'll return to my room and write a letter. (*He turns to go.*)

CHOU CH'UNG. No, Brother. Mother hasn't seen you for a long time. Aren't you willing to sit here for awhile and have a chat together?

CHOU FAN-YI. You see, your brother likes to be alone. You may as well let him go and have a rest.

CHOU P'ING. (*Somewhat vexed*) Not necessarily so. I'm merely afraid that you are busy, since Father has come back. So—

CHOU CH'UNG. Don't you know that Mother has been ill?

CHOU FAN-YI. How can your brother take my illness as his heart's concern?

CHOU P'ING. Are you better now?

CHOU FAN-YI. Yes, thank you. I have just come downstairs.

CHOU P'ING. Good, for I am ready to leave home tomorrow for the mine.

CHOU FAN-YI. Ah, (*pauses*) very well. When will you be back?

CHOU P'ING. I'm not sure. Maybe after two years, or three. H'm, how is it that this room is so stuffy?

CHOU CH'UNG. The windows have been opened already. I think probably a storm is gathering.

CHOU FAN-YI. (*Hesitates a little*) What are you going to do at the mine?

CHOU CH'UNG. Have you forgotten, Mother, that Brother took special courses in mining?

CHOU FAN-YI. Is this the reason, P'ing?

CHOU P'ING. (*Picks up some newspapers to read and to conceal himself*) Difficult to say. It seems that I've stayed home too long and feel terribly bored.

CHOU FAN-YI. (*Laughs*) I'm afraid it's your cowardice.

CHOU P'ING. What do you mean?

CHOU FAN-YI. Have you forgotten that this house was once haunted?

CHOU P'ING. No, I haven't forgotten. But I have grown tired of this place.

CHOU FAN-YI. (*Smiles*) If I were you, I would loathe all the people around here, and I would also leave this dead place for good.

CHOU CH'UNG. Mother, I don't want you to talk like that.

CHOU P'ING. (*Depressed*) Humph! I haven't even had enough of hating myself. Do I deserve to say that I loathe others? (*Gives a sigh.*) Brother, I think I'm going back to my room. (*Rises.*)

The door of the study opens.

CHOU CH'UNG. Don't go. It seems that Father is coming.

The door of the study is half open, showing a part of the body of CHOU P'U-YUAN, who is talking to some one inside: "My idea is to do it this way. There is no other question. Very well. See you again. Excuse my not seeing you out."

The door opening wide, CHOU P'U-YUAN enters. He is between 50 and 60 years of age, grey-haired, wearing a pair of oval gold-rimmed glasses, behind which his deep-set stern eyes are glittering. As in the case of all people who have enriched their own families and made a career for themselves, his dignified carriage appears to be all the more stern and awe-inspiring in the presence of his children. The garments he wears were the fashion twenty years ago: a Mandarin-gauze gown with round patterns, and a white crêpe de chine shirt underneath. The button on the collar of his long gown is not in its hole, hanging loose and disclosing the flesh on his neck. His clothes adhere to his body in a very free and easy manner, being neat and tidy and free from the slightest trace of dust and dirt. He is a little fattish and his back is somewhat bent with age. The flesh on his pallid cheeks sags laxly and the sockets of his gleaming eyes are sunken. His face bears marks of numerous years of exertion and experience in the world. From his cold sharp glance and his sneering smile, which is occasionally forced to appear at the corners of his mouth, one may tell his tyranny, egotism, and obstinacy in everyday life. The rashness and prodigality of his youth has been so deeply buried beneath the wrinkles on his face that not a single trace of it is to be found. Only his hoary hair, parted and smoothly combed backward, still

suggests the man about town of his past. Under the sunlight, his face takes on a silverwhite sheen, which in the opinion of people is the very special symptom of a successful man and is, therefore, responsible for his owning such a vast mining estate. He is in the habit of combing the grey beard on his chin with a tiny ivory comb and wearing a large ring on his thumb.

He is in good spirits as he stalks in.

CHOU P'ING.

CHOU CH'UNG. (*At the same time*) Father.

CHOU CH'UNG. Has the guest gone?

CHOU P'U-YUAN. (*Nods in the affirmative and turns to CHOU FAN-YI.*) How is it that you have come downstairs to-day? Are you completely well now?

CHOU FAN-YI. My sickness was not so serious to begin with. Have you been well since you returned?

CHOU P'U-YUAN. Quite well. But you ought to go upstairs and take a rest. (*To CHOU CH'UNG*) Ch'ung, what do you think of your mother's appearance now in comparison with that of sometime ago?

CHOU CH'UNG. Mother didn't have much of an illness even at the very beginning.

CHOU P'U-YUAN. (*Displeased to hear his child replying to him in such a way, he shows the white of his eyes and speaks gravely.*) Who told you that? During my absence, did you often come and enquire after your mother's health? (*Seats himself on the sofa.*)

CHOU FAN-YI. (*Fearing that he will again start on a paternal admonition*) P'u-yüan, you look as if you have lost some weight. How is the strike at the mine?

CHOU P'U-YUAN. They went back to work yesterday morning. So everything is settled.

CHOU CH'UNG. But, Father, how is it that Lu Ta-hai is still here waiting to see you?

CHOU P'U-YUAN. Who is Lu Ta-hai?

CHOU CH'UNG. Son of Lu Kwei. He was recommended into the mine the year before last, and is this time a representative of the workers.

CHOU P'U-YUAN. That fellow! I think there is a certain background behind him. The management of the mine has already dismissed him.

CHOU CH'UNG. Dismissed! But, Father, that man has a clear

head. I have just had a talk with him. It is unnecessary that a representative of the workers on strike should be dismissed.

CHOU P'U-YUAN. Humph! Nowadays, it seems to be the fashion for young men to talk with workers and give them a few sympathetic words that will do them neither harm nor good!

CHOU CH'UNG. I think that we ought to be sympathetic with those people who struggle for the good of their own group. Besides, it is not right for us, who have been enjoying so much prosperity, to insist on our pound of flesh. It is not a question of fashion or no fashion.

CHOU P'U-YUAN. (*Shows the white of his eyes.*) What do you know about society? How many books on social economy have you read? I remember the time when I was studying in Germany. I think I was much more thorough-going in those things in comparison with your half-a-bottle-of-vinegar socialistic ideas!

CHOU CH'UNG. (*Crestfallen, but nevertheless—*) Father, I have heard that the mine is not going to pay any compensation to the injured workers in the present incident.

CHOU P'U-YUAN. (*Chin up*) I reckon that you have talked too much this time. (*To CHOU FAN-YI*) These two years he has succeeded in imitating you very well. (*Looks at his watch.*) There will be another guest coming after ten minutes. Well, have anyone of you anything else to say?

CHOU P'ING. Father, I intended to see you awhile ago.

CHOU P'U-YUAN. Yes, what for?

CHOU P'ING. I intend to go to the mine tomorrow.

CHOU P'U-YUAN. Have you finished handing over your business at the Corporation here?

CHOU P'ING. Almost finished. I wish to request you to assign some substantial work to me. I don't desire any work that only requires my glancing over.

CHOU P'U-YUAN. (*Pauses to look at CHOU P'ING*) Are you any good for hard work? If you really want to work, then work to the last. I don't like to see my son give people cause for criticism.

CHOU P'ING. I have been too comfortable with my job here these two years. I desire very much to go to the rural districts in the interior.

CHOU P'U-YUAN. Let me think. (*Pauses.*) You may leave to-

morrow. I'll send a telegram to you when you arrive at the mine, as regards what sort of work you will be assigned to.

SHIH-FENG *enters from the dining room door, with a cup of Yunnan tea in hand.*

CHOU P'ING. (*Hesitatingly*) Father.

CHOU P'U-YUAN. (*Knowing that he has something new to bring up*) Yes, you?

CHOU CH'UNG. Now I want to consult you about a very important thing.

CHOU P'U-YUAN. What?

CHOU CH'UNG. (*Lowers his head.*) I intend to put aside a part of my tuition—

CHOU P'U-YUAN. Yes.

CHOU CH'UNG. (*Musters up his courage.*) To put aside a part of my tuition and give it to—

CHOU P'U-YUAN. (*SHIH-FENG puts down the tea cup in front of him.*) Shih-fêng— (*To CHOU CH'UNG*) Just a minute. (*To SHIH-FENG*) Where is the medicine I told you to brew for the lady?

SHIH-FENG. It has been brewed.

CHOU P'U-YUAN. Why don't you bring it here? (*SHIH-FENG makes no reply, but merely looks at CHOU FAN-YI.*)

CHOU FAN-YI. (*Feeling that things are going to turn out badly*) She brought it to me awhile ago, but I didn't drink it.

CHOU P'U-YUAN. Why not? . . . (*Pauses. To SHIH-FENG*) Where's the medicine?

CHOU FAN-YI. (*Quickly*) Thrown away. I told Shih-fêng to throw it away.

CHOU P'U-YUAN. (*Slowly*) Thrown away? (*Still slower*) Thrown away! (*To SHIH-FENG*) Is there some left?

SHIH-FENG. There is still a little left in the medicine pot.

CHOU P'U-YUAN. (*Low and slow*) Bring it here.

CHOU FAN-YI. (*Rebelliously*) I'm unwilling to drink such bitter stuff.

CHOU P'U-YUAN. (*To SHIH-FENG*) Bring it here. (*SHIH-FENG goes to the left side to pour out the medicinal broth.*)

CHOU CH'UNG. Father, since Mother is unwilling, why do you force her to drink it?

CHOU P'U-YUAN. You and your mother both don't know what your own sicknesses are. (*To CHOU FAN-YI, in a low voice*) Just drink it and you'll be completely cured. (*Seeing that*

- SHIH-FENG *is hesitating, he points at the broth.*) Give it to the lady.
- CHOU FAN-YI. (*Tolerantly*) All right. Put it here for the time being.
- CHOU P'U-YUAN. (*Displeased*) No, you had better drink it now.
- CHOU FAN-YI. (*All of a sudden*) Shih-fêng, take it away.
- CHOU P'U-YUAN. (*Suddenly turns stern*) Drink it! Don't let yourself loose in the presence of your grown-up children.
- CHOU FAN-YI. (*Her voice trembling*) I don't want to drink it.
- CHOU P'U-YUAN. (*To CHOU CH'UNG*) Ch'ung, take the medicine to your mother.
- CHOU CH'UNG. (*Protestingly*) Father!
- CHOU P'U-YUAN. (*Looks at him angrily*) Go! (*CHOU CH'UNG cannot but take the bowl of broth to his mother.*) Say: Mother, please drink it.
- CHOU CH'UNG. (*Holding the bowl in his trembling hands, he turns his head and addresses his father, at a high pitch of voice*) Father, please don't do this.
- CHOU P'U-YUAN. (*Loudly*) I want you to say it.
- CHOU P'ING. (*Head low, he goes to CHOU CH'UNG and speaks to him in a low voice*) Please obey Father. You know what Father's temper is like.
- CHOU CH'UNG. (*There being no other way, he has to turn to his mother with tears in his eyes.*) Please drink it. Please drink it for my sake, else Father's anger will not calm down.
- CHOU FAN-YI. (*Imploringly*) Well, isn't it possible to reserve it for me to drink in the evening?
- CHOU P'U-YUAN. (*Cold and stern*) Fan-yi, a mother should give a thought to her children in every respect. Even if you don't care for your own health, you ought to set an example of obedience to your children.
- CHOU FAN-YI. (*Looks around, glancing at CHOU P'U-YUAN and then at CHOU P'ING. Then she takes up the bowl with tears trailing down her cheeks, but suddenly she puts it down again*) Oh, no! I can't gulp it down!
- CHOU P'U-YUAN. (*To CHOU P'ING*) P'ing, persuade your mother to drink it.
- CHOU P'ING. Father! I—
- CHOU P'U-YUAN. Go! Go to your mother, kneel down before her, and entreat her. (*CHOU P'ING goes to CHOU FAN-YI.*)
- CHOU P'ING. (*Imploringly*) Oh, Father!

CHOU P'U-YUAN. (*Shouts*) Kneel down! (CHOU P'ING *looks at* CHOU FAN-YI. *and* CHOU CH'UNG; *the former's face is tearstained, the latter's whole body is trembling.*) I say, kneel down! (CHOU P'ING *kneels down right in front of* CHOU FAN-YI.)

CHOU FAN-YI. (*Fixes her eyes on* CHOU P'ING *and speaks quickly before he kneels down.*) I drink! I drink right now! (*Takes up the bowl and drinks a few gulps, being so angry that her tears flow again. She casts a glance at the rigid eyes of* CHOU P'U-YUAN *and at the distressed* CHOU P'ING, *then swallowing her indignation, she empties the bowl in one gulp.*) Oh, Heaven! (*She cries and runs off the stage into the dining room on the right side.*)

After an awkward suspense—

CHOU P'U-YUAN. (*Looks at his watch*) Still three minutes more. (*To* CHOU CH'UNG) What did you want to say awhile ago?

CHOU CH'UNG. (*Lifts his head slowly*) What?

CHOU P'U-YUAN. You said you want to put aside a part of your tuition. Yes? What do you intend to do with it?

CHOU CH'UNG. (*In a low voice*) Now I have nothing to say.

CHOU P'U-YUAN. You really haven't got some novel idea in mind?

CHOU CH'UNG. (*On the verge of tears*) Nothing, nothing. What Mother said was right. (*Runs toward the dining room.*)

CHOU P'U-YUAN. Where are you going, Ch'ung?

CHOU CH'UNG. I'm going upstairs to see Mother.

CHOU P'U-YUAN. Are you running away like this?

CHOU CH'UNG. (*Controls himself and comes back.*) Yes, Father, I'm going. Do you have anything to say to me?

CHOU P'U-YUAN. Go ahead, then. (CHOU CH'UNG *moves for a few steps toward the dining room.*) Come back.

CHOU CH'UNG. Father?

CHOU P'U-YUAN. Tell your mother that I have already invited the German doctor Krieg to come and look at her.

CHOU CH'UNG. Hasn't Mother already taken your medicine?

CHOU P'U-YUAN. I have noticed that there is something wrong with your mother mentally. Her sickness seems to be quite serious. (*Turns to* CHOU P'ING) I have noticed that it is the same with you.

CHOU P'ING. Father, I want to retire and have a rest.

CHOU P'U-YUAN. No, don't go. I've something to talk to you.
(*To CHOU CH'UNG*) Tell her that Dr. Krieg is a famous specialist in brain troubles. I knew him in Germany. Tell her that she must see him when he comes. Hear me?

CHOU CH'UNG. Yes, Father... (*Goes for a few paces.*) Father, nothing else?

CHOU P'U-YUAN. Now you go upstairs. (*CHOU CH'UNG exits through the dining room door.* CHOU P'U-YUAN turns to look at SHIH-FENG.) Shih-fêng, I remember I have told you that you have to leave this room whenever you have nothing to do here.

SHIH-FENG. Yes, Master... (*Also goes out through the dining room door.*)

LU KWEI enters from the study.

LU KWEI. (*Seeing his master, he involuntarily feels as if he is unable to speak.*) Ma-ma-master. The guest has come.

CHOU P'U-YUAN. Well, show him first into the big parlour.

LU KWEI. Yes, Master. . . . (*Exit.*)

CHOU P'U-YUAN. Who has opened the windows?

CHOU P'ING... Brother opened them for me.

CHOU P'U-YUAN. Close them... (*Wipes his glasses.*) Don't let any servant come in here freely. I intend to take a rest here alone after awhile.

CHOU P'ING. Yes.

CHOU P'U-YUAN. (*Looks around at the furniture, while wiping his spectacles*) The furniture in this room is for the most part what your own mother loved best when she was living. I moved from the South to the North, and have since changed my abode many times, but I would never give up this furniture. (*Puts on his glasses and coughs.*) I like to see the arrangement in this house made as it was thirty years ago, so that my eyes may look at it and feel more comfortable. (*Waddles to the table and examines the photograph on it.*) Your own mother always preferred to have the windows closed in summer.

CHOU P'ING. (*Forces a smile.*) But, Father, in commemorating Mother, it is unnecessary to—

CHOU P'U-YUAN. (*Suddenly lifts his head*) I have heard that you have now done an injustice to yourself.

CHOU P'ING. (*Taken aback*) Wha—what?

CHOU P'U-YUAN. (*Approaches CHOU P'ING and speaks to him in a low voice.*) Do you know what you have done is also an injustice to your father? And also—(*Pauses*)—an injustice to your mother?

CHOU P'ING. (*At a loss what to do*) Father!

CHOU P'U-YUAN. (*Kindly, holding CHOU P'ING's hand.*) You are my elder son. I don't want to talk about the matter in the presence of others. (*Pauses, gasps, and then turns stern*) I have heard in these two years you have been playing the devil at home during my absence.

CHOU P'ING. (*All the more shocked.*) Father, no such thing. No, no.

CHOU P'U-YUAN. If a man dares to do a thing, he should take it on himself like a man.

CHOU P'ING. (*Turns pale*) Father!

CHOU P'U-YUAN. The Corporation people say that you have been always hopping about in cabarets, especially in the last two or three months, drinking, gambling, and staying away from home all night.

CHOU P'ING. Ah, (*heaves a sigh of relief*) you mean—

CHOU P'U-YUAN. Is all this true or not? (*After a moment's suspense*) Speak the truth!

CHOU P'ING. It's true, Father. (*Blushes painfully.*)

CHOU P'U-YUAN. You are a man approaching thirty. You ought to know how to take care of yourself! Do you still remember why you're named P'ing?

CHOU P'ING. Yes, I remember.

CHOU P'U-YUAN. Then state the reason.

CHOU P'ING. It is because my own mother's name was Shih-p'ing. On her death bed, she named me after herself.

CHOU P'U-YUAN. Then, I beg you to reform yourself completely for the sake of your mother.

CHOU P'ING. Yes, Father. It was my temporary heedlessness.

LU KWEI *enters from the study.*

LU KWEI. Ma-ma-master. The guest has been wai-wai-waiting for a long while already.

CHOU P'U-YUAN. I know. (*Exit LU KWEI.*) My home is what I deem to be the most perfect and orderly. And I also think that my sons are sound healthy children. I am positively unwilling to hear anyone criticizing the children brought up under my family education.

CHOU P'ING. Right, Father.

CHOU P'U-YUAN. Attendants! *(To himself)* Yes, I am a little tired. *(CHOU P'ING supports him to the sofa. Enters LU KWEI.)*

LU KWEI. Master.

CHOU P'U-YUAN. Show the guest in here.

LU KWEI. Yes, Master.

CHOU P'ING. No, Father, you had better take a rest.

CHOU P'U-YUAN. No, don't mind my business. *(To LU KWEI)* Go and show the guest in.

LU KWEI. Yes, Master.

Exit LU KWEI. CHOU P'U-YUAN produces a cigar, which CHOU P'ING lights for him, and sits in an upright posture, smoking leisurely.

—Curtain—

ACT II.

After tiffin, it is very gloomy and sultry. The air, laden with moisture, is oppressive to the people in the house, making them feel vexed and impatient. CHOU P'ING enters from the dining room alone. Looking out into the garden, he finds it to be lonely and deserted. He goes on tip-toe to the study, but there again it is empty and unoccupied. Then suddenly he recalls that his father is receiving a guest somewhere else and, reassuring himself, moves to the window and opens it. He looks at the shady green of the groves outside and blows a peculiar faint whistle, calling "SHIH-FENG!" intermittently three or four times in a low voice. In a moment he seems to hear some one whistling back from a distance and gradually coming near. "FENG-ERH!" he slowly calls. And a feminine voice outside the door answers, "P'ING, is it you?" As CHOU P'ING closes the window, SHIH-FENG enters from the outside on tip-toe.

CHOU P'ING. *(Turns his head to look at SHIH-FENG who is coming in through the door in the centre. He speaks to her in a warm but low voice.)* Fêng-êrh! *(Goes to her and holds her hand.)*

SHIH-FENG. No. *(Pushes him away)* No, no. *(Pricks her ears and looks around.)* Look if there's some one.

CHOU P'ING. There's no one, Fêng. Please sit down. *(Gently pushes her down on the sofa.)*

SHIH-FENG. (*Uneasily*) Where's the master?
 CHOU P'ING. Oh, he is in the big parlour.
 SHIH-FENG. (*Sits down and heaves a deep sigh as she glances at her lover.*) You're always stealthy like this.
 CHOU P'ING. Um-m-m.
 SHIH-FENG. You don't even dare to call me.
 CHOU P'ING. That's why I want to leave this place.
 SHIH-FENG. (*Muses for a moment*) Ah, the mistress should really be pitied. Why did the master lose his temper with the mistress the first time he saw her after his return?
 CHOU P'ING. Father is precisely such a man. He can never put up with contradiction. His opinion is law.
 SHIH-FENG. (*Nervously*) I—I am so afraid.
 CHOU P'ING. Afraid of what?
 SHIH-FENG. I'm afraid if the master should know of— Oh, I'm afraid. Once you said that you were going to tell him about our affair.
 CHOU P'ING. (*Shakes his head and speaks gravely*) This is really not what we ought to be afraid of.
 SHIH-FENG. What else then?
 CHOU P'ING. (*Suddenly*) You haven't heard any gossip?
 SHIH-FENG. What? (*Pauses*) No.
 CHOU P'ING.. Concerning me. You haven't heard anything?
 SHIH-FENG. No.
 CHOU P'ING. You have never heard anything?
 SHIH-FENG. (*Unwilling to bring the matter up*) No. What did you say?
 CHOU P'ING. Then—nothing! Nothing?
 SHIH-FENG. (*Earnestly*) I believe you. I believe hereafter you'll never deceive me. This is enough for me. Awhile ago I heard you say that you're going to the mine tomorrow.
 CHOU P'ING. I told you last night.
 SHIH-FENG. (*Bluntly*) Why don't you take me with you?
 CHOU P'ING. Because— (*Smiles*) —because I don't intend to take you along.
 SHIH-FENG. As things stand now, I have to leave here sooner or later. You can never tell, the mistress may dismiss me today.
 CHOU P'ING. (*The thought has never occurred to him.*) She wants to dismiss you. Why?
 SHIH-FENG. Please don't ask.

CHOU P'ING. No, I want to know.

SHIH-FENG. Of course it is because I have done something wrong. I think probably the mistress has no such intention. Maybe it's my guessing at random. (*Pauses*) P'ing, is it all right to take me along with you?

CHOU P'ING. No.

SHIH-FENG. (*Softly*) P'ing, I can attend on you so well. You need such a person. I will do some copying for you. Sewing, cooking rice, preparing dishes—all these I can do well, if you will only ask me to go with you.

CHOU P'ING. Ah, shall I still have a woman going with me, attending on me, and giving me comfort? Don't you think that such a life as I have had here at home all these years has not been enough for me?

SHIH-FENG. I know it won't do for you to be away from home alone.

CHOU P'ING. Fêng, can't you see I can't take you away from here at present? What you have just said is child's talk, isn't it?

SHIH-FENG. P'ing, take me along! I won't involve you in any complication. If people should say anything bad about you because of me, I will immediately leave you. You—you needn't be afraid.

CHOU P'ING. (*Impatiently*) Fêng, do you think I am so selfish as that? You shouldn't think of me like that. Humph! I fear! What do I fear? (*Unable to control himself*) In all these years I have committed many blunders. . . . Humph! even my heart has died. I hate myself to the core. Now that my heart is just beginning to revive and I can love a woman openly and boldly, should I be afraid of people criticizing me? Humph! let them talk: the elder young-master of the Chou House has fallen in love with his maid-servant. What is there to fear? I love her.

SHIH-FENG. (*Consolingly*) P'ing, don't be unhappy. Whatever you may have done, I won't blame you for it. (*Muses*)

CHOU P'ING. (*Calms down*) What are you thinking of now?

SHIH-FENG. I am thinking of what I shall do after your departure.

CHOU P'ING. You wait for me.

SHIH-FENG. (*Smiles sadly*) But you have forgotten about one person.

SHIH-FENG. He will never leave me alone.

CHOU P'ING. Ah, he, eh? What of him?
SHIH-FENG. He has repeated to me what he said one month ago.
CHOU P'ING. He said that he wanted you.
SHIH-FENG. No. He asked me whether I was willing to marry him or not.
CHOU P'ING. How about you?
SHIH-FENG. At first I said nothing. Later, after he had pressed me for an answer, I had to tell him the truth.
CHOU P'ING. The truth?
SHIH-FENG. I said nothing that matters. I only mentioned that I had been engaged to someone else.
CHOU P'ING. Did he ask about anything else?
SHIH-FENG. No. He merely said that he would subsidize me to go to school.
CHOU P'ING. To go to school? (*Smiles*) He is really stupid! But who knows? You might be greatly pleased to hear him talk like that.
SHIH-FENG. You know that I don't like him and that I wish always to be with you.
CHOU P'ING. But I am nearly thirty, you only eighteen. My future is not in any way more promising than his. And besides, I have done many things for which I should be ashamed.
SHIH-FENG. P'ing, don't talk nonsense to me. I am now very unhappy at heart. You have to think of some way out for me. He is a child; I really don't like to put up appearances with him, and you won't allow me to tell him openly.
CHOU P'ING. I have never told you not to tell him.
SHIH-FENG. But every time you see me with him you look particularly—
CHOU P'ING. Naturally, I can't look happy. I am unwilling to see my most beloved girl be with someone else frequently, even though he is my own brother.
SHIH-FENG. You see you have drifted to something else. Let's come back to our subject, P'ing. You must tell me plainly what you are actually going to do about me?
CHOU P'ING. What I am going to do about you? (*He smiles and is unwilling to say that he thinks women are as a rule more or less stupid. It seems to him that some woman had once put the same question to him, and he feels a secret pain in his heart.*) You want me to speak out? (*Smiles*)

again) Then, what would you have me to say?

would you? You obviously know that I am now absolutely

SHIH-FENG. (*Pitifully*) P'ing, you wouldn't treat me like that, yours, and yet you still want—you still want to be unjust to me like that.

CHOU P'ING. (*He doesn't like this, but at the same time he thinks that after all she somehow fails to understand him thoroughly.*) Oh! (*Heaves a sigh*) Heaven!

SHIH-FENG. P'ing, my father only knows how to ask me for money, my brother looks down upon me and says that I have no self-respect. If my mother should know of our affair, she would certainly hate me. Oh, P'ing, without you I would be nothing. You are my father, my brother and my mother rolled in one. Maybe there will be a day when they would be indifferent to me, but you—never, never. (*Sobs.*)

CHOU P'ING. No, no, Shih-fêng. Please don't be like that, please let me think it over carefully.

SHIH-FENG. My mother loves me most. She is unwilling to let me work in a big house. I am afraid in case she should discover that I have been lying to her and that I am working here, and . . . with you— And if you were not true to me, then I—I would be breaking my mother's heart. (*Weeps*) Besides, . . .

CHOU P'ING. No, Fêng, you shouldn't be so suspicious of me. Let me tell you, I intend to go to your place tonight.

SHIH-FENG. No, my mother is coming back today.

CHOU P'ING. Then, shall we meet somewhere else?

SHIH-FENG. No, my mother will certainly have something to say to me in the evening.

CHOU P'ING. But I am leaving by the early morning train tomorrow.

SHIH-FENG. Are you really not going to take me along with you?

CHOU P'ING. Child! How could I?

SHIH-FENG. But, you— Just think what I should do.

CHOU P'ING. I must first leave home alone, then after awhile I will think of a way to put it plainly before Father and take you with me.

SHIH-FENG. (*Looks at him*) Well, all right. Then you have to come to my house tonight. I think in that two-room house of ours, Father and Mother will certainly sleep in the

outer room. Brother never sleeps at home. So it is quite certain that I shall be alone in my room at midnight.

CHOU P'ING. In that case I will whistle when I come. *(Whistles)* Can you hear distinctly?

SHIH-FENG. Yes. If I expect you to come, there will be a red lantern at my window. If you don't see the lantern, then you mustn't come.

CHOU P'ING. Mustn't come?

SHIH-FENG. That means I have changed my mind—there may be many people in my house.

CHOU P'ING. All right, let it be so. At eleven o'clock.

SHIH-FENG. Yes, eleven o'clock.

LU KWEI *enters from the central door and, seeing SHIH-FENG and the elder young-master in the room, suddenly halts and intentionally puts on a knowing smirk.*

LU KWEI. Ah! *(To SHIH-FENG)* I am looking for you. *(To CHOU P'ING)* Have you had your lunch, elder young-master?

SHIH-FENG. What do you want to see me for?

LU KWEI. Your mother has come.

SHIH-FENG. *(Obviously happy)* Mother has come! Where is she?

LU KWEI. At the gate-keeper's shack, having just met your brother and talked with him.

SHIH-FENG makes for the central door.

CHOU P'ING. Shih-fêng, when you see your mother, please give her my regards.

SHIH-FENG. Thank you, see you later. *(Exit SHIH-FENG.)*

LU KWEI. Elder young-master, are you leaving tomorrow?

CHOU P'ING. Yes.

LU KWEI. Please let me see you off.

CHOU P'ING. No, thank you.

LU KWEI. You have always been good-hearted, and a good patron to us. When you depart, this slave girl of mine and I will be thinking of you.

CHOU P'ING. *(Smiles)* Are you again in need of money?

LU KWEI. *(Smiles cunningly)* Elder young-master, you are again joking with me. I am telling you the truth and Shih-fêng knows it also, that I have always spoken well of you in private.

CHOU P'ING. Well and good. You have nothing—?

LU KWEI. Nothing, nothing. I only want to consul you about a trifling matter. As you know, Shih-fêng's mother has come and the mistress wants to see her. . . . (CHOU FAN-YI enters through the dining room door. Upon seeing her, LU KWEI swallows up the latter half of his sentence.) Ah, Mistress has come downstairs! Have you entirely recovered, Mistress? (CHOU FAN-YI nods.) Lu Kwei has always been concerned about your health.

CHOU FAN-YI. Good of you. You may retire now. (LU KWEI bows and exits through the central door. To CHOU P'ING) Where has he gone to?

CHOU P'ING. (*Without getting her point*) Who?

CHOU FAN-YI. Your father.

CHOU P'ING. He is occupied, seeing some guest, but will come here in a moment. Where is Brother?

CHOU FAN-YI. He only knows how to cry. He has gone.

CHOU P'ING. (*Being afraid to be alone with her in the room*) Ah. (*Pauses*) I am going. I want to pack up my things now. (*Moves toward the dining room.*)

CHOU FAN-YI. Come back. (CHOU P'ING halts.) I beg you to sit here for a little while.

CHOU P'ING. What for?

CHOU FAN-YI. (*Gravely and gloomily*) I have something to say to you.

CHOU P'ING. (*Perceives from her countenance*) It seems that you have something important to say.

CHOU FAN-YI. Yes.

CHOU P'ING. Then speak.

CHOU FAN-YI. I hope you realized the situation awhile ago. It is not a matter that lasts only for one day.

CHOU P'ING. (*Evasively*) Father has always been like that. He means what he says, word for word.

CHOU FAN-YI. But for me to listen to every word of other people is against my nature.

CHOU P'ING. I understand you. (*Forces a smile*) Then you had better not listen to him. That will solve the problem.

CHOU FAN-YI. P'ing, I hope that you are still as sincere as you were before. It is better for you not to imitate the scornful attitude of the rank and file of young men of today. You know that I am already miserable even without your behaving like that in my presence.

CHOU P'ING. That is why I want to leave, so that we may not see each other and be reminded of our most regrettable affair.

CHOU FAN-YI. I do not regret. I have never regretted anything I have done.

CHOU P'ING. (*Helplessly*) I think I have put it very clearly before you. And I think you understand very clearly why I haven't been seeing you these days.

CHOU FAN-YI. Very clearly.

CHOU P'ING. What an absurd ignoramus I am! I regret it. I deem it as the one great blunder I have committed in my life. I have been unjust to myself, unjust to my brother, and especially unjust to my father.

CHOU FAN-YI. (*Low and grave*) But you have easily forgotten the one you have been most unjust to.

CHOU P'ING. Of course there is one to whom I have been most unjust. But it is unnecessary for me to tell you who that is.

CHOU FAN-YI. (*Sneers*) It is not *she!* It is *I* to whom you have been most unjust. It is *you* who have seduced your step-mother.

CHOU P'ING. (*Somewhat afraid of her*) You have gone mad.

CHOU FAN-YI. You owe me a debt, a responsibility. You cannot run away alone when you see a new world.

CHOU P'ING. I consider that these words you use are simply horrible. These words shouldn't be uttered in a family of such prestige as my father's.

CHOU FAN-YI. (*Overwhelmed with anger*) Your father! Your father! You had better leave your father alone. Prestige! You also talk about prestige, eh? (*Sneers*) For eighteen years I have been in this family of such prestige. The sins of the Chou family—I have heard of them, I have seen them and I have done them. I have never belonged to your Chou family. Whatever I have done I am responsible for it myself, unlike your grandfather, your granduncles, and your good father, who have done numerous horrible things on the sly, made other people scape-goats, and outwardly maintained their appearance of being virtuous people, philanthropists, and pillars of society.

CHOU P'ING. Of course, Fan-yi, it's impossible for a large family to avoid having black sheep. But this branch of our family, with the exception of myself,

CHOU FAN-YI. All the same. Your father is the first hypocrite.

He seduced a good girl a long time ago.

CHOU P'ING. Don't talk nonsense.

CHOU FAN-YI. P'ing, you listen to me: you are none other than your father's love child!

CHOU P'ING. (*Shocked and at a loss*) You are talking at random. What evidence do you have?

CHOU FAN-YI. Please go and ask your honourable father. It was told to me by himself fifteen years ago when he was drunk. (*Points at the photograph on the clothes-press*) You were the infant son of this young girl. She drowned herself in a canal because your father forsook her.

CHOU P'ING. You . . . you . . . you are simply— All right, all right. (*Forces a smile*) I acknowledge everything. What do you intend to do? What do you want to speak to me about?

CHOU FAN-YI. Your father has been unjust to me. He used the same tactics to seduce me into this house of yours. I couldn't escape, and gave birth to Ch'ung. For more than ten years he had been just as tyrannical and cruel to me as he was awhile ago, gradually petrifying me into a stone-like mummy. Then, you suddenly came from your native town, and it was you—you who led me into a situation that has made me neither a mother nor a lover. It was you who seduced me!

CHOU P'ING. Seduce! May I beg you not to use this word? Do you know what the situation was then?

CHOU FAN-YI. You have forgotten about what you once said with a sigh, in this room at midnight, when I was crying? You said you hated your father. You said that you wished him to die, and that you were ready to see your wish realized even if you had to commit parricide.

CHOU P'ING. You have forgotten that I was young then and it was the mad heat in me that made me utter such absurd words.

CHOU FAN-YI. You have forgotten that though I was a few years older than you, I was after all your step-mother. Didn't you know that you shouldn't have spoken such words to me?

CHOU P'ING. Ah! (*Sighs*) The House of Chou had plenty of ancestors who did evil things and committed murder. At any rate, you shouldn't have married into the House of Chou where the air is saturated with sin.

CHOU FAN-YI. Sin! Yes, exactly, sin. Your ancestors were never

clean-handed and your house has always been dirty.

CHOU P'ING. You wouldn't pardon a young man who has committed a blunder as a result of a moment's muddle-headedness? (*Painfully knits his brow.*)

CHOU FAN-YI. It is not a question of pardon or no pardon. At that time I had my coffin ready, peacefully and quietly awaiting my death. Then you came along and coaxed me to live again, but later you ignored me and left me to wither and thirst gradually to death. Now you speak, what shall I do?

CHOU P'ING. That . . . that I don't know. What do *you* say?

CHOU FAN-YI. (*Emphatically, word by word*) I hope you will not go.

CHOU P'ING. What? You want me to keep you company in a house like this, to brood over my past sins, and to be suffocated to death like this?

CHOU FAN-YI. Since you know that a house like this is capable of suffocating one to death, how could you go away alone and leave me here?

CHOU P'ING. You have no right to talk like this. You are the mother of brother Ch'ung.

CHOU FAN-YI. No, I am not! I am not! Since I entrusted to you my life and reputation, I have paid no heed to anything else. I am not his mother. No, no, I am not even Chou P'u-yüan's wife.

CHOU P'ING. (*Coldly*) Even if you don't recognize yourself as my father's wife, I still recognize myself as my father's son.

CHOU FAN-YI. (*Dumbfounded, as she didn't expect such a reply from CHOU P'ING*) Ah! you are your father's son. You haven't come to see me these months, particularly because you are afraid of your father?

CHOU P'ING. It may be said that it is because I am afraid of him.

CHOU FAN-YI. Is your departure to the mine this time an imitation of your father's heroic example, to cast aside heedlessly someone who really understands you and loves you?

CHOU P'ING. It may also be interpreted in that way.

CHOU FAN-YI. (*Coldly*) So speaking, you are after all your father's son. (*Laughs*) Father's son? (*Laughs hysterically*) Father's son! (*Bursts into a riotous laughter, and then suddenly calms down and speaks sternly.*) Humph! Both of you are good-for-nothing cowardly rats, and unworthy of my sacrifice! I hate myself for not knowing you earlier!

CHOU P'ING. But you have known me now! I have been unjust to you, but I have exhaustively explained to you that I loathe such an unnatural relationship. I tell you, I loathe it. I should take up my responsibility. I confess my past blunders. But you are not altogether free from the responsibility of my committing such a sin. You are what I recognize to be a most intelligent and understanding woman. So I think you will eventually pardon me. As to my attitude, you may condemn it as scornful, or irresponsible—either way you please. But let me tell you, I hope this is our last conversation.

(Moves toward the dining room.)

CHOU FAN-YI. *(In a grave tone)* Stop! *(CHOU P'ING stops.)* I hope you understand what I have just said. I am not entreating you. I hope you will make an effort to recall the many, many words—*(pauses in suffering)*—which we said to each other in the past. Remember: a woman can never suffer the maltreatment of two generations. You may as well give a thought to this.

CHOU P'ING. I have thought it over very thoroughly. I don't think you know anything about my sufferings these days. Well, please let me go.

CHOU P'ING. *exits through the dining room.* CHOU FAN-YI *moves to the clothes-press with beads of tears trickling down her cheeks, looks at her pallid wrinkled face in the mirror, then flings herself over the press and begins to sob.*

LU KWEI *sneaks in through the central door and sees his mistress in tears.*

LU KWEI. *(In a low voice)* Mistress!

CHOU FAN-YI. *(Suddenly straightens up)* What have you come here for?

LU KWEI. Lu, the amah, has been here for a long time.

CHOU FAN-YI. Who? Who has been here for a long time?

LU KWEI. My wife. Didn't you say that you wanted me to tell her to come and see you?

CHOU FAN-YI. Why didn't you tell me earlier?

LU KWEI. *(With a false smile)* I had thought of doing that, but I *(in a low voice)* just saw you talking with the elder young-master. So I didn't dare to disturb you.

CHOU FAN-YI. Ah, you . . . you . . . you . . . just

. . . .

LU KWEI. I? I was waiting on the master at his interview with a guest in the big parlour. (*Feigns to be ignorant*) Have you anything in particular, Mistress?

CHOU FAN-YI. Nothing. You may show the amah in now.

LU KWEI. (*Smiles flatteringly*) My wife is of the low class, and is coarse in her conversation. You won't mind?

CHOU FAN-YI. We are all human beings alike. I only want to see her and have a chat with her.

LU KWEI. Yes, it's your ladyship's mercy. Oh yes, Master has just told me to request you to take out his old rain-coat for him, saying that he was afraid it would rain hard tomorrow. Maybe he will go out in a moment.

CHOU FAN-YI. Shih-fêng takes care of the master's clothes. Can't she take it out for him?

LU KWEI. I also said that. Besides, you are indisposed. But the master said he didn't want Shih-fêng to do it, but wanted you to take it out.

CHOU FAN-YI. Then I'll take it out after awhile.

LU KWEI. But the master said that he wanted it right now.

CHOU FAN-YI. Ah, all right. I'll attend to it immediately. Now you may tell the amah to come in, and wait here for awhile.

LU KWEI. Yes, Mistress. (*Exit LU KWEI. CHOU FAN-YI'S face turns even paler, she is desperately suppressing her vexation.*)

CHOU FAN-YI. (*Opens the window, takes a breath and speaks to herself*) So hot and choking! I really can no longer stay here. I wish I were a volcano and could erupt heatedly for once. I'd burn up everything and then, even if I should fall into a glacier and be frozen into dead ashes, it would be enough for me to have flammed with white heat once in my lifetime. My past is no more and my hope is probably dead also. Humph! I am ready for the worst. Come my haters, come you who have made me disappointed and jealous. Come all of you. I am waiting for you here. (*Stares into the space before her and then lowers her head. Re-enters LU KWEI.*)

LU KWEI. An under-servant has just come with the word that the master wants the rain-coat urgently.

CHOU FAN-YI. (*Lifts her head*) All right, you go first. I'll tell Ch'en-ma to send it.

Exit CHOU FAN-YI through the dining room, and LU KWEI through the central door. Meanwhile LU, the amah—that is, LU

SHIH-F'ING—and SHIH-FENG come in. LU is about forty-seven years of age, but looks only thirty-eight or -nine, in spite of a few streaks of white in her hair. She has a fair and clean-looking face. Her eyes are a little dull, frequently gazing fixedly before her. But from her lovely long eyelashes and her large round pupils, one may still discern the shadow of a quiet, charming youth. Her dress is simple and plain, but comely. An old, blue-cloth coat and a pair of drawers neatly adhere to her body. At a distance she looks like a poor woman of a decayed great house. Her noble carriage is in striking contrast with her husband's mean vulgarity and crooked thievishness. Her head is covered with a white handkerchief which was probably put on to keep off the soot and dust in the train. She always likes to smile when she speaks, and at the moment her countenance is beaming with the happiness and joy of seeing her own children, whom she has not seen for two years. Though her pronunciation is very distinct, her voice is low and steady with the accent of a Southerner, who has mixed up with the Northerners for a long time but still retains faintly some of the light brisk accent of the South. Her teeth are exceedingly even, and there are a pair of dimples beside her mouth when she smiles, reminding one of a similar feature in SHIH-FENG's face.

As the two enter, LU holds the hand of her daughter, who is huddling to her side like a baby bird. Behind them LU KWEI follows up with baggage in an old cloth wrapper in his hand. He smiles and looks even more mean and vulgar in contrast with the simple joy of the mother and daughter.

SHIH-FENG. Where is the mistress?

LU KWEI. She's coming downstairs in a second.

SHIH-FENG. Please sit down, Ma. (LU sits down.) Are you tired?

LU. Not at all.

SHIH-FENG. (In high spirits) Ma, just sit here for awhile. Let me go and fetch you a cup of iced water.

LU. No, don't go. I don't feel hot.

LU KWEI. Fêng-êrh, go and fetch your mother a bottle of aerated water. (To LU) This mansion has everything in stock. In summer, there is lemonade, fruit juice, water-melon juice, orange, banana, fresh lichi nut. . . . Whatever you may want, you'll get it here.

LU. (To SHIH-FENG) No, no, don't listen to your father.

Those all belong to them. You had better sit beside me for awhile. Later, you and I shall have a chat with . . . with Madam Chou. That will be better than drinking anything whatsoever.

- LU KWEI. The mistress will come downstairs soon. Say, look at yourself. You are still wearing your white head-wrapper.
- LU. (*Smiles good-naturedly*) Really—talking for such a long time, (*glances at SHIH-FENG smilingly*) I have even forgotten to undo the handkerchief which I put on my head in the train. (*Begins to untie the knot in the handkerchief.*)
- SHIH-FENG. (*Smiling*) Ma, let me unite it for you. (*Goes to her mother to disentangle the knot. At the same time, LU KWEI moves to the teapoy and stealthily stuffs some cigarettes into his own cigarette case.*)
- LU. (*Takes down the handkerchief*) Look, is my face dirty? There was so much soot and dust in the train. Look at my hair. Don't let people laugh at me.
- SHIH-FENG. No, no, it's not in the least dirty. I haven't seen you for two years, but you still look the same.
- LU. By the way, Fêng-êrh, what a memory I have! Talking for such a long while, I have forgotten to show you something you like most.
- SHIH-FENG. What is it, Ma?
- LU. (*Produces a small package from her pocket*) You see, you will surely like it.
- SHIH-FENG. No, Mother, don't show it to me, let me guess first.
- LU. All right, you guess then.
- SHIH-FENG. A small stone doll?
- LU. (*Shakes her head*) No, you are too grown-up for that.
- SHIH-FENG. A small powder-puff?
- LU. (*Again shakes her head*) What is the use of giving that to you?
- SHIH-FENG. Ah, then it must be a small sewing box.
- LU. (*Smiles*) You're about right.
- SHIH-FENG. Then let me open it. (*Hastily opens the package*) Ah, Mother! a thimble, a silver thimble! Father, look. . . . look! (*Shows the thimble to LU KWEI.*)
- LU KWEI. (*Half-heartedly*) Good, good!
- SHIH-FENG. This thimble is really too cute. It is even mounted with a piece of precious stone.
- LU KWEI. What? (*Moves a few paces to SHIH-FENG and takes*

- the thimble to examine it carefully.)* Let me look.
- LU. It was given me by the wife of the principal of the school. He had lost an important money-bag, which I happened to find and return to him. So his wife insisted on giving me something as a reward. She produced a heap of small jewels and ornaments and asked me to choose one as a gift to my daughter. What do you think of it?
- SHIH-FENG. It's wonderful, Ma. It is exactly what I need.
- LU KWEL. Oh, pshaw! (*Returns the thimble to SHIH-FENG.*) Shut up! the stone on it is a fake. What a good choice you have made!
- SHIH-FENG. (*Contemptuously, and she is especially fond of being talkative in the presence of her mother*) Humph, you! In your hand even a genuine stone is taken to be a fake.
- LU. Fêng-êrh, I forbid you to talk to your father like that.
- SHIH-FENG. (*Plays the spoiled child*) Ma, you don't know. During your absence, Father vented his temper upon me alone, and always treated me badly.
- LU KWEL. (*Disgusted to see the "boorishness" of his wife and daughter; hence, contemptuously*) Look at your own pauperish manner. Having come to the mansion of a great house, you keep on talking idle nonsense instead of taking a look at the splendid lay-out around you. Shih-fêng, you had better first show your mother the clothes you have made in these two years.
- SHIH-FENG. (*Showing him the white of her eyes*) Ma doesn't care for that.
- LU KWEL. Don't you also have some jewels? Take them out and let your mother open her eyes, to see which is the right thing to do—to listen to me, or to shut my daughter up at home?
- LU. (*To LU KWEL*) I told you when I went away that I was unwilling to send my daughter to a rich house to be at people's beck and call, and I have constantly reminded you of the same in my letters these two years. But nevertheless, you—(*Suddenly realizes that it is no place for talking about family affairs, and turns to SHIH-FENG.*) Where is your brother?
- SHIH-FENG. Isn't he waiting for us at the gate-keeper's shack?
- LU KWEL. Not waiting for you. He is waiting to see the master.
(*To LU*) Last year I asked someone to give you the message

that Ta-hai had become a foreman at the mine. That position was obtained through my giving him a push up here.

SHIH-FENG. (*Disgusted with her father's self-praise*) Father, you had better go and see Brother. His temper is somewhat bad, and I am afraid he may get anxious from waiting and raise a disturbance with the gatekeepers Chang and Liu.

LU KWEL. Ah, really, *mother's!* I had forgotten about that boy's dog temper. (*Moves towards the central door and turns his head*) You stay in this room for awhile and don't make any rash move. The mistress will come downstairs in a minute.

Exit LU KWEL. After his departure, the mother and daughter heave a sight of relief like prisoners seeing the jail-keeper go away. They exchange a somewhat miserable smile but in the twinkling of an eye, the look of happiness again floats over their faces. This time it is the smile that comes up from the depths of their hearts.

LU. (*Stretches out her hand to SHIH-FENG*) Ah, child, let me take a look at you.

SHIH-FENG. (*Goes to the front of her mother and kneels down.*) Mother, you won't blame me? You won't blame me for not listening to your advice, but coming here to the Chou mansion to work?

LU. No, no, since it has been done, let it be done. But why didn't you write me word of it in these two years? It was only after I had alighted from the train that I was informed by aunt Chang that my daughter was here.

SHIH-FENG. Ma, I was afraid that you would be angry. I was afraid it would give you pain. So I didn't dare to tell you. But as a matter of fact, Mother, we are not a rich family, and I think it doesn't matter for me to work for others like this.

LU. Now, don't think that your mother is worried about poverty, or is afraid of people sneering at our position? No, child, Ma knows best how to accept fate, and Ma is able to take things most philosophically. But, child, I am afraid you are too young, and it's easy for you to lose your head at times. Ma has tasted the bitterness of life and Ma knows. You don't understand, and you don't know that this world is too—the human heart is too— (*Sighs*) Well, let's talk of it no more. (*Rises*) The mistress of this house is certainly queer. What does she want to see me for?

- SHIH-FENG. Ah, yes. (*Fear comes upon her, but she is still inclined to dwell upon the brighter side of the matter.*) Well, Mother, the mistress here hasn't got many friends. She has heard that you also know how to read and write, and may have felt you will be near to each other. So she intends to have a chat with you here.
- LU. (*Dubiously*) Eh? (*Slowly looks around at the arrangement of the room and points at the clothes-press with a looking-glass.*) This room is very elegant, only the furniture is a little old, don't you think?
- SHIH-FENG. This is the redwood desk formerly used by the master, but is now converted into an ornament. I have heard that it is a piece of old furniture of thirty years ago, but the master likes it nevertheless and takes it with him wherever he goes.
- LU. What is that? (*Again points at the clothes-press with a looking-glass.*)
- SHIH-FENG. That is also a piece of old furniture, the thing which the former mistress, that is the elder young-master's mother, loved best. You see how clumsy the old-fashion furniture is?
- LU. Hem! Strange! How is it that the windows here are all closed?
- SHIH-FENG. You think it is strange, don't you? But this is our master's strange way, to have the windows closed in summer.
- LU. (*Reminiscently*) Fêng-êrh, it seems as if I saw this room somewhere in the past.
- SHIH-FENG. (*Laughs*) Really? Probably it is because you have been thinking of me so much that you have come here in your dreams.
- LU. Right, it's like a dream. Strange . . . this place is really strange. It suddenly makes me recall many, many things. (*Lowers her head and sits down.*)
- SHIH-FENG. (*Alarmed*) Your face has turned pale, Ma, what's wrong with you? Maybe you are suffering from sunstroke. Let me fetch you a cup of cold water.
- LU. No, not that. Don't go away. I am very afraid. This room is really strange!
- SHIH-FENG. Ma, what's wrong with you?
- LU. I'm very afraid. All of a sudden I have recalled one thing after another of thirty years ago. They are again revolving in my heart after having been forgotten for so many years.

Shih-fêng, feel my hand.

SHIH-FENG. (*Feels LU's hand*) It's as cold as ice, Ma. Oh, don't make me frightened. I am chicken-hearted, Ma. This house was once haunted.

LU. Don't be afraid, child. There is nothing wrong with Ma. But, Shih-fêng, it seems as if my spirit has been here.

SHIH-FEN. Ma, please don't talk nonsense. How could you ever have been here? They moved here twenty years ago, when you were still in the South, weren't you?

LU. No, no, I have been here. This furniture. . . . I don't recall where I saw them before.

SHIH-FENG. Ma, don't stare straight before you like that. It frightens me.

LU. Don't be frightened, child. Don't be frightened, child. (*As her voice grows fainter, she is more absorbed in her recollection. Her whole mind is centred on happenings of bygone days till she reaches the utmost limit of her recollection.*)

SHIH-FENG. Ma, why are you gazing at that press? It belonged to the late former mistress.

LU. (*Suddenly speaks to SHIH-FENG tremblingly and in a low voice.*) Fêng-êrh, go and find out . . . go and find out if there is a child's tiny embroidered tiger-head slipper in the third drawer on the right hand side of that press.

SHIH-FENG. Ma, what's wrong with you? Don't be so apprehensive.

LU. Fêng-êrh, go and take a look. I am nervous and somewhat unable to move. You go!

SHIH-FENG. All right, I'll go and see. (*She goes to the press and opens the drawer.*)

LU. (*Hastily*) Do you find it? . . .

SHIH-FENG. No, Mother.

LU. Are you sure of it?

SHIH-FENG. Yes, it's all empty except for a few tea-cups.

LU. Ah, then probably I am dreaming.

SHIH-FENG. (*With pity for her mother*). Please don't talk any more, Ma, and calm yourself for awhile. You must have been wronged while you were away. (*In tears*) You were never, never so mentally upset before. Oh, my poor Ma! (*Embraces her*) Are you better now?

LU. It's all right. . . . I heard awhile ago at the gatekeeper's

shack that there were two young-masters in this house.

SHIH-FENG. Yes, Ma, they are both very good and kind to people.
LU. (*To herself*) No, my daughter should never stay any longer in this house. Never, never.

SHIH-FENG. Mother, what are you talking about? All the people here, high and low, have been treating me nicely. The master and mistress here, Ma, never scold their servants, and the two young-masters are both very kind. In this Chou House, not only are its living members kind-hearted but also those who have died.

LU. Chou? Is Chou the name of this house?

SHIH-FENG. Yes, Ma. Didn't you ask for the House of Chou when you came here? How could you have forgotten that? (*Laughs*) Oh! I see, Ma, you must have suffered from sunstroke on your way. Let me first show you the photograph of the former mistress of this house, and then fetch some water for you. (*SHIH-FENG takes the photograph from the clothes-press, then returns and stands behind her mother, showing the picture to her.*)

LU. (*Takes the photograph and looks at it.*) Oooh! (*Shocked into numbness, her hands quivering.*)

SHIH-FENG. (*Behind her mother*) You see how pretty she is. She is the elder young-master's mother. How beautiful her smile is. They say that I somehow look like her. What a pity, she is dead, otherwise— (*Seeing that her mother's head is drooping forward*) Oh, Mother, what's wrong with you? Why are you—?

LU. No, no, I merely feel dizzy, I want some water.

SHIH-FENG. (*Frightened, she pinches LU's fingers and rubs her head.*) Ma, come here. (*Supports LU to the large sofa. The photograph is still tightly held in LU's hand.*) Ma, just lie on this for awhile, and let me go and fetch some water for you. (*Runs out hurriedly through the dining room.*)

LU. Oh, Heaven! I, a dead person! Could this be true? This photograph, this furniture, how could they—? Oh, the world is so vast, and yet after these decades of suffering it should happen that this pitiful child of mine again falls into his—his house. How could it be? Oh, unjust Heaven! (*Weeps. SHIH-FENG re-enters with a cup of water in her hand. LU instantly wipes off her tears.*)

SHIH-FENG. (*Holds out the cup to LU*) Ma, take a drink. . . .

- No, drink a little more. (Lu *drinks*.) Do you feel better now?
- LU. Yes, better. I am all right now. You may go home with me now, child.
- SHIH-FENG. (*Surprised*) Ma, what's wrong with you?
The voice of CHOU FAN-YI calling "SHIH-FENG" issues forth from the dining room.
- LU. Who is calling you?
- SHIH-FENG. The mistress.
- VOICE OF CHOU FAN-YI. Shih-fêng!
- SHIH-FENG. Yes.
- VOICE OF CHOU FAN-YI. Come Shih-fêng, where have you put the master's rain-coat?
- SHIH-FENG. (*Shouts back*) I am coming. (*To Lu*) Please wait a minute, Ma. I'll come right back.
- LU. All right, go ahead.
Exit SHIH-FENG. LU looks around, moves to the clothes-press and feels the furniture that once belonged to her. Her head drooping low in meditation, she suddenly hears a footfall in the garden outside, and turns about in expectation.
- LU KWEI enters from the central door.
- LU KWEI. Where is Shih-fêng?
- LU. The mistress has called her away.
- LU KWEI. Tell the mistress that as soon as she finds the rain-coat, the master will come here himself to put it on and speak a few words with her.
- LU. Is the master coming to this room?
- LU KWEI. Yes. Give the message clearly. Otherwise, if the master should not find the mistress in this room when he comes, the old head will again lose his temper.
- LU. You had better give the message to the mistress yourself.
- LU KWEI. I have to run so many under-servants inside and outside. I'm too busy to wait.
- LU. I am going home. I won't see the mistress.
- LU KWEI. Why? I have told you that the mistress has asked you to come here this afternoon because she has something very important to say to you.
- LU. I am ready to take Fêng-êrh back with me, and tell her to quit the job here.
- LU KWEI. What? You see, your—
 CHOU FAN-YI enters from the dining room.

LU KWEI. Mistress.

CHOU FAN-YI. (*To SHIH-FENG, who is behind the door.*) Shih-fêng, bring here also the other two rain-coats and ask the master which one he wants. (*SHIH-FENG answers off the stage.*) Ah. (*Breathes heavily and addresses LU*) Is this Shih-fêng's mother? I have kept you waiting for a long time.

LU KWEI. It's her duty to wait for your ladyship. It's a great 'face' that you should allow her to come here and pay her respects to you. (*SHIH-FENG re-enters from the dining room with the rain-coats in her hands.*)

CHOU FAN-YI. Please sit down. You have been here for a long while, eh? (*LU doesn't sit down, but is hesitating.*)

LU. Only a short while, Madam.

SHIH-FENG. Mistress, shall I send these three rain-coats to the master?

LU KWEI. The master said they were to be left here. He will come here and fetch them himself. (*To CHOU FAN-YI*) Would you please wait here for a minute? The master has something to say to you.

CHOU FAN-YI. I know. (*To SHIH-FENG*) You may go to the kitchen now, look at the dinner dishes, and give word to the cook.

SHIH-FENG. Yes, Mistress. (*Glances at LU KWEI and nervously casts her eyes at her mistress, then exits through the central door.*)

CHOU FAN-YI. Lu Kwei, tell the master that I am talking with Shih-fêng's mother, and ask him to come here later.

LU KWEI. Yes, Mistress. (*But he doesn't move.*)

CHOU FAN-YI. (*Noticing that LU KWEI is still remaining in the room.*) What business do you have?

LU KWEI. Mistress, this morning the master made an appointment with Dr. Krieg to call.

CHOU FAN-YI. The younger young-master has already told me of it.

LU KWEI. The master has just given orders that the doctor will look at you as soon as he comes.

CHOU FAN-YI. I know. Well, you may go now. (*LU KWEI exits through the central door. She turns to LU.*) Please sit down and talk and make yourself at home. (*Seats herself on the sofa.*)

LU. (*Sits in a chair on the side*) As soon as I alighted from

the train, I was informed that you had given orders for me to come here and see you.

CHOU FAN-YI. I have often heard Shih-fêng mention you, saying that you have read books and were formerly from a house of good standing.

LU. (*Unwilling to bring up her past*) Shih-fêng is a stupid child and ignorant of good manner. She must have given you a lot of trouble these two years.

CHOU FAN-YI. No, she is exceedingly clever and I like her very much. This child should not be made a servant. You should find a proper career for her.

LU. You have commended her too highly, But really I don't want her to be a maid.

CHOU FAN-YI. I understand this very clearly. I understand that you have read books and know the bounds of propriety. At first sight I feel that we are both straightforward in nature. So I may as well tell you the reason of my asking you to come here.

LU. (*Unable to keep silent*). Madam, is it because the child's everyday behaviour has given rise to people's criticism?

CHOU FAN-YI. (*Smiles and purposely puts it very positively*) No, not that.

LU KWEI *re-enters from the central door.*

CHOU FAN-YI. What's the matter?

LU KWEI. The chauffeur was sent with the car awhile ago for Dr. Krieg. The doctor has now arrived and is waiting in the small parlour.

CHOU FAN-YI. I am seeing a guest.

LU KWEI. Guest? . . . The master asks you to see the doctor immediately.

CHOU FAN-YI. I know. You may go now. (*Exit LU KWEI. To LU*) Let me explain to you the situation in my house. First, there are only a few women in our family.

LU. Yes, Madam.

CHOU FAN-YI. I am the only woman. The two young-masters, the master, and all the servants, except one or two maids, are all men.

LU. Yes, Madam, I understand.

CHOU FAN-YI. Shih-fêng is very young. Yes, she is only nineteen, isn't she?

LU. No, eighteen.

CHOU FAN-YI. That's right. I remember that she is about one year older than my own child. Such a young girl, working away from home and being so cute looking. . . .

LU. Madam, if Shih-fêng has been careless in her conduct, please don't hesitate to tell me about it.

CHOU FAN-YI. No, no, (*again smiles*) she has been very good. I am merely explaining the situation. I have a son myself, who is only seventeen years of age—perhaps you have seen him in the garden—he is a very senseless child.

LU KWEI re-enters from the study.

LU KWEI. The Master urges Mistress to see the doctor.

CHOU FAN-YI. Is there no one receiving Dr. Krieg?

LU KWEI. Commissioner Wang has just left, and the master is receiving the doctor himself.

LU. Please go and see the doctor, Madam. I'll wait here, it's all right.

CHOU FAN-YI. No, I haven't finished speaking yet. (*To LU KWEI*) Tell Master that I have no disease and I haven't asked any doctor to come.

LU KWEI. Yes, Mistress. (*But doesn't move.*)

CHOU FAN-YI. (*Looks at LU KWEI*) Why are you staying here?

LU KWEI. I am waiting for further orders from you, Mistress.

CUO FAN-YI. (*Suddenly recalls*) Yes, after you give my message to the master, go out and call an electrician. I have just heard that an old live wire has fallen from the wistaria arbour in the garden. Get an electrician to repair it so as to avoid causing danger to human life.

LU KWEI. Yes, Madam. (*Exits through the central door.*)

CHOU FAN-YI. (*Notices that LU is rising*) Mrs. Lu, please be seated. Ah, the room is again getting sultry. (*Moves to the window, opens it, and then returns to her seat.*) These days I have noticed something strange about my boy. How could I know he would suddenly tell me that he was very fond of Shih-fêng?

LU. What?

CHOU FAN-YI. Perhaps he will subsidize her tuition and ask her to go to school.

LU. That is ridiculous, Madam.

CHOU FAN-YI. He also wishes that Shih-fêng will marry him.

LU. Please don't go further, Madam, I understand everything

now.

CHOU FAN-YI. (*Taking one step further*) Shih-fêng is older than my child, and she is also a very intelligent girl. Such a situation—

LU. (*Dislikes the suspicious tone of CHOU FAN-YI's speech.*) I still believe that my girl is a sensible and considerate child. I have always been unwilling to let her go to any great house to serve as a maid. But I am confident that even after having been a maid for two years, my daughter is not likely to be capable of doing anything absurd.

CHOU FAN-YI. Mrs. Lu, I also know that Shih-fêng is a sensible child. But since there is such an unfortunate situation, I think it is very easy for people to get a wrong impression.

LU. (*Sighs*) It's absolutely beyond my expectations that I should come here today. I am ready to take her away with me later. May I ask you now, Madam, to grant her a permanent leave?

CHOU FAN-YI. Ah, ah, if you think that is a good way, I also feel that it is very safe and proper. Only one thing—I am afraid that my child is somewhat stupid and he may go to your house and look for her.

LU. Please rest assured. I regret it very much, I shouldn't have left this child in the care of her father alone. Tomorrow I shall leave here and take her with me to a place far away, so that she may never see the Chous. Madam, I intend to take her away right now.

CHOU FAN-YI. All right then, I'll tell our accountant to clear up her wages later. As to her personal belongings, I will have a man bring them to her. I have a trunk of old clothes which she may also have and reserve for her everyday wear in the future.

LU. (*To herself*) Fêng-êrh, my poor child! (*Sits on the sofa in tears*) Heaven!

CHOU FAN-YI. (*Goes to LU*) Please don't be broken-hearted, Mrs. Lu. If you have any pecuniary trouble, please come freely to me and I shall never fail you. Take her back and be nice to her; with such a good mother like yourself educating her, it will naturally be much better for her to be with you than to be here.

CHOU P'U-YUAN *enters from the study.*

CHOU P'U-YUAN. Fan-yi! (CHOU FAN-YI lifts her head.

Li rises, quickly shrinks aside and looks at him, her countenance having greatly changed.) Why haven't you gone?

CHOU FAN-YI. (*Intentionally*) Where to?

CHOU P'U-YUAN. Dr. Krieg is waiting for you. Don't you know that?

CHOU FAN-YI. Dr. Krieg? Who is Dr. Krieg?

CHOU P'U-YUAN. The same Dr. Krieg who examined you before.

CHOU FAN-YI. I have swallowed enough of the medicine. I don't want to swallow any more.

CHOU P'U-YUAN. Then your sickness. . . .

CHOU FAN-YI. I have no sickness.

CHOU P'U-YUAN. (*Tolerantly*) Dr. Krieg was my good friend in Germany and is a specialist in women's diseases. Your mind is somewhat out of order, but he will surely cure you.

CHOU FAN-YI. Who says that my mind is out of order? Why do you curse me like that? I have no sickness, I tell you I have no sickness!

CHOU P'U-YUAN. (*Coldly*) You shout and yell so senselessly in the presence of others. You are sick and yet you refuse to admit it and see a doctor. Isn't this the very symptom of mental disease?

CHOU FAN-YI. Humph! Even if I had a disease, it wouldn't be one that a doctor can cure. (*Shouts*) Stop! Where are you going?

CHOU FAN-YI. (*Callously*) Going upstairs.

CHOU P'U-YUAN. (*Imperatively*) You should listen to me.

CHOU FAN-YI. (*As if not understanding him*) Ah! (*Pauses to scan him scornfully*) Look at yourself! (*Laughs shriekingly a couple of times.*) You are really making me laugh. (*Laughs as she speaks contemptuously*) Don't forget what sort of a man you are! (*Again bursts into laughter and runs out through the dining room, slamming the door behind her.*)

CHOU P'U-YUAN. Attendants!
Enters a male servant.

SERVANT. Master.

CHOU P'U-YUAN. The mistress is now upstairs. Go and tell the elder young-master to accompany Dr. Krieg upstairs to look at the mistress.

SERVANT. Yes, Master.

CHOU P'U-YUAN. Tell the elder young-master that since the mistress is now suffering from a very serious mental disease, he

must be very careful with her. Also tell the amahs upstairs to take good care of the mistress.

SERVANT. Yes, Master.

CHOU P'U-YUAN. One thing more. Tell the elder young-master to inform Dr. Krieg that I am fatigued and shall not accompany him.

SERVANT. Yes, Master. (*Exit the servant. CHOU P'U-YUAN lights a Manila cigar and examines the rain-coats on the table.*)

CHOU P'U-YUAN. (*To LU*) Are these the rain-coats taken out by the mistress?

LU. (*Looks at him*) Probably they are.

CHOU P'U-YUAN. (*Takes them up to examine*) No, no, these are all new ones. I want my old rain-coat. Tell that to the mistress later.

LU. Yes, Master.

CHOU P'U-YUAN. (*Seeing that she doesn't make a move*) Don't you know that servants are not allowed to come freely into this room?

LU. (*Looks at him*) I don't know, Master.

CHOU P'U-YUAN. Are you a new servant?

LU. No, I have come here to see my daughter.

CHOU P'U-YUAN. Your daughter?

LU. Shih-fêng is my daughter.

CHOU P'U-YUAN. Then you have come into the wrong room.

LU. Ah— Nothing else, Master?

CHOU P'U-YUAN. (*Pointing at the window*) Who has opened the window?

LU. Hum. (*Goes to the window in a very natural way, closes it, and moves slowly to the central door.*)

CHOU P'U-YUAN. (*Seeing that she has closed the window, he suddenly feels that she is very strange.*) Wait a minute. (*LU stops.*) You— What is your name?

LU. My name is Lu.

CHOU P'U-YUAN. Lu? From your accent it seems that you are not a Northerner.

LU. No, I'm not. I'm from Kiangsu.

CHOU P'U-YUAN. You seem to have a Wusih accent.

LU. I was brought up in Wusih.

CHOU P'U-YUAN. (*Muses*) Wusih? Hum, Wusih. (*Abruptly*) When were you there?

LU. In the twentieth year of Emperor Kuang Hsü, more than thirty years ago now.

CHOU P'U-YUAN. Ah, you were in Wusih thirty years ago?

LU. Yes, more than thirty years ago. I remember, at that time we didn't use matches.

CHOU P'U-YUAN. (*Meditates*) More than thirty years ago, yes, very remote from now. Let me see, it was about the time when I was a little more than twenty years old. I was in Wusih then.

LU. Where are you from, Master?

CHOU P'U-YUAN. Mmmm. (*Muses*) Wusih is a good place,

LU. Ah, good place.

CHOU P'U-YUAN. Were you in Wusih thirty years ago?

LU. Yes, Master.

CHOU P'U-YUAN. Thirty years ago there was a very well known incident in Wusih. . . .

LU. Ah.

CHOU P'U-YUAN. Do you know that?

LU. Maybe I still remember, but I don't know which incident you mean.

CHOU P'U-YUAN. Ah, it was long, long ago, and people have all forgotten about it.

LU. You can never tell, they may still remember it.

CHOU P'U-YUAN. I have enquired of many people who were at Wusih at that time, with a view to learning something more about the incident, but they have either grown old or are dead by now, and most of the living don't know anything about it, or have forgotten the whole thing.

LU. If you like to enquire into anything concerning it, I still know some people at Wusih. Though I haven't been in communication with them for a long time, it is still possible for me to ask them to make investigations.

CHOU P'U-YUAN. I once sent someone to Wusih to investigate. Perhaps you know that there was a Mei family at Wusih thirty years ago.

LU. Mei family?

CHOU P'U-YUAN. In the Mei family there was a young lady, very noble and intelligent and also very virtuous. One night she suddenly drowned herself. Later . . . later . . . Do you know that?

LU. I can't say.

CHOU P'U-YUAN. Um-m.

LU. But she was no lady, and by no means noble and intelligent either. And it was said that she was not quite virtuous.

CHOU P'U-YUAN. Maybe . . . maybe you have made a mistake. But you may as well tell me about her.

LU. That girl Mei actually drowned herself in a canal one night, holding in her arms a male infant three days old. It is not certain, however, if she was this girl. I heard people say that she was not virtuous when living.

CHOU P'U-YUAN. (*Painfully*) Ah!

LU. She was a low-born girl, and was not over-nice about toeing the line. It is said that she had impure relations with a young-master of the Chou House and had borne him two sons. Three days after the birth of the second son, the Chou young-master suddenly gave her up. The elder child was in the Chou House, but the new-born baby was in her arms, when she drowned herself in a canal on a New Year's Eve.

CHOU P'U-YUAN. (*With perspiration exuding from his face*) Ah!

LU. She was no lady. She was the daughter of the amah Mei of the Chou House of Wusih, and her name was Shih-p'ing.

CHOU P'U-YUAN. (*Lifts his head*) What is your name?

LU. My name is Lu, Master.

CHOU P'U-YUAN. (*Breathes heavily and muses*) Yes, Shih-p'ing. It was said that a pauper discovered that girl's body and buried it. Can you find out where her grave is?

LU. Why do you ask about such an unimportant thing?

CHOU P'U-YUAN. She was a sort of relative of mine.

LU. Relative?

CHOU P'U-YUAN. Yes, I intend to repair her grave a little.

LU. Oh, there is no need.

CHOU P'U-YUAN. Why?

LU. She is still living.

CHOU P'U-YUAN. (*Astonished*) What?

LU. She didn't die.

CHOU P'U-YUAN. She is still living? Impossible. I saw her clothes on the bank of the canal and her last note with them.

LU. But she was saved by a kindly person.

CHOU P'U-YUAN. Ah, she was saved?

LU. Thereafter, the people of Wusih no longer saw her, and thought she had died that night.

CHOU P'U-YUAN. But how about her?

LU. She has been living alone in some far away place.

CHOU P'U-YUAN. How about the child?

LU. Also living.

CHOU P'U-YUAN. (*Suddenly rises*) Who are you?

LU. I am the mother of Shih-fêng the maid here. Master.

CHOU P'U-YUAN. Ah!

LU. She is now getting old, having married a low-class person and given birth to a daughter. Her living conditions have been very bad.

CHOU P'U-YUAN. Do you know where she lives now?

LU. I saw her only a few days ago!

CHOU P'U-YUAN. What? Is she here? At this place?

LU. Yes, right here.

CHOU P'U-YUAN. Ah!

LU. Master, do you want to see her?

CHOU P'U-YUAN. No, no, thank you.

LU. She is ill-fated. After she left the Chou House, the young master married a rich young lady of an illustrious family, whereas she was alone, with neither friends nor relatives, and had a child with her. She had to do all sorts of work in a strange land, begging, sewing, acting as a maid, and attending on people in a school.

CHOU P'U-YUAN. Why didn't she go back to the Chou House?

LU. Probably she was unwilling. For the sake of her own child, she has married twice.

CHOU P'U-YUAN. Ah, she subsequently married twice, eh?

LU. Yes, in both cases to low-class persons. She hasn't been happy with her husband. Do you intend to help her, Master?

CHOU P'U-YUAN. All right, you may go now. Let me think it over.

LU. Nothing else, Master? (*Looks at CHOU P'U-YUAN with tears rushing into her eyes*) Master, what shall I say concerning your rain-coat?

CHOU P'U-YUAN. You may tell Shih-fêng to take out that old raincoat from my camphor-wood trunk and also a few old shirts from it.

LU. Old shirts?

CHOU P'U-YUAN. Tell her they are in my oldest trunk—*crêpe de chine* shirts without collars.

LU. Aren't there only five shirts of that kind all together,

- Master? Which one do you want?
- CHOU P'U-YUAN. Which one?
- LU. Hasn't one of them a hole burnt on its right sleeve which was mended later with an embroidered plum-blossom in silk? And another—
- CHOU P'U-YUAN. (*Astonished*) Plum-blossom?
- LU. Another shirt had on its left sleeve an embroidered plum-blossom beside which was also embroidered the character P'ing. And another—
- CHOU P'U-YUAN. (Stands up slowly) Ah, you—you—you are . . .
- LU. I am one who attended on you before.
- CHOU P'U-YUAN. Shih-p'ing! (*In a low voice*) What? Is it you?
- LU. Of course, it's beyond your expectation that Shih-p'ing's face can grow so old that even you can't recognize her.
- CHOU P'U-YUAN. You—you—Shih-p'ing? (*Instinctively casts a glance at the photograph on the clothes-press, and then looks at LU.*)
- LU. P'u-yüan, are you looking for Shih-p'ing? Shih-p'ing is here.
- CHOU P'U-YUAN. (*Suddenly turns stern*) What have you come here for?
- LU. I didn't want to come.
- CHOU P'U-YUAN. Who has instigated you to come here?
- LU. (*Bitterly indignant*) Fate! Unjust fate has made me come here.
- CHOU P'U-YUAN. (*Coldly*) So, after all these thirty years, you have eventually come to my door.
- LU. (*Indignant and angry*) I haven't looked for you. I haven't looked for you. I thought that you were long dead. I did not dream I should come here today. It's Providence that meant me to meet you again.
- CHOU P'U-YUAN. You may as well be a little more calm and cool. Both of us have grown-up children now. If you have any resentment in your heart, it is unnecessary to begin with tears, since we are both so advanced in age.
- LU. Tears? Humph! I have long wept dry my tears. I have no resentment, I have only hatred and regret and bitterness which I have swallowed every day in these thirty years. You probably have already forgotten what you did! Thirty years

ago, on a New Year's Eve and the third day after I gave birth to your second son you demanded that I leave the House of Chou, and forced me out into the heavy snow, because you were in a hurry to marry that rich lady of an illustrious family.

CHOU P'U-YUAN. Why should you bring up the love and hatred of so many years ago?

LU. It is because the former elder young-master of the Chou House has carried everything before him and become now a pillar of society. But since I was driven out from your house, though I didn't succeed in taking my own life, I had given my mother sufficient anguish to kill her. And you also forced me to leave my two children in your house.

CHOU P'U-YUAN. Didn't you take away with you your second child?

LU. That was because your mother saw that the child was on the verge of death, so she asked me to take it with me. (*To herself*) Oh, Heaven, I feel that I am dreaming.

CHOU P'U-YUAN. I think it is unnecessary to talk about by-gones.

LU. I want to talk about them, I want to talk about them. I have been pent up for thirty years! After your marriage, you immediately moved your house, and I thought that I would never see you again in my life-time. But who ever knew that my own child should be destined to come to the same Chou House and repeat the same thing I did?

CHOU P'U-YUAN. No wonder Shih-fêng looks like you so much.

LU. I waited on you, and my child again waits on your sons. So that is my fate.

CHOU P'U-YUAN. Please cool down a little and quiet your brain. Don't think that my heart is dead. Do you think that a man can forget about a thing which he did with a guilty conscience? You see, the furniture here is exactly that which you liked best formerly, and I have kept it so many years for the sake of your memory.

LU. (*Head low*) Ah.

CHOU P'U-YUAN. Every year I have observed your birthday on April 18th. Every minute detail of the occasion has been celebrated as if you had been legally and formally married into the Chou House. Even as regards the practice of closing the windows as a result of your being ill after giving birth to P'ing, I have observed it with a view to commemorat-

- ing you in remorse for my sins.
- LU. (*Heaves a sigh*) Since we are both advanced in age, I may in turn beg you not to talk such nonsense.
- CHOU P'U-YUAN. So much the better. Now then, we may talk the matter over openly and straightforwardly.
- LU. But I feel there is nothing to be talked over.
- CHOU P'U-YUAN. There is a lot to be talked over. I have noticed that there hasn't been much change in your character. It seems to me that Lu Kwei isn't a very honest man.
- LU. Don't be afraid. He will never know anything.
- CHOU P'U-YUAN. That is good for both of us. I also want to ask you, where is the child you took with you?
- LU. He is working at your mine.
- CHOU P'U-YUAN. I am asking where he is now.
- LU. He is waiting at the gatekeeper's shack to see you.
- CHOU P'U-YUAN. What? Lu Ta-hai? Is he my son?
- LU. He still has one of his toes missing as a result of your carelessness.
- CHOU P'U-YUAN. (*Sneers*) In that case, it is my own flesh and blood that has instigated a strike in the mine against me!
- LU. You and he are now absolutely different kinds of person.
- CHOU P'U-YUAN. (*Quietly and gravely*) He is still my son.
- LU. Don't think that he will still recognize you as his father.
- CHOU P'U-YUAN. (*Suddenly*) All right, to be straightforward, how much money do you demand now?
- LU. What?
- CHOU P'U-YUAN. For your old age.
- LU. (*Smiles bitterly*) Humph! Do you still think that I have purposely come here to blackmail you?
- CHOU P'U-YUAN. All right, let's not dispute that. Let me first tell you my opinion. Listen to me. I am going to dismiss Lu Kwei immediately, and Shih-fêng will have to go home also. But—
- LU. Don't be afraid. Don't think I will blackmail you on the strength of our former relations. Rest assured, I won't. I will take Shih-fêng to the place where I have come from, in three days' time. This is a dream, and I shall stay here no longer—absolutely.
- CHOU P'U-YUAN. Very well, then, I will be responsible for all your travelling expenses.
- LU. What?

CHOU P'U-YUAN. So that I may ease my conscience.
 LU. Your conscience? (*Laughs*) I have lived through these thirty years alone. Shall I accept your money now?
 CHOU P'U-YUAN. Well, well, then, what do you want?
 LU. (*Pauses*) I . . . I want something.
 CHOU P'U-YUAN. What is it? Speak.
 LU. (*Her eyes swollen with tears*) I . . . I . . . I want to see my P'ing.
 CHOU P'U-YUAN. You want to see him?
 LU. Yes, where is he?
 CHOU P'U-YUAN. He is now with his step-mother. I'll call him to come downstairs at once to see you. But—
 LU. But what?
 CHOU P'U-YUAN. He has grown up.
 LU. (*After a moment's recollection*) He is twenty-eight now, eh? I remember that he was only one year older than Ta . . .
 CHOU P'U-YUAN. And besides, he thinks his mother died a long time ago.
 LU. Ah, do you think I'll weep and cry, to ask him to recognize his own mother? I won't be so stupid. You think I don't know that a mother like me can only make her son feel ashamed? I know that his position and education do not allow him to recognize such a mother as me. I have learned to be wise in all these years. I only wish to see him, for after all he is my own child. Don't be afraid. Even if I should tell him the truth, it would only be giving him unpleasantness, and he himself would be unwilling to recognize me.
 CHOU P'U-YUAN. Then let us settle the matter like this: I'll call him to come downstairs and you may take a look at him. But after that, not one of the Lu family shall ever be allowed to come to the House of Chou.
 LU. All right, I hope that in my life-time I shall never meet you again.
 CHOU P'U-YUAN. (*Takes from his pocket a cheque book in a leather case and signs a cheque.*) Very well, this is a cheque for five thousand dollars. You may take this as some recompense for my sin.
 LU. (*Takes the cheque*) Thank you. (*Slowly tears the cheque into pieces.*)
 CHOU P'U-YUAN. Shih-p'ing!

LU. You can never repay with your money the bitterness I have swallowed all these years.

CHOU P'U-YUAN. But you—

The noise of a quarrel outside is heard.

VOICE OF LU TA-HAI. Leave me alone. I want to go in.

VOICE OF THREE OR FOUR MALE SERVANTS. No, no, the master is resting.

The sound of a struggle between LU TA-HAI and the servants outside the central door.

CHOU P'U-YUAN. (*Goes to the central door*) Attendants! (*A male servant enters from the central door.*) Who are kicking up this row?

THE SERVANT. It's Lu Ta-hai, the foreman. He won't listen to reason and insists on seeing you, Master.

CHOU P'U-YUAN. Hum. (*Muses*) Then you may show him in. Oh, wait a minute. Tell someone to ask the elder young-master to come downstairs. I have something to ask him about.

THE SERVANT. Yes, Master. (*Exits through the central door.*)

CHOU P'U-YUAN. (*To LU*) Shih-p'ing, don't be so obstinate. If you won't accept the money, you will regret it in the future.

LU looks at him without speaking a word. The servants usher in LU TA-HAI, who stands on the left side with them at his elbow.

LU TA-HAI. (*Upon seeing LU*) Mother, you are still here?

CHOU P'U-YUAN. (*Studies LU TA-HAI*) What is your name?

LU TA-HAI. (*Laughs*) Don't put on airs with me, Mr. chairman. Do you mean to say that you don't know who I am?

CHOU P'U-YUAN. You? I only know that you are a foreman, who has been the most riotous among the strikers.

LU TA-HAI. Yes, exactly. That's why I have come here to pay you my respects.

CHOU P'U-YUAN. What have you come here for?

LU TA-HAI. Of course, you know what I have come here for, Mr. Chairman.

CHOU P'U-YUAN. (*Shakes his head*) I don't know.

LU TA-HAI. We have come a long way from the mine, and I have waited at the gate-keeper's shack of your house from six o'clock this morning until now. I only want to ask you, Mr. Chairman, whether you are going to accept the demands of us workers.

CHOU P'U-YUAN. Ah. Then where are the other three representatives?

LU TA-HAI. Let me tell you, they are now establishing connections with other labour unions.

CHOU P'U-YUAN. Ah, didn't they tell you something else?

LU TA-HAI. It's none of your business whether they told me anything else or not. I am asking you, what are you driving at after all, since your attitude is sometimes weak and sometimes strong?

CHOU P'ING enters from the dining room and, upon seeing a stranger, turns to go.

CHOU P'U-YUAN. (Sees CHOU P'ING) Don't go, P'ing-êrh. (Looks at LU, who stares at CHOU P'ING through tears, knowing that he is her son.)

CHOU P'ING. Yes, Father.

CHOU P'U-YUAN. (Points to his side) P'ing-êrh, come and stand here. (To LU TA-HAI) It's impossible to negotiate the matter with you, since you are led by your emotions like that.

LU TA-HAI. Humph! I know all your tricks. You have been dragging the matter on, wasting our time merely because you are planning to win over those shameless workers and to keep us here during the interval.

CHOU P'U-YUAN. Your view is not altogether groundless.

LU TA-HAI. But you have made a mistake. Our strike this time is a consolidated and organized one. Now you listen to me: We representatives have not come here to entreat you. If you promise, then promise. If you don't promise, we will keep on the strike to the end. We know that you will have to close up your whole enterprise within two months.

CHOU P'U-YUAN. Do you think that those representatives and leaders of yours are all reliable?

LU TA-HAI. At least they are much more reliable than you who only care for money.

CHOU P'U-YUAN. Then let me show you something.

CHOU P'U-YUAN goes to the table to find a telegram, which is found and handed to him by his servant. During the interval the younger young-master sneaks in from the study and stands aside to listen.

CHOU P'U-YUAN. (Hands the telegram to LU TA-HAI) This is a telegram from the mine yesterday.

LU TA-HAI. (Takes and reads it) What? They have gone

back to work? (*Lays the telegram on the table*) Impossible, impossible.

CHOU P'U-YUAN. The workers of the mine went back to work early yesterday morning, and you don't know anything about it? You a representative?

LU TA-HAI. Is it nothing for the policemen on the mine to shoot the workers and kill thirty of them? Those boneless creatures, only afraid of hunger. . . . Are they going to leave us four representatives in the lurch and not care a damn for us? (*Again reads the telegram, then suddenly laughs*) Humph! This is a fake. You have faked this to play us against each other. (*Laughs*) Humph! Such a mean rascally conduct!

CHOU P'ING. (*Unable to bear it any longer*) Who are you? And how dare you talk nonsense here?

CHOU P'U-YUAN. P'ing-êrh! This is no place for you to speak. (*To LU TA-HAI in a low voice*) You really have so much confidence in the other representatives who came with you?

LU TA-HAI. There is no need for you to talk more. I know the meaning behind your words.

CHOU P'U-YUAN. All right, then, let me show you the agreement to call off the strike.

LU TA-HAI. (*Laughs*) Don't be childish. The agreement to call off the strike cannot be effective without being signed by us representatives.

CHOU P'U-YUAN. Oh, yes! (*To a servant*) The agreement. (*The servant hands him the agreement on the table.*) You see, this is the agreement signed by the three other representatives.

LU TA-HAI. (*Reads the agreement*) What? (*Slowly and in a low voice*) They have signed it! How could they sign it without telling me? Are they leaving me in the lurch like that?

CHOU P'U-YUAN. Yes, you fool. It doesn't do merely to be able to shout aloud, without any experience.

LU TA-HAI. Where are the other three representatives?

CHOU P'U-YUAN. They went back by the night train last night.

LU TA-HAI. (*As if awakening from a dream*) They have betrayed me. Those cowardly workers of the mine have sold me. Humph! You shameless Board of Directors. Your money again works this time.

CHOU P'ING. (*Infuriated*) You absurd egg!

CHOU P'U-YUAN. Don't talk. (*Turns to LU TA-HAI*) Lu Ta-hai, you are not qualified to speak to me. The mine has already dismissed you.

LU TA-HAI. Dismissed?

CHOU CH'UNG. Father, that is unjust.

CHOU P'U-YUAN. (*To CHOU CH'UNG*) You shut up. Get out of here! (*CHOU CH'UNG goes out through the central door with suppressed anger.*)

LU TA-HAI. All right, all right. (*Grinding his teeth*) I have long experienced your tactics. So long as you can make money, you are capable of doing anything. You ordered the policemen to kill so many workers of the mine, and you still—

CHOU P'U-YUAN. You are talking nonsense!

LU. (*Goes to LU TA-HAI*) No more argument; let's go.

LU TA-HAI. (*To CHOU P'U-YUAN.*) Humph! I know all about your history. You once had a contract to repair the river bridge at Harbin and you intentionally caused a breach in the dyke—

CHOU P'U-YUAN. (*Severely*) Get out!
The servants drag away LU TA-HAI, shouting "Get out! Get out!"

LU TA-HAI. (*To the servants*) Leave me alone, you absurd eggs. (*To CHOU P'U-YUAN*) I say, you deliberately drowned twenty-two hundred workers in order to squeeze three hundred dollars out of the life each of them! You, bearer of the name of Chou, you have blackened your conscience to make a fortune, which should deprive you of sons and grandsons. And now you still—

CHOU P'ING. (*Overwhelmed with anger, he goes to LU TA-HAI and gives him two sound slaps on the face.*) You absurd creature! (*LU TA-HAI attempts to retaliate at once, but is dragged back by the servants.*) Beat him!

LU TA-HAI. (*To CHOU P'ING, at the top of his voice*) You . . . you . . . (*Before he can curse, the servants fall upon him. His head bleeds, and LU cries and tries to shelter him.*)

CHOU P'U-YUAN. (*Sternly*) Don't beat him! (*The servants stop beating, but still seize his arms.*)

LU TA-HAI. Leave me alone, you bandits!

CHOU P'ING. (*To the servants*) Drag him out.

LU. (*Cries aloud*) Oh, this is really a gang of bandits! (*Moves to CHOU P'ING and sobs*) You are P'ing—P'ing . . . pinning my son here and beating him. How could you?

CHOU P'ING. Who are you?

LU. I am your—your victim's mother.

LU TA-HAI. Mother, don't speak to that swine. Beware of their maltreatment.

LU. (*Gazes fixedly at CHOU P'ING's face and then suddenly cries aloud again.*) Ta-hai, my child, let's go. Oh, let's go. (*Clasps TA-HAI's bruised head and weeps. The servants push LU TA-HAI out, LU following them. Exit all except CHOU P'U-YUAN and CHOU P'ING.*)

CHOU P'ING. (*Apologetically*) Father.

CHOU P'U-YUAN. You were too rash.

CHOU P'ING. But that fellow shouldn't insult you, Father.

A brief suspense.

CHOU P'U-YUAN. Has Dr. Krieg looked at your mother?

CHOU P'ING. Yes, he found nothing wrong.

CHOU P'U-YUAN. Hum. (*Muses and then speaks abruptly.*)

Attendants! (*Enters a servant from the central door*) Tell the mistress to pay Lu Kwei and Shih-fêng their wages. I have already dismissed them.

THE SERVANT. Yes, Master.

CHOU P'ING. What? What has happened to them?

CHOU P'U-YUAN. Don't you know that worker's name is also Lu and he is none other than Shih-fêng's brother?

CHOU P'ING. Ah! that man is Shih-fêng's brother! But Father

CHOU P'U-YUAN. (*To the servant*) Ask the mistress to instruct the accountant to pay Lu Kwei and Shih-fêng two months' extra wages and tell them to leave today. You may go now.

(*The servant goes out through the dining room.*)

CHOU P'ING. But Father, Shih-fêng and Lu Kwei have been very good servants. Both very faithful and honest.

CHOU P'U-YUAN. Hum. (*Yawns*) I feel very tired. I intend to go to the study and take a rest. Tell them to bring me a cup of strong Yünnan tea.

CHOU P'ING. Yes, Father. CHOU P'U-YUAN *disappears into the study.* CHOU P'ING *heaves a sigh.*) Ugh! (*Hurriedly makes for the central door where he meets CHOU CH'UNG, who has just entered.*)

CHOU CH'UNG. (*Anxiously*) Where is Shih-fêng, Brother?

CHOU P'ING. I don't know.

CHOU CH'UNG. Is Father going to dismiss Shih-fêng?

CHOU P'ING. Yes, and Lu Kwei also.

CHOU CH'UNG. Though her brother offended Father, haven't we already beaten him? But what is the point of being mean to such a poor girl?

CHOU P'ING. You may as well ask Father.

CHOU CH'UNG. That is altogether too unreasonable.

CHOU P'ING. I agree with you.

CHOU CH'UNG. Where is Father?

CHOU P'ING. In the study. (CHOU CH'UNG goes into the study, leaving CHOU P'ING alone fidgeting in the room. SHIH-FENG enters from the central door, her face pallid and sad with tears hanging at the corners of her eyes. CHOU P'ING promptly goes to her.) Shih-fêng, I am sorry. As a matter of fact, I didn't know him. (SHIH-FENG shakes her hand. Her bosom is filled with words which she is unable to utter.) But your brother shouldn't talk like that.

SHIH-FENG. It's no use mentioning that now. He was very wrong. (*Moves to the dining room.*)

CHOU P'ING. Where are you going?

SHIH-FENG. To pack up my own things. Good-bye. Since you are leaving to-morrow, I am afraid I shall not be able to see you.

CHOU P'ING. No, don't go. (*Obstructing her.*)

SHIH-FENG. No, no, please leave me alone. Don't you know that you have already dismissed us?

CHOU P'ING. (*Painfully*) Fêng, you—you will pardon me?

SHIH-FENG. No, don't be like that. Let us shake hands. I have no complaint against you. I knew that there would be a day like this, sooner or later. But you mustn't, a thousand times, come and see me tonight.

CHOU P'ING. But how about in the future?

SHIH-FENG. That. . . . Let's talk about it later!

CHOU P'ING. No, Shih-fêng, I want to see you. I must see you tonight. I have so much to tell you. Shih-fêng, you. . . .

SHIH-FENG. No, you mustn't come on any account.

CHOU P'ING. Then, please think of some other way to see me.

SHIH-FENG. There is no other way. Can't you see what the situation is?

CHOU P'ING. If that is so, all the more reason why I should come.

SHIH-FENG. No, no, don't be silly. You must never. . . . (CHOU FAN-YI enters from the dining room) Ah, Mistress.

CHOU FAN-YI. So you are here! (To SHIH-FENG) Your father has gone to call an electrician and will return in awhile. I may ask him to bring all your things to you, or shall I send them to you by a servant? Where do you live?

SHIH-FENG. No. 10, Almond Blossom Terrace.

CHOU FAN-YI. Don't be sad. You may come and see me frequently when you have leisure. The clothes I promised to give you will be sent to your home later. Is it No. 10, Almond Blossom Terrace?

SHIH-FENG. Yes, thank you, Mistress.

LU. (*Off the stage*) Shih-fêng! Shih-fêng!

SHIH-FENG. Yes, Mother, I'm here.

LU. (*Enters from the central door*) Shih-fêng, pack up your odds and ends, and let's go. There will be a downpour soon.

Sounds of blowing wind and a gradually intensifying reverberation of the thunder.

SHIH-FENG. Yes, Mother.

LU. (*To CHOU FAN-YI*) We are going, Mistress. (*To SHIH-FENG*) Shih-fêng, thank your mistress.

SHIH-FENG. (*Curtseys to her mistress*) Thank you, Mistress. (*Looks at CHOU P'ING through tears. The young man slowly turns his head away from her. Exit LU and SHIH-FENG through the central door. The roar of the wind and thunder grows louder.*)

CHOU FAN-YI. P'ing, what did you say to Shih-fêng awhile ago?

CHOU P'ING. You have no right to enquire about it.

CHOU P'ING. What do you mean?

CHOU FAN-YI. Don't ever lie to me again. I am asking you where did you say you were going to?

CHOU P'ING. There is no need for you to ask. Will you please be more dignified and serious?

CHOU FAN-YI. Did you say that you intended to go somewhere tonight?

CHOU P'ING. I— (*Suddenly*) I am going to see her. How about that?

CHOU FAN-YI. (*Intimidatingly*) Do you know who she is, and who you are?

CHOU P'ING. I only know that I really love her now and that she also loves me. I know that you have been fully aware of that recently. But since you want me to speak out, there is of course no use in my concealing it from you.

CHOU FAN-YI. Such a highly educated man like you— And now you are mixing up with a servant's daughter, such a low-born girl. . . .

CHOU P'ING. (*Exploding*) Nonsense! You have no right to say that she is low-born. You have no right! She is not like you. She—

CHOU FAN-YI. (*Sneers*) Look out, look out! Don't drive a disappointed woman to the wall. She is capable of doing anything.

CHOU P'ING. I have already taken that into account.

CHOU FAN-YI. All right, go then! But look out, now (*looks out from the window and speaks to herself, forboding a catastrophe*) the storm is going to come!

CHOU P'ING. (*Seeing her point*) Thank you, I know. (CHOU P'U-YUAN re-enters from the study.)

CHOU P'U-YUAN. What were you talking about here?

CHOU P'ING. I was just talking with Mother about the incident awhile ago.

CHOU P'U-YUAN. Have they gone?

CHOU FAN-YI. Yes, gone.

CHOU P'U-YUAN. Fan-yi, I have again caused Ch'ung-êrh to cry. You may call him out and console him.

CHOU FAN-YI. (*Moves to the study door*) Ch'ung-êrh, Ch'ung-êrh! (*Hearing no answer, she goes into the study.*)

The wind and thunder outside roars violently.

CH'ÉU P'U-YUAN. (*Goes to the window and looks out. The wind is blowing hard and the sound of flower pots bloom down to the ground into pieces is heard.*) P'ing-êrh, the flower pots have been broken to pieces by the wind. Call the servants to close the shutters immediately. The storm is probably coming on.

CHOU P'ING. Yes, Father. (*Goes out through the central door.*)

CHOU P'U-YUAN remains in front of the window, looking at the lightning outside.

ACT III.

SCENE:—*In the home of LU KWEL, at No. 10 Almond Blossom*

Terrace.

The following is the scene outside LU KWEI's home:—

The Railway Station clock has struck ten. The residents, old and young, of the Almond Blossom Terrace are still cooling themselves on the banks of a pond, from which emanates in the day-time a foul odour which is dissipated only at midnight by a good cool breeze from the foreign concessions. In spite of a shower a short while ago, it is still unbearably sultry, and the sky is blackened with hosts of dark grotesque-looking clouds. Everyone is like a sunburnt small grass, which though bathing in dews late in the night, still feels hot and uneasy at its core and yearns for another storm to come. Only the frogs hiding at the roots of the weeds in the pond are enthusiastic in their incessant croaking, whereas the sound of the idle talk of the people is spasmodic. In the starless firmament the lightning winks in the absence of the thunder. Under its bluish flash, the weeping willows on the edge of the pond sway tremulously over the water. When the lightning flickers out, all is again a sheet of jet black.

Gradually those out for the cool breeze begin to disperse. Quietness creeps in all around. The faint rumble of the thunder is heard. The frogs seem to be frightened and dare not croak too much. The wind is blowing again, rustling the willow leaves. In dim alleyways, homeless dogs are barking hysterically but lonesomely.

The lightning gradually gives a more horrific bluish flash and the rumble of the thunder grows more ferocious. The quietness all around intensifies into a breathless hush, broken casually only by a few croakings of the frogs and the more resonant beating of the wooden pang. The howls of the wild dogs are now scarcely heard. A storm is coming.

Finally the storm comes, attended by a fierce wind and violent rain, which last till the curtain falls.

But what the audience sees is merely SHIH-FENG's house (that is LU KWEI's two-room house). All that depicted in the foregoing, with the exception of the sounds, can only be seen through the one wooden window in the centre of the back wall of the room. It's SHIH-FENG's room:—

The LU family has just supped and everyone of its members feels sad and vexed at heart, each having his or her own heart's concern. In the corner of the room LU TA-HAI is alone cleaning

something. LU and SHIH-FENG are mute and not inclined to utter any word. The mother is removing bowls and chopsticks from the roundtable in the centre, her head hanging low. Sitting in a broken armchair on the left side, LU KWEI is drunk. His eyes have grown red like those of a monkey. Leaning on the back of the chair, he gazes at LU and hiccups. Now and then he puts his bare feet on the chair and then again lets them stretch out on the floor, his two legs straddling wide apart like a pair of compasses. He wears a white singlet, which is sweat-soaked and sticks to his body, and he is incessantly fanning himself with a banana-leaf fan.

SHIH-FENG is standing in front of the window in the centre with her back to the audience, and looking out restively. Outside the window, on the banks of the pond the people out for the cool breeze are talking and the frogs are croaking. At times SHIH-FENG is nervous and thinks she has heard some sound; at times she turns her head to look at her father and then quickly turns away again with disgust. At her elbow and against the left wall there is a makeshift wooden-board "bed" covered with a mat having a very clean lined sheet, a straw summer pillow and a rush fan tidily disposed upon it.

The house is very small, as all poor people's houses are, with the ceiling almost pressing on one's head. An advertisement picture of a tobacco company hangs over one end of the bed; a conventional popular "New Year picture", much torn and worn out, is stuck on the wall on the left side. A small square-table stands by the only chair occupied by LU KWEI, with a mirror, a few combs, and ordinary woman's toilet articles on it. This is probably SHIH-FENG's dressing-table. There is a stool near the left wall, and a round-stool standing solitarily beside the roundtable in the centre. Underneath SHIH-FENG's bed, there are two or three pairs of very fashionable shoes lying in perfect order and a wooden trunk covered with a piece of white cloth on which one china teapot and two or three crude bowls are placed. On the small round-table a kerosene lamp with a beautiful bright-red paper lampshade is put together with a few sundry small articles which, though not distinctly visible under the dim light, still make one feel that this is probably a woman's bedroom.

The room has two doors; the smaller one on the left side, that is the side with the wooden-board "bed", has a gory red-patterned curtain hanging over it. Behind the curtain, there is a pile of coal

and one or two pieces of old furniture for SHIH-FENG's use in changing her dress. The cracked old wooden door on the right side leads to the Lu's outer room which is occupied by LU KWEI and will be the sleeping quarters of himself and his wife tonight. The entrance of the outer room opens to the muddy path along the bank of the pond. A pair of wooden boards for making a "bed" stand beside the wooden door between the inner and outer room.

When the curtain rises, LU KWEI has just poured out, with much animation his "paternal admonition" in the form of half cursing. Inside the room all is silent and tense. During the awkward suspense, one may hear voices on the bank of the pond singing obscure "spring melodies" which are mingled with the conversation of the people out for the cool breeze. The inmates of the room are silent, each brooding over his or her heart's affair. LU KWEI is perspiring freely as a result of drinking too much wine and delivering his "speech" too strenuously. Saliva flows from his mouth, and his face is abnormally flushed. He seems to be pleased with his own prestige and majesty in his home. With the torn banana-leaf fan in hand, he waves it, sways it and points with it. His fat head, as if swollen from soaking in sweat, leans forward, and his eyes sweep hither and thither over everyone in the room.

LU TA-HAI is still cleaning the barrel of his revolver. The two women are both mute, awaiting LU KWEI's further grumbles. At that moment the croaking of the frogs and the cries of street minstrels issue forth.

SHIH-FENG stands in front of the window, casually heaving a deep sigh.

LU KWEI. (Begins to cough) Mother's! (Spits on the floor and demands excitedly) Think! Which of you has done me justice? (To SHIH-FENG and LU TA-HAI) Don't be unwilling to listen. Were you not brought up by me through pain and toil—each one of you? But now, is there anything you have done that does me justice? (Turns to the left to LU TA-HAI) You speak. (Then suddenly turns to the right to SHIH-FENG) And you speak. (Triumphantly to LU, who is standing opposite the round-table in the centre) And you also speak, since they are both your good children! "Pha!" (He spits again on the floor. Silence ensues, the sound of a Chinese fiddle and singing floats in from outside.)

- ⁵⁰⁷LU TA-HAI. (*To SHIH-FENG*) Who is that? It's almost half past ten, and still singing?
- SHIH-FENG. (*Dispassionately*) A blind man and his wife. They sing here for a living everyday. (*Waves her fan and sighs lightly.*)
- LU KWEI. All my life I have had a bad star and ill luck. I have just worked at the Chou House for two years and placed my children in nice positions, then you (*points at Lu*) come along and cook my goose. Every time you come home, something is bound to happen. What happened awhile ago? No sooner had I called an electrician to the Chou mansion than Fêng-êrh's job was lost and even my old root in the earth was dug out. *Mother's!* Had you not come (*points at Lu*), would I have had such bad luck? (*Again spits.*)
- LU TA-HAI. (*Puts down his revolver*) Scold me if you like. But don't point to the east when you mean the west, and be mean to Mother because she is so meek.
- LU KWEI. I scold you? You are a young master, and I scold you? You even scolded a rich man to his face, and I dare to scold you?
- LU TA-HAI. (*Impatiently*) You have scarcely swallowed two cups of wine than you begin to babble endlessly. Isn't this last half hour already enough for your prattling?
- LU KWEI. Enough? Humph! My belly is full of wrongs, full of fire. I have not had enough! Years ago, your father also had people waiting on him. Eating, drinking and merry-making—which of these hadn't I had in grand fashion! But since I married your mother, my house has been on the decline, getting worse everyday, getting worse everyday. . . .
- SHIH-FENG. Is it not because you have lost all your money in gambling?
- LU TA-HAI. Don't mind him. Let him talk.
- LU KWEI. (*Cares only for venting his feelings to his heart's content, as if he is the only martyr*) Let me tell you. My house has been on the decline, getting worse everyday. I have swallowed people's insults, and also yours. Now, well, I am not even entitled to swallow people's insults, though I am willing to, and I have to let hunger gnaw at my stomach and wait with you for death. Just think, have you done anything that is fair to me? (*Suddenly feels there is nothing for his legs to rest on comfortably, and addresses Lu*) Give

me that stool to put my legs on.

LU TA-HAI. (*Glances meaningly at his mother not to mind LU KWEI.*) Mother! (*But in spite of that, she takes over the only round-stool in the room and puts it before LU KWEI's feet. LU KWEI places his legs on it.*)

LU KWEI. (*Looks at LU TA-HAI*) But who is to blame? You insulted them, and naturally they were infuriated and fired us. Can I help the fact that I am your father? Ta-hai, think it over in your heart: I have lived to such an age and yet I'll have to starve to death with you. I should die of hunger, could you feel that you had done me justice? Let me ask you, if I should die like that——?

LU TA-HAI. (*Unable to bear it any longer, he stands up and shouts*) If you have to die, die then. What are you?

LU KWEI. (*Somewhat shocked and sobered*) Mother's! This child!

LU. Ta-hai!

SHIH-FENG. Brother! (*Simultaneously*)

LU KWEI. (*Looking at LU TA-HAI's tall husky body and the revolver in his hand, he is somewhat in fear, and smiles*) Look! The pretty temper of this child! (*Pauses and then continues*) Ugh! If one looks at the matter from another angle, one cannot blame Ta-hai alone. None of the Chous, whether old or young, are decent fellows. I have attended on them for two years. Is there anything they have done that can escape my knowledge? After all, rich men find it very easy to do what they like. When they do something wicked, they can whitewash it and make it appear more glorious than good deeds. The more high-sounding words they use, the more dastardly they are. Eggs of a tortoise! When I left the Chou House today, the master and the mistress played up and gave me 'the mandarin's talk'. Fine fellows! I shall see them tomorrow. And they think that I don't know the screets of their house.

SHIH-FENG. (*Fears that he may do something absurd*) Father, but you—but you must never go to the Chou House again!

LU KWEI. (*Turning scornful in spite of himself*) Humph! Tomorrow I'll make public the whole affair between the mistress and the elder young-master, and then even that tortoise egg of an old head will have to kneel down and k'otou to me. Ungrateful things! (*In high spirit he begins*

to cough) Mother's! *(Again spits heavily on the floor and turns to SHIH-FENG)* Where's my tea?

SHIH-FENG. Father, are you really drunk? Didn't I put it on the table awhile ago?

LU KWEL. *(Takes up the cup and addresses SHIH-FENG)* This is water, young lady! *(Throws the water on the floor.)*

SHIH-FENG. *(Because of her damping his spirits)* You silly mug! I always want some good tea after meals, don't you know that?

LU TA-HAI. *(Wilfully)* Ah, Father wants tea also after meals. *(To SHIH-FENG)* Shih-fêng, why make Father so angry instead of brewing the four-dollar-eighty-per-ounce Lung-ching tea for him?

SHIH-FENG. Lungching tea? There is not a single tea leaf in this house.

LU TA-HAI. *(To LU KWEL)* Do you hear that? You had better take this cup of boiled water and stop being so damned particular. *(Takes the cup of boiled water, puts it on the table beside LU KWEL, and moves away from him.)*

LU KWEL. This is my home. If it doesn't please your eyes to look at it, you may roll out of here like an egg.

LU TA-HAI. *(Advances to him)* You, you—

LU. *(Obstructs LU TA-HAI)* Don't, don't, good child. For your Ma's sake, don't quarrel with him.

LU KWEL. You think that you're not in the least wrong. But you had scarcely been home two days when you created a big trouble. Do you want to beat me now even though I haven't said anything against you? You get out of here!

LU TA-HAI. *(Tolerantly)* Mother, I really can't bear any longer to see him. I am leaving, Ma.

LU. Nonsense. It's going to rain soon. Where do you want to go?

LU TA-HAI. I have some business. If I should fail to do it, perhaps I'll take a rickshaw from the rickshaw company to pull.

LU. Ta-hai, you—

LU KWEL. Let him go, let him go. This boy is nothing but a pile of pauperish bones. Tell him to roll out of here. *(To LU TA-HAI)* Get out!

LU TA-HAI. Look out. You had better not provoke the fire in me.

LU KWEL. (*Knawishly*) Your mother being here, what do you dare do to your father? You bastard!

LU TA-HAI. What? Whom are you cursing?

LU KWEL. Cursing you. You—

LU. (*To LU KWEL*) Don't be so shameless! You shut up!

LU KWEL. I shameless? I never gave birth to a bastard before marriage, and then got married, taking the child along (*points at LU TA-HAI*) with me.

LU. (*With a pang at heart*) Oh, Heaven!

LU TA-HAI. (*Whips out his revolver and bawls at LU KWEL*) I—I will kill you, you old mug!

LU KWEL. (*Screams*) Help, help! (*Rises, darts to the "closet" and stands there petrified.*)

SHIH-FENG. (*Rushes to her brother and holds his hand*) Brother!

LU. Ta-hai, you put that down!

LU TA-HAI. (*To LU KWEL*) Tell Ma that you are wrong and that you will never again talk nonsense or freely curse others.

LU KWEL. All right—

LU TA-HAI. (*Moves one step forward*) Speak!

LU KWEL. (*Under intimidation*) You, you—you put that down first.

LU TA-HAI. (*With rage*) No, you speak first.

LU KWEL. All right. (*To LU*) I have spoken wrongly. I shall never again talk nonsense or curse people.

LU TA-HAI. (*Points at the only armchair*) Go back and sit there!

LU KWEL. (*Dejected, he sits in the chair and droops his head, grumbling in a low voice*) That bastard!

LU TA-HAI. Humph! You are not worthy of my using so much strength.

LU. Put it down. Ta-hai, please put your revolver down.

LU TA-HAI. (*Puts down his revolver and smiles*) Don't be afraid, Ma, I was merely cowing him.

LU. Give it to me. Where did you get this revolver?

LU TA-HAI. The policemen at the mine dropped it when shooting at us. I picked it up and brought it with me.

LU. Why do you hang it on your body?

LU TA-HAI. Nothing.

LU. No, you must tell me.

LU TA-HAI. (*Grins with a grimace*) There is nothing. If the

Chous should drive me to the wall, this will be my only way out.

LU. Nonsense, leave it with me.

LU TA-HAI. (*Unwillingly*) Mother!

LU. I told you at supper time that the matter of the Chous is closed and that we Lus should never mention them again.

LU TA-HAI. (*Slowly and in a low voice*) How about the blood that was shed at the mine? How about the slap the elder young-master of the Chou House gave me awhile ago? Shall I let them go like that?

LU. Yes, let them go. Those accounts can never be cleared up, and to retaliate, there would be no end. Everything is predestined by Heaven. I wish you had more fortitude.

LU TA-HAI. It's you yourself—I . . .

LU. (*At a high pitch*) Ta-hai, you are my most beloved child. Listen, I have never spoken to you like this. If you should do any harm to the Chous, whether to the master or to the young-masters—if you should do harm to them, I would disown you as long as I live.

LU TA-HAI. (*Imploringly*) But, Ma—

LU. (*Positively*) You know your Ma's temper. If you should do the thing which I fear most you would do, then I would take my own life right in front of you.

LU TA-HAI. (*Heaves a deep sigh*) Oh, Mother! You— (*Lifts his head, looks at her and then bows down again*) Then I will hate . . . hate them as long as I live.

LU. (*Sighs*) Heaven! Then, I'm not to blame. (*To LU TA-HAI*) Give me your revolver. (*He refuses to give it up*) Give it to me! (*Goes to him and tries to lay hold of his revolver.*)

LU TA-HAI. (*With pain*) Ma, you—

SHIH-FENG. Brother, give it to Ma.

LU TA-HAI. All right then, take it. But you must tell me where you will put it.

LU. All right, I'll put it in the trunk. (*Goes to the "bed" and puts the revolver in the wooden trunk underneath*) But (*turns to LU TA-HAI*) early tomorrow morning I will report to the police and hand it over to them.

LU KWEL. Right you are. That's the proper way.

LU TA-HAI. You shut up!

LU. Ta-hai, don't talk to your father like that.

- LU TA-HAI. (*Glances at LU KWEI and then turns away from him*) Well, Ma, I am leaving. I will go and see whether there is anyone I know in the rickshaw company.
- LU. All right, you may go. But you must come back. Members of the same family should never quarrel like this.
- LU TA-HAI. Mmmm, I'll be back soon.
- LU TA-HAI *goes out through the door opening to the outer room on the right side, and after a moment he is heard shutting the house door. LU KWEI rises, watching his son's departure, and then turns back to stand beside the round table with anger in his bosom.*
- LU KWEI. (*To himself*) That small egg of a tortoise! (*To LU*) I told you to buy some tea leaves awhile ago. Why didn't you buy them?
- LU. There is no money.
- LU KWEI. But, Shih-fêng, where is my money? Where are our wages? Didn't you get them from the Chou House?
- SHIH-FENGG. You mean the two months' extra wages given to us?
- LU KWEI. Exactly. Regular and extra, altogether sixty dollars.
- SHIH-FENG. (*Knowing that she has to tell him sooner or later*) Yes, yes. But the money was all paid to your creditors already.
- LU KWEI. What? Paid to my creditors?
- SHIH-FENG. Chao San came awhile ago, blocking the door for settlement of your gambling accounts. So Mother gave him all the money we had.
- LU KWEI. (*To LU*) All the money, sixty dollars, for the accounts?
- LU. Yes, I have cleared up your gambling accounts this time once for all.
- LU KWEI. (*With anxiety*) *Mother's!* It is exactly in this way that you have ruined my house. Is this the time for clearing up accounts?
- LU. (*Quietly*) It's better to clear them all up. I have planned to give up our home here.
- LU KWEI. You are going to give up our home here?
- LU. I think I am going back to Tsinan day after tomorrow.
- LU KWEI. When you return to Tsinan, Shih-fêng and myself will still be here, and we'll need this house all the same.
- LU. This time I am going to take Shih-fêng with me. I won't

let her be alone with you here.

LU KWEL. (*Smiles at SHIH-FENG*) Shih-fêng, do you hear that your mother is going to take you with her?

LU. When I went away last time, I didn't know what my job would turn out to be. Here Shih-fêng had our neighbour Aunt Chang to look after her, whereas in a strange land far away we didn't know anybody; so it was only natural that I didn't take her with me. But now my job there is pretty stable and Shih-fêng has nothing to do here. Why shouldn't I take her away with me?

SHIH-FENG. (*Her heart throbbing with astonishment*) Are you . . . are you really going to take me away?

LU. (*With suppressed pain*) Yes, Ma will never leave you alone again, no matter what may happen.

LU KWEL. Impossible. We have to talk it over carefully.

LU. What is there to be talked over? If you are willing to go, you may go together with us day after tomorrow. But you won't be able to find your gang of gambling friends over there.

LU KWEL. Of course I won't go. But why do you want to take Shih-fêng there?

LU. A daughter naturally follows her mother. Formerly, it couldn't be helped.

LU KWEL. (*Loquaciously*) So long as Shih-fêng is with me, she will have nice things to eat and wear and swell persons to see. Why do you want to take her with you and make her suffer hell's hardships?

LU. (*Helplessly*) It's impossible to convince you. You may as well ask her whether she is willing to go with me or to stay with you.

LU KWEL. Of course she is willing to stay with me.

LU. You ask her.

LU KWEL. (*Being confident of a sure triumph*) Shih-fêng, come here. Now listen clearly: what are you going to do, follow your mother, or your father? It's up to you. (SHIH-FENG turns to him, her face tear-stained) Hey, child, why are you crying?

LU. Ah, Fêng-êrh, my poor child!

LU KWEL. (*To SHIH-FENG*) Speak. This is not a case of a bride going into her flower-palanquin for marriage.

LU. (*Consolingly*) Ah, Fêng-êrh, tell me: awhile ago you

- promised me that you would willingly go with Ma. How is it now? Tell me, good child. Tell me frankly, Ma will love you all the same.
- LU KWEI. (*To LU*) She is displeased at heart to hear you say that you will have her go with you. I know she can't bear to leave this place. (*Smiles.*)
- SHIH-FENG. (*To her father*) Get away! (*To her mother*) Don't ask me, Ma, I feel ill at heart. Ma, my Ma, I am going with you. Oh, Ma! (*Sobs and flings herself into her mother's embrace.*)
- LU. Oh, my child, my poor child has been wronged today.
- LU KWEI. Look, this child is a lady from top to heel. Won't it mean suffering to her, if she should go with you?
- LU. (*To LU KWEI*) You had better talk less. (*To SHIH-FENG*) Ma's fate is bad. Ma feels sorry for you. Don't be broken-hearted. Hereafter you'll be together with Ma and nobody will dare maltreat you. Oh, my child—my heart.
- LU TAI-HAI *re-enters from the right side.*
- LU TAI-HAI. Ma, Aunt Chang has come back. I just met her in the street.
- LU. Did you talk to her about selling our furniture?
- LU TAI-HAI. Yes, I did. She said she could do something about it.
- LU. Did you find someone you knew at the rickshaw company?
- LU TAI-HAI. Yes. But I have to go out again to find a guarantor.
- LU. Then let's go out together. Wait for me, Shih-fêng, I'll be back soon.
- LU TAI-HAI. (*To LU KWEI*) See you later. Have you sobered up a little from your wine? (*To his mother*) I'm afraid I won't come home to sleep tonight. (*Exit LU and LU TAI-HAI.*)
- LU KWEI. (*His eyes follow them as they go out*) Humph! That brute! (*To SHIH-FENG, who is standing in front of the window*) Your Ma has gone, Shih-fêng. Now tell me what you intend to do. (*SHIH-FENG does not reply to him, but heaves a sigh and listens to the croaking of the frogs and the rumble of the thunder outside. LU KWEI continues with contempt.*) You see you are still deeply absorbed in the affairs of your heart.
- SHIH-FENG. (*Evasively*) What affairs of the heart? The weather is so sultry, I only feel unbearably pent up.

LU KWEL. Don't fool me. Your eyes have been staring straight before you since you supped. What have you been thinking about?

SHIH-FENG. I am not thinking about anything.

LU KWEL. (*Purposely sad*) Fêng-êrh, you are my child, my sensible child. I have no other real daughter but you. If you go with your Ma, you will be leaving me alone here.

SHIH-FENG. Please don't talk any more, my heart is all topsyturvy. (*The lightning flashes outside*) Listen, the thunder is again roaring at a distance.

LU KWEL. Child, don't interrupt me. Are you really going with Ma to Tsinan?

SHIH-FENG. Yes. (*Exhaling a breath.*)

LU KWEL. (*Fatuously begins to sing*) 'Flowers bloom and fade, it happens every year. But when the springtime of Life is past, it'll ne'er return again. . . . Ah! (*abruptly*) Shih-fêng, one has altogether two or three good years in one's lifetime, and good chances are gone once you miss them.

SHIH-FENG. You—you had better leave me alone. I am tired.

LU KWEL. (*Gradually tries to arouse her interest*) Don't be worried about the matter of the Chou House. So long as I am here, we shall go back there again tomorrow. Have you really the heart to leave? (*Hinting*) Could you bear to give up such a nice place as that? Could you bear to give up the Chou—

SHIH-FENG. (*Being afraid of him*) Please don't talk nonsense. You had better go to bed now. The people cooling themselves outside have all dispersed; why don't you to to sleep?

LU KWEL. Don't be occupied by absurd thoughts. (*Sincerely*) There is no one in this world who is reliable. Money alone is the real thing. Huh, but it just happens that you and your mother don't know the value of money.

SHIH-FENG. Listen, I seem to hear someone knocking at the door.
Sound of knocking outside.

LU KWEL. It's almost eleven o'clock now. Who can it be?

SHIH-FENG. Let me go and see, Father.

LU KWEL. No, let me go. (*Half opens the right door*) Who is it?

THE VOICE OUTSIDE. Is this the Lu house?

LU KWEL. Yes, what do you want?

THE VOICE OUTSIDE. I am looking for someone.

LU KWEL. Who are you?

THE VOICE OUTSIDE. My name is Chou.

LU KWEL. (*His face beams with joy. To SHIH-FENG*) There, there, you see: someone of the Chou House has come.

SHIH-FENG. (*Quickly, in astonishment*) No, Father, tell him that we have all gone out.

LU KWEL. Gee! (*Casts a wily glance at her*) What are you talking about! (*Exit LU KWEL*).

SHIH-FENG *slightly tidies up the room by putting away some out-of-the-place articles in the small "closet" behind the curtain on the left side, and stands in the right corner in expectation of the visitor. In the meantime the voice of the younger young-master talking with LU KWEL is heard, and in a moment the two enter.*

CHOU CH'UNG. (*Brightens up as he sees SHIH-FENG*) Shih-fêng!

SHIH-FENG. (*Stares at him curiously*) Younger young-master!

LU KWEL. (*Smiles flatteringly*) Please don't laugh at us for this poor miserable place of ours.

CHOU CH'UNG. (*Smiles*) It is really difficult to find this place. Outside there is a pond, which is very nice.

LU KWEL. Please sit down, younger young-master. (*Turns to SHIH-FENG and points at the round-table*) Shih-fêng, fetch that decent chair here.

CHOU CH'UNG. (*Observing that SHIH-FENG is mute*) Shih-fêng, what is the matter? Are you not feeling well?

SHIH-FENG. Yes. (*Seriously*) Younger young-master, what have you come here for? If the mistress should know that—

CHOU CH'UNG. It's the mistress herself who asked me to come.

LU KWEL. (*Half grasps the situation*) The mistress asked you to come?

CHOU CH'UNG. Yes, and I also wanted to come and see you myself. (*To SHIH-FENG*) Where is your brother and mother?

LU KWEL. They have gone out.

SHIH-FENG. How did you know this place?

CHOU CH'UNG. (*Innocently*) Mother told me the place. I didn't know that there is such an enormous pond and the road is so slippery after the rain. In the darkness, if I had been careless I really could have easily fallen into it.

LU KWEL. You didn't trip over, did you, younger young-master?

CHOU CH'UNG. (*Curiously*) No. I came by our own private rickshaw; it was very interesting. (*Looks around at the lay-*

out in the room and smiles joyously, his eyes resting on SHIH-FENG) So, you are here!

SHIH-FENG. I think you had better go home right away.

LU KWEL. What?

CHOU CH'UNG. (*Suddenly*) By the way, I have forgotten why I have come here. Mother told me she was much concerned about you since you left us. She was afraid that you might not be able to find a job quickly, so she asked me to send your mother one hundred dollars. (*Takes out the money.*)

SHIH-FENG. What?

LU KWEL. (*Presuming that the Chous are afraid of offending him, he smiles proudly and turns to SHIH-FENG*) You see they are so kind and generous. After all they are rich men.

SHIH-FENG. No, younger young-master, please thank the mistress for us and take the money back, we are still able to carry on without it.

LU KWEL. (*To SHIH-FENG*) How can you talk like that? You see, the mistress has asked the younger young-master to send us the money himself. How can we be so rude as to decline their goodwill? (*Accepts the bank-notes and turns to CHOU CH'UNG*) Please give our respects to the mistress, saying that we are all very well and thank her for her kindness, and ask her not to be worried about us.

SHIH-FENG. (*Obstinately*) Father, that won't do.

LU KWEL. What do you know, you a child?

SHIH-FENG. If you accept it, Ma and Brother would never let you go.

LU KWEL. (*Does not mind her but turns to CHOU CH'UNG*) Thank you for coming such a long way. Let me go and buy you something fresh to eat. Please sit here for awhile with Shih-feng and excuse my leaving.

SHIH-FENG. Please don't go, Father! It's impossible.

LU KWEL. Don't merely talk. Serve a cup of tea to the younger young-master first. I'll be back soon. (*Goes out in a hurry.*)

CHOU CH'UNG. (*Without meaning it*) It's all right to let him go.

SHIH-FENG. (*With disgust*) Huh! truly mean! (*Unwillingly to CHOU CH'UNG*) Who has asked you to send us money?

CHOU CH'UNG. You . . . you . . . you seem to be unwilling to see me. Why is it? I won't talk so carelessly

hereafter.

SHIH-FENG. (*Tries to find something to say*) Has the master had his dinner?

CHOU CH'UNG. He has just had it. He was losing his temper and Mother became angry and ran upstairs before she finished her dinner. I tried to console her for quite awhile, otherwise I wouldn't have come here so late.

SHIH-FENG. (*Intentionally callous*) Where is the elder young-master?

CHOU CH'UNG. I haven't seen him. I know he is very sad and is again drinking in his own room. Probably he is drunk.

SHIH-FENG. Ah! (*Heaves a sigh*) Why didn't you send a servant in place of yourself? Why should you come to this pauper's quarters?

CHOU CH'UNG. (*Earnestly*) Probably you resent us now. (*Shamefully*) I really feel sorry for what has happened today. But you should never take Brother to be a wicked man. He regrets it very much now. You don't know, but he still likes you very much.

SHIH-FENG. Younger young-master, I am now no longer a servant of the Chou House.

CHOU CH'UNG. But can't we forever be the best of friends?

SHIH-FENG. I am going with my mother to Tsinan.

CHOU CH'UNG. No, please don't go. Sooner or later you and your father may still come back to us. When we move into our new house, my father may go back to the mine. Then, you may come back and how happy I would be!

SHIH-FENG. You truly have a good heart.

CHOU CH'UNG. Don't be sad about such a small thing, Shih-fêng. The world is so vast. You ought to read books, and then you would know how many people there are in the world who have suffered pains and hardships like us, who worked hard and took their time, and finally found happiness.

SHIH-FENG. Huh! women are after all women! (*Suddenly*) Listen. (*The croaking of the frogs is heard*) Why don't the frogs go to sleep, instead of croaking at midnight?

CHOU CH'UNG. (*Without hearing her*) No, you are no ordinary girl. You have strength and you can stand hardship. We are both young yet; we'll surely work in the future for the well-being of mankind in this world. I hate this unjust society, I hate those who only advocate 'might is right,' and

I loathe my father. We are both oppressed persons. We're alike—

SHIH-FENG. You are probably thirsty now, younger young-master. Let me fetch you a cup of water. (*Rises to pour out the water.*)

CHOU CH'UNG. No, thank you.

SHIH-FENG. No, let me wait on you just a little.

CHOU CH'UNG. Please don't talk like that. The world as it is should never have existed. I have never treated you as my servant. You are my sister Fêng, you are my guide. Our real world is not here.

SHIH-FENG. Ah, you truly know how to talk.

CHOU CH'UNG. Sometimes I forget about the present . . . (*Meditates*) I forget about home, forget about you, forget about Mother, and forget about myself. I think—I seem to be in a winter morning: an unusually bright sky . . . on a boundless sea . . . Ah, there is a tiny little yacht as light as a sea swallow. When the wind blows hard and the sea smells a little of the fish and the salt, its sails hang full and skim slantingly over the sea like the wings of an eagle—flying, flying, flying towards the horizon. At that time, only two or three hazy white clouds float on the verge of the sky, and we are sitting in the bow and gazing ahead. And ahead is the world that belongs to us.

SHIH-FENG. Us?

CHOU CH'UNG. Yes, you and I. We may fly . . . fly to a really happy and clean land, where there will be no dispute, no hypocrisy, no inequality, no. . . . (*He looks up a little bit as if such a place is right in front of his eyes. Then suddenly*) What do you say to that?

SHIH-FENG. How well you can imagine.

CHOU CH'UNG. (*Earnestly*) Are you willing to go together with me? It is possible even to take him along.

SHIH-FENG. Who?

CHOU CH'UNG. You told me about him yesterday. He is the man to whom you said you had given your heart. I am sure he resembles you. He must be a lovable person.

LU TA-HAI *re-enters.*

SHIH-FENG. Brother.

LU TA-HAI. (*Coldly*) What's the matter here?

CHOU CH'UNG. Mr. Lu.

SHIH-FENG. The younger young-master has come here to see us.

LU TA-HAI. Ah, I didn't expect to find you two here at this moment. Where is Father?

SHIH-FENG. He has gone out to buy something.

LU TA-HAI. (*To CHOU CH'UNG*) It's very strange! So late, and yet the younger young-master should have come to this miserable place of ours—to see us.

CHOU CH'UNG. I was expecting to see you. Are you . . . are you willing to shake hands with me? (*Stretches out his right hand.*)

LU TA-HAI. (*Ill-humouredly*) I don't know foreign etiquette.

CHOU CH'UNG. (*Withdraws his hand*) Then allow me to say that I really feel sorry for you at heart.

LU TA-HAI. What's the matter?

CHOU CH'UNG. (*Blushing*) This afternoon when you were at my home—

LU TA-HAI. (*Suddenly turns angry*) You had better not mention that incident any more.

SHIH-FENG. Brother, please don't be like that. It is goodwill on his part to console us.

LU TA-HAI. Young-master, we don't need your consolation. We are born with a set of pauperish bones and we do not need your paying us a visit at midnight to console us.

CHOU CH'UNG. You probably have misunderstood my intention.

LU TA-HAI. (*Distinctly*) I have not misunderstood you. There was no third person in this house, only you and my sister were here. What did that mean?

CHOU CH'UNG. I did not expect that you would think that way.

LU TA-HAI. But anybody would think of it that way.

(*Turns to SHIH-FENG*) Go out.

SHIH-FENG. Brother!

LU TA-HAI. Go out, I have a few words to speak to the younger young-master. (*See that SHIH-FENG still remains*) Get out! (*SHIH-FENG slowly goes out through the door on the left side.*) Younger young-master, we have spoken to each other once and I know that in your house you are comparatively more level-headed. But remember, if you should come here again—to console us, (*suddenly turns fierce*) I'll break your legs.

CHOU CH'UNG. Break my legs?

LU TA-HAI. (*With the look of confirmation*) Yes!

- CHOU CH'UNG. (*Smiles*) I think nobody would ever refuse other people's sympathy.
- LU TA-HAI. Sympathy is not a thing between you and I. It must be accepted with due consideration of one's position.
- CHOU CH'UNG. Ta-hai, I feel that sometimes you are too much prejudiced. A rich man is not necessarily a criminal. Do you mean to say that it is impossible for him to be near you?
- LU TA-HAI. You are too young and it's of no use telling you too much—you won't understand. Let me tell you explicitly: you shouldn't have come here, this is no place for you.
- CHOU CH'UNG. Why? You said this morning that you were willing to be my friend. I think Shih-fêng is also willing to be my friend. Can't I, then, come here to help you a little?
- LU TA-HAI. Young-master, don't think that this is kindness I have heard that you intended to send Shih-fêng to school, eh? Shih-fêng is my sister and I know her. She is merely a fickle, ordinary girl, having also the wish to wear silk stockings and ride in motor-cars.
- CHOU CH'UNG. Then you have mistaken her.
- LU TA-HAI. No, I have not. The more she sees the world of you rich people, the more unhappiness she will have. Your motor-cars, your dancing and your leisurely days have dazzled her eyes during these last two years. She has forgotten where she came from, and now that she has returned to her own home, she finds everything disagreeable to her eyes. But she is a poor man's child and her future will be to live with a worker as his wife—to wash clothes, to cook rice, and to gather bits of coal from the cinder piles. Humph! To go to school and read books, and to be married to a rich man as his wife—that's a young lady's dream! These things should not even occur to us poor people.
- CHOU CH'UNG. It's true that there is some reason in your words, but—
- LU TA-HAI. Therefore, if the son of the mine-owner really has a thought for Shih-fêng, then I will request you not to have anything more to do with her.
- CHOU CH'UNG. I think you are too prejudiced. You can't say that because my father is a mine-owner, you will—
- LU TA-HAI. Now let me warn you . . . (*Stares at him*)
- CHOU CH'UNG. Warn me?

LU TA-HAI. If anytime I should see you come to this house and be together with my sister, I'll surely— (*Laughs, then suddenly his attitude turns more friendly*) well, I hope such a thing won't happen. It's late now, young-master, and we are going to bed.

CHOU CH'UNG. It's beyond my expectation that you . . . you would talk like this. It didn't occur to me that what my father said was right after all.

LU TA-HAI. (*Reservedly*) Humph! (*Exploding*) Your father is a silly old egg!

CHOU CH'UNG. What?

LU TA-HAI. Your brother is—

SHIH-FENG *runs in from the right door.*

SHIH-FENG. You had better stop! (*Points at LU TA-HAI*) I see that you have actually become a monster!

LU TA-HAI. You—you are simply an idiotic worm!

SHIH-FENG. I won't speak with you! (*To CHOU CH'UNG*) You had better go and not talk with him any more.

CHOU CH'UNG. (*Helplessly looks at LU TA-HAI*) All right, I'll go. (*To SHIH-FENG*) I am sorry that I have come here to make you more unhappy.

SHIH-FENG. Don't mention that please, younger young-master. You had better go, this is no place for you to linger about.

CHOU CH'UNG. All right, I'll excuse you, (*kindly*) and I'm still willing to be your friend. (*Stretches out his hand*) Are you willing to shake hands with me? (*LU TA-HAI makes no answer but turns away from him.*)

SHIH-FENG. Humph!

CHOU CH'UNG *speaks no more and is on the point of leaving, when LU KWEI enters from the right door, carrying fruits, a bottle of wine and delicacies that go with it. His face is more flushed than before and his gait a little unsteady.*

LU KWEI. (*Seeing that CHOU CH'UNG is leaving*) How is it?

LU TA-HAI. (*To LU KWEI*) Make way. He is leaving.

LU KWEI. (*To CHOU CH'UNG*) Oh, no, no. Why are you leaving so soon after you have come, younger young-master?

SHIH-FENG. (*Angrily*) Please ask Brother!

LU KWEI. (*Half divines the situation, then suddenly smiles at CHOU CH'UNG*) Don't mind him, please sit for awhile.

CHOU CH'UNG. No, I am going.

LU KWEI. Then younger young-master, please eat something

before you go. I have gone a long way to buy you these delicacies. Please eat a little and drink a few cups before you go.

CHOU CH'UNG. No, it's late and I am going home.

LU TA-HAI. (*To SHIH-FENG, pointing at the edibles bought by LU KWEL*) Where did he get the money to buy these things?

LU KJEI. (*Turns his head to LU TA-HAI*) It's my own money, the money earned by your father.

SHIH-FENG. No, Father, this is the Chou's money! And you are again squandering it! (*Turns to LU TA-HAI*) Awhile ago the mistress of the Chou House sent one hundred dollars to Ma. In Ma's absence, Father accepted the money in spite of my objection.

LU KWEL. (*Casts a threatening glance at SHIH-FENG and then addresses LU TA-HAI in an explanatory way*) It was sent to me by the younger young-master in person. How could I refuse to accept it?

LU TA-HAI. (*Moves to CHOU CH'UNG*) What? Did you come to bring us money?

SHIH-FENG. (*To LU TA-HAI*) Now you see!

LU KWEL. (*To LU TA-HAI, his face betraying humility*) You see the Chous are all decent people.

LU TA-HAI. (*Turns his face to LU KWEL*) Give me the money!

LU KWEL. (*With fear and suspicion*) What for?

LU TA-HAI. Will you give it to me or not? (*His eyeballs stand out*) No? Do you remember what's in the trunk there?

LU KWEL. (*Cowed*) I'll give it to you, I'll give it to you! (*Fumbles out the banknotes and hands them to LU TA-HAI*) Here it is—one hundred dollars.

LU TA-HAI. (*Counts the notes*) What? There are ten dollars missing.

LU KWEL. (*Forces a smile*) I—I—I have spent them.

CHOU CH'UNG. (*Unwilling to see them any longer*) I'm going. See you again.

LU TA-HAI. (*Lays hold on him*) Don't go. Don't think we can be fooled by such trick as yours.

CHOU CH'UNG. What do you mean?

LU TA-HAI. I have money. There are just ten dollars left in my pocket. (*Produces several dollar-notes and silver dollars in a heap*) Exactly ten dollars. Take them away, we don't

need your pity.

LU KWEI. What are you talking about?

CHOU CH'UNG. You are really a chap that doesn't appreciate goodwill.

LU TA-HAI. Right, I don't know goodwill. I don't know such hypocrisy and false benevolence as yours. I don't know.

SHIH-FENG. Brother!

LU TA-HAI. Take them away. I want you to get out. I want you to roll out of here like an egg.

CHOU CH'UNG. (*All his illusions shattered, he stands in disappointment for awhile, then suddenly takes the money*) All right, I'm going, I'm going. I was wrong.

LU TA-HAI. Let me tell you, hereafter if any one of you Chous should come here again, I'll kill him, regardless of whoever he may happen to be!

CHOU CH'UNG. Thank you. I think, apart from me there can't be anyone else in the Chou House who is so absurd. Good-bye. (*Goes toward the right door.*)

LU KWEI. Ta-hai!

LU TA-HAI. (*At the pitch of his voice*) Tell him to get out!

LU KWEI. All right, all right. (*To CHOU CH'UNG*) Let me light a lamp for you, the outer room is all dark.

CHOU CH'UNG. Thank you. (*The two go out through the right door.*)

SHIH-FENG. Younger young-master! (*Runs out*)

LU TA-HAI. Shih-fêng, Shih-fêng, don't go! (*Seeing that SHIH-FENG has gone out already*) That silly child!

LU *enters from the right door.*

LU TA-HAI. Ma, you know, the younger young-master of the Chou House came here.

LU. Yes, I saw a rickshaw in front of our door. I didn't know who had come, so I dare not come in.

LU TA-HAI. Do you know I have driven him out of here?

LU. (*Nods gravely*) Yes, I do. I overheard what you had been saying in the doorway.

LU TA-HAI. The mistress of the Chou House sent you one hundred dollars.

LU. Humph! (*Indignantly*) I don't want her money, and I am leaving and taking my daughter away with me.

LU TA-HAI. You are leaving and taking Shih-fêng with you?

LU. Yes, I'm leaving tomorrow.

LU TA-HAI. Tomorrow?

LU. Yes, tomorrow, I've changed my mind.

LU TA-HAI. Jolly good! Then it is unnecessary for me to say anything else.

LU. What do you want to say?

LU TA-HAI. (*Obscurely*) Nothing particular. When I came home, I saw Shih-fêng talking with the younger young-master.

LU. (*Beyond herself*) What were they talking about?

LU TA-HAI. (*Evasively*) I don't know. They seemed to be very affectionate.

LU. (*Astonished*) Ah! . . . (*To herself*) That silly child.

LU TA-HAI. Ma, what happened when you saw Aunt Chang?

LU. We have made arrangements to sell our furniture.

LU TA-HAI. Good, Ma, I am going.

LU. Where are you going?

LU TA-HAI. (*Sullenly*) As my money is all spent, I may have to pull the rickshaw all night.

LU. Why should you? No, there is no need. Ma has money here, you may stay at home and go to bed.

LU TA-HAI. No, please reserve it for your own expenses. I am going. (*Exits through the right door.*)

LU. (*Cries after him*) Ta-hai, Ta-hai!

Enters SHIH-FENG.

SHIH-FENG. Ma, (*uneasily*) you have come back.

LU. You were busy seeing the younger young-master off and didn't notice me.

SHIH-FENG. (*Tries to explain*) It was the mistress who asked the younger young-master to come.

LU. I heard from your brother that you talked for quite awhile, didn't you?

SHIH-FENG. Do you mean to say—with the younger young-master?

LU. Yes, what did he say?

SHIH-FENG. Nothing particular. Just ordinary conversation.

LU. Really, Fêng-êrh??

SHIH-FENG. Did Brother say anything to you? He does not have an atom of human feeling.

LU. (*Seriously*) Fêng-êrh, (*looks at her and holds her hand*) look at me, I'm your Ma, am I not?

SHIH-FENG. Ma, what's happened to you?

LU. Fêng, Ma loves you best, doesn't she?
 SHIH-FENG. Why do you talk like that, Ma?
 LU. I want to ask you: isn't Ma the most pitiful, poor old woman in the world, unpitied by everybody?
 SHIH-FENG. Please don't talk like that. I pity you.
 LU. Then Fêng-êrh, I want to implore you to do me a favour.
 SHIH-FENG. Please say it, Ma. What do you want me to do?
 LU. You must tell me what has actually happened between you and the young-master?
 SHIH-FENG. Brother always talks nonsense. What did he say to you?
 LU. It's not your brother. He didn't say anything, but Ma wants to ask you.
The dim rumble of distant thunder.
 SHIH-FENG. Why do you ask that? Didn't I tell you that nothing had happened? Nothing, Ma!
The dim rumble of distant thunder again.
 LU. Listen, the thunder is roaring outside. Ma is a woman to be pitied. My daughter shouldn't deceive you! Didn't I tell you that in these two years—
 LU KWEI *shouts in the outer room off the stage.*
 THE VOICE OF LU KWEI. Shih-p'ing, come right away and go to bed. It's late now.
 LU. Don't mind me. You may go to bed first.
 THE VOICE OF LU KWEI. Come!
 LU. Please don't mind me! (*To her daughter*) What did you say?
 SHIH-FENG. Didn't I tell you that in these two years I returned home—every evening?
 LU. But, child, you must tell the truth. Ma can't stand it if anything more serious had happened.
 SHIH-FENG. Ma, (*sobs*) Ma, why don't you believe your own daughter? (*Throws herself into her mother's embrace and bursts into tears; Lu closes her around her.*)
 LU. (*Her tears trickling down*) Fêng-êrh, my poor child—not that I don't believe you, but that I love you too much and I am afraid people may make a fool of you. (*Painfully*) I really don't dare to believe the people of this world. Crazy child, you don't understand Ma's heart. Ma's sufferings of so many years cannot be told, and that is because when Ma was young there was no one to warn her. Poor me,

Ma took a wrong step, and after that every step went wrong. Child, you are my only daughter, and my daughter should never go the way of her mother. Human hearts are all unreliable. I don't mean to say that all men are wicked, only I regret that human nature is so weak and fickle. Child, you are mine. You are my only jewel, and you should love me always! If you should deceive me again it would kill me. Oh, my ill-fated child!

SHIH-FENG. No, Ma. No, hereafter I'll be yours forever.

LU. (*Suddenly*) Fêng-êrh, so long as I am here, I shall have no peace of heart. We must leave tomorrow and get away from here.

SHIH-FENG. (*Rises*) What? Leaving tomorrow?

LU. (*Resolutely*) Yes, I have changed my mind. We'll leave tomorrow and never come back here again.

SHIH-FENG. We shall never come back again? Oh, no, Ma, why should we leave so soon?

LU. What do you want to do, child?

SHIH-FENG. (*Hesitantly*) I—I—

LU. Are you not willing to leave here quickly with Ma?

SHIH-FENG. (*Heaves a sigh and smiles bitterly*) All right, let's leave tomorrow.

LU. (*Suddenly suspicious*) Child, you are still keeping something from me.

SHIH-FENG. (*Dries her tears*) Nothing, Ma.

LU. (*With maternal kindness*) Good child, will you remember what Ma said awhile ago?

SHIH-FENG. Yes, I will.

LU. Fêng-êrh, I want you never to see the Chous again.

SHIH-FENG. All right, Ma.

LU. (*Gravely*) No, you must swear an oath.

SHIH-FENG. (*Looks with awe at her mother's serious face*) Oh, why must I?

LU. (*Still gravely*) Yes, you must.

SHIH-FENG. (*Drops on her knees*) Ma! (*Flings herself upon her mother*) No, Ma, I—I can't.

LU. (*Tears trailing down*) Do you want to break your mother's heart? Have you forgotten that three years ago Ma almost died because of your sickness? And now you— (*Turns her head away to weep.*)

SHIH-FENG. Ma, I will, I will.

LU. (*Rises*) You may remain kneeling like this and swear your oath.

SHIH-FENG. Ma, I promise you that hereafter I shall never see the Chous again.

The sound of the thunder rumbling past.

LU. Child, it's thundering in Heaven. What if you should forget about Ma's word and see the Chous?

SHIH-FENG. (*Scared*) Ma, I will not, I will not.

LU. Child, you must swear—you must swear that if you should forget Ma's words—

The roar of thunder outside.

SHIH-FENG. (*Desperately*) Then — let the thunder strike me. (*Flings herself on her mother's bosom*) Oh, my Ma! (*Cries aloud.*)

The sound of thunder rumbling past.

LU. (*Holds SHIH-FENG in her arms and bursts into tears*) Poor child, it's Ma's fault, it's Ma who has sinned. Ma feels ashamed before you, Ma feels ashamed before you. (*Weeps.*)

LU KWEI *enters from the right door. His shirt having been taken off, he has only a singlet on, which reveals his plump body. He is humming some "spring melodies", and looks at LU and SHIH-FENG in a dreamy way, his face exuding grease.*

LU KWEI. (*To LU*) It's so late now, why don't you go to sleep? What were you talking about here?

LU. None of your business. You may as well go to bed alone. I am going to sleep with Shih-fêng tonight.

LU KWEI. What?

SHIH-FENG. No, Ma, please go with him and leave me alone here.

LU KWEI. Shih-p'ing, Fêng-êrh has been unhappy all day. Why should you keep on disturbing her?

LU. Child, you really don't want your Ma to accompany you?

SHIH-FENG. Ma, please let me rest here alone for awhile.

LU KWEI. (*To LU*) What are you doing here? Come. Let the child take a good rest. She has always slept alone. I'll go first (*He goes out.*)

LU. All right. (*To SHIH-FENG*) Fêng-êrh, go to bed and have a good sleep. I'll come back to see you after awhile.

SHIH-FENG. Yes, Ma.

Exit LU. SHIH-FENG closes the right door. In the outer room

off the stage LU KWEI is again singing the "spring melodies" beginning with these lines: "Flowers bloom and fade, so it happens every year, but when the springtime of Life is past, it'll ne'er return again." She goes to the round-table, and dims the table lamp. Meanwhile the croaking of frogs and the barking of dogs are heard. Sitting on the edge of the bed, she puts on a pair of slippers, stands up and undoes a few buttons of her dress. She has hastily moved a few steps when she returns to sit there again. Then she heaves a deep sigh and collapses on the bed. LU KWEI is still humming in the outer room and LU seems to be telling him in a low voice to stop being a nuisance. The ra-tat-tat of the wooden pang issues forth from outside; SHIH-FENG again sits up and picks up the rush fan, waving it energetically. She feels extremely pent-up. Opening the window, she stands in front of it, ruffles her hair, draws a long breath and lightly opens the window. She still feels vexed and recalls many things. She wipes the sweat off her face with her handkerchief and moves to the round-table, hearing again the voice of LU KWEI talking and singing. In painful suffocation, she cries "Heaven!" Then suddenly she lifts the bottle of wine to her lips and gulps down a mouthful. She caresses her own bosom and feels her heart burning within, and she sinks into the chair beside the table.

LU KWEI reappears from the right door, bare-footed and wearing a pair of slippers.

LU KWEI. Why don't you go to bed?

SHIH-FENG. (Casts a glance at him) Mmmm.

LU KWEI. (Noticing that she is holding the wine bottle) Who told you to drink wine? (Takes the wine bottle and the delicacies, smiling) Go quickly to bed.

SHIH-FENG. (Absent-mindedly) Yes.

LU KWEI. (Moves to the door) It's late now and even your Ma has fallen asleep. (Exit.)

SHIH-FENG goes to the right door, closes it again and lingers there for awhile, overhearing LU KWEI talking to LU. She moves to the round-table and sighs deeply, banging the table with her fist; then flings herself on it, sobbing "Oh, Heaven!" Then a distant whistling comes from outside, and SHIH-FENG at once jumps to her feet and with bated breath listens. Suddenly she brightens up the table lamp, runs to the window, and open it to look out. Then she quickly shuts it up and, with her back against

the window-sill, breathes heavily with dread, her breast rising and falling irregularly. But when the whistling becomes more distinct, she put a red paper cover over the lamp and places it on the window-sill. Her face turns pale and she is panting. As the whistling comes nearer, the thunder roars in the distance. Frightened, she takes the lamp back to the table and dims its light again, leaning over the table to listen attentively. Then there is a footfall outside the window, and the sound of coughing. On tiptoe she moves to the window and leans against it, with her face to the audience. Then comes a rapping on the window.

SHIH-FENG. (*Her voice trembling*) Yes!

A voice from outside.

THE VOICE. (*At a low pitch and accompanied by a knocking on the window*) Hello, please open it!

SHIH-FENG. Who is it?

THE VOICE. (*Obscurely*) You guess!

SHIH-FENG. (*Her voice trembling*) You— what are you coming here for?

THE VOICE. (*Faintly*) Just make a guess.

SHIH-FENG. I can't see you now. (*Her face turns pale and ashen; her voice quivers between her chattering teeth.*)

THE VOICE. (*Laughs in an ambiguous way*) Is that what you have in your heart?

SHIH-FENG. (*Urgently*) My mother is at home.

THE VOICE. (*Seductively*) Don't fool me! She has fallen asleep.

SHIH-FENG. (*With concern*) Look out! My brother hates you intensely.

THE VOICE. (*Listlessly*) He is not in and I know it.

SHIH-FENG. (*Turns about*) Please go away.

THE VOICE. No, I won't. (*The speaker tries to push open the window forcibly from outside; SHIH-FENG musters up all her strength to keep it shut.*)

SHIH-FENG. (*Anxiously*) No, no, please don't come in.

THE VOICE. (*At a low pitch*) Shih-fêng I implore you, please open it!

SHIH-FENG. No, no! it's already midnight and I have undressed.

THE VOICE. (*Urgently*) What? You have undressed?

SHIH-FENG. (*Nods*) Yes, I already fell asleep.

THE VOICE. (*Tremblingly*) Then . . . then . . . then I would . . . (*Breaks off with a long sigh.*)

SHIH-FENG. (*Beseechingly*) Then, will you please not come in?
THE VOICE. (*Changes its tone*) Well, all right, I'll go. (*Again anxiously*) But will you please open the window just to let me . . .

SHIH-FENG. No, no, please go right away!

THE VOICE. (*Implores urgently*) No, Shih-fêng, please just let me . . . Ah! . . . just let me caress you for a moment.

SHIH-FENG. (*Painfully*) Oh, elder young-master, this is not your house. Will you please have mercy on me?

THE VOICE. (*With resentment*) Then you have forgotten me. You are no longer thinking . . .

SHIH-FENG. (*With determination*) Yes, (*Turns about, facing the audience. Painfully*) I have forgotten you. Will you please go now.

THE VOICE. (*Suddenly*) Didn't my brother come here awhile ago?

SHIH-FENG. Yes, (*hesitantly*) . . . he . . . he . . . he did.

THE VOICE. (*As though hurt*) Ah! (*Heaves a long sigh*) I don't blame you for behaving like this now.

SHIH-FENG. (*At her wit's end*) Doubtless you know that I don't like him.

THE VOICE. (*Bitterly*) Humph! heartless! If you have changed your heart, beware of my . . . (*Sneers.*)

SHIH-FENG. Whose heart has changed?

THE VOICE. (*Ill-humoured and impatient*) Then why don't you open the window and let me in? Don't you know that I really love you and that I can't live without you?

SHIH-FENG. (*Pleading*) Oh, elder young-master, will you please not annoy me any longer? You have created so much trouble for us today, and you haven't yet had enough?

THE VOICE. (*Earnestly*) I know I was wrong. But I want to see you now. Yes, I want to see you now.

SHIH-FENG. (*Sighs*) Well, how about tomorrow? Tomorrow I will do whatever you want me to!

THE VOICE. (*In real earnestness*) Tomorrow?

SHIH-FENG. (*Smiles bitterly and wipes off her tears as they fall down*) Yes, tomorrow!

THE VOICE. (*Dubiously*) Really? Tomorrow?

SHIH-FENG. Yes, really. I have never fooled you.

THE VOICE. All right, let it be so. Tomorrow—but you mustn't fool me.

A footfall.

SHIH-FENG. Are you going?

THE VOICE. Yes, I am.

The footsteps gradually recede into the distance.

SHIH-FENG. *(A big load is lifted from her bosom. To herself)*

He has gone! Ah, *(feeling her own bosom)* it's so suffocating, it's so hot! *(Opens the window and stands before it. The breeze wafts in; she feels her burning cheeks and heaves a deep sigh)* Ugh!

CHOU P'ING *suddenly appears outside the window.*

SHIH-FENG. Oh, my mother! *(Hurriedly closes the window, but*

CHOU P'ING *has already pushed it open. The two engage in a struggle.)*

CHOU P'ING. *(Pushing the window)* Now you can't drive me away.

SHIH-FENG. *(Tries to shut the window with all her might)*

You . . . you . . . get away!

There is a struggle, but eventually CHOU P'ING gets across the window. He is mud-stained all over, his right cheek being smeared with blood.

CHOU P'ING. You see I have come in after all.

SHIH-FENG. *(Retreats)* You are again drunk!

CHOU P'ING. No, *(pleadingly)* Shih-fêng, why should you shun me? You have changed today. I am going early tomorrow morning, and yet you have tried to fool me, saying that you want to see me tomorrow. I have only a little time to see you. Why are you so afraid of seeing me? *(Turns his blood-stained cheek.)*

SHIH-FENG. *(Frightened)* What's the matter with your face? *(Points at CHOU P'ING's face.)*

CHOU P'ING. *(Feels his own face and his hand gets stained)* In looking for you, I tripped over on the way. *(Draws near to SHIH-FENG.)*

SHIH-FENG. Will you please go away now? I implore you to go.

CHOU P'ING' *(Laughs at her queerly)* No, I must take a good look at you. *(Holds her hand.)*

The thunder roars ferociously.

SHIH-FENG. *(Shuns him)* No. Listen—the thunder, the thunder! Please close the window for me.

CHOU P'ING. *(Closes the window and then comes back, drawing near to her)* What are you afraid of?

SHIH-FENG. (*In a trembling voice*) I am afraid of you. (*Backs from him*) You look awful, your face is blood-stained all over... I don't know you.... You are....

CHOU P'ING. (*Laughs weirdly*) Who do you think I am, crazy child? (*Holds her hand.*)

There are sounds of a woman sighing and rapping at the window.

SHIH-FENG. (*Pushes CHOU P'ING away*) Listen, what is that?

It seems that someone is knocking at the window.

CHOU P'ING. (*Listens*) Nonsense. There is no one!

SHIH-FENG. Yes, there is, there is. Listen, it seems there is a woman sighing.

CHOU P'ING. (*Listens again*) No, no, (*suddenly laughs*) you probably have seen ghosts.

The thunder rumbles threateningly and then—a deafening clap.

SHIH-FENG. (*In a feeble voice*) Oh, Ma. (*Darts into CHOU P'ING'S arms*) I'm scared! (*Hids herself in the corner.*)

The rumbling of thunder and the beating of the downpour; the stage grows dim. A gust of wind tears the window open. Outside is complete darkness. Suddenly a steel-blue flash of lightning shows CHOU FAN-YI'S pallid death-like face over the window-sill. Like a corpse she lets the threads of rain lash her dishevelled hair. She laughs convulsively, but bitterly and softly, with tears draining from the corners of her eyes, and stares at the cowering inmates in the room. When the lightning flash ceases, darkness again reigns in the space outside the window. When it flashes again she is seen thrusting in her hands slowly to close the window. The thunder is again rumbling and the room grows darker. In the shadows only SHIH-FENG'S low voice is heard.

SHIH-FENG. (*Weakly*) Please hold me tightly, I am awfully frightened.

For a moment the stage is all dark, excepting the lamp on the round-table and the bluish flash of lightning outside the window. The voice of LU TA-HAI is heard shouting to someone to open the house door, and then he is heard entering.

The stages now gradually grows bright. CHOU P'ING is sitting on the round-stool and SHIH-FENG standing by his side. The bed appears slightly disordered.

CHOU P'ING. (*Listens*) Who's that?

SHIH-FENG. Don't make a noise!

VOICE OF LU. (*Off the stage*) How is it that you have come

back, Ta-hai?

VOICE OF LU TA-HAI. (*Off the stage*) It rained so hard that the rickshaw company's building has collapsed.

SHIH-FENG. (*Urgently and in a low voice*) Brother has come back. Please go away now.

CHOU P'ING. (*Hurriedly makes for the window and tries to open it. It does not yield, however.*) Strange!

SHIH-FENG. What?

CHOU P'ING. (*Anxiously*) Someone has shut the window from outside.

SHIH-FENG. (*Fearfully*) Really! Who could that be?

CHOU P'ING. (*Tries again*) No, it can't be moved.

SHIH-FENG. Don't make a noise. They are right in the doorway

VOICE OF LU TA-HAI. (*Off the stage*) Where are the wooden 'bed-boards'?

VOICE OF LU. (*Off the stage*) In Shih-fêng's room.

SHIH-FENG. Ah, P'ing, they are coming in. You . . . you . . . you go and hide yourself.

When SHIH-FENG is leading CHOU P'ING to the left door, LU TA-HAI comes in from the right, lamp in hand.

LU TA-HAI. (*Slowly shrieks*) What? (*Sees SHIH-FENG and CHOU P'ING who are standing motionless and silent. His voice turns hoarse*) Ma, come in quick! I see ghosts!

LU *rushes in.*

LU. (*The sight of the two lovers chokes her voice*) Heaven!

SHIH-FENG. (*Upon seeing LU enter, she at once runs out through the right door and cries painfully*) Ah-a-a-ah!

LU *almost swoons but supports herself on the door-bolt.*

LU TA-HAI. (*To CHOU P'ING*) So, it's you! (*Snatches a knife from the table and dashes toward him. LU holds on to her son's coat with all the strength at her command.*)

LU. Don't make a move, Ta-hai. If you should raise your hand. Ma will take her own life right in front of you.

LU TA-HAI. Let me go, let me go! (*Stamping his feet with anger.*)

LU. (*Anxiously stamps her feet as she sees CHOU P'ING stand there petrified with astonishment*) Silly fool, why don't you run away?

CHOU P'ING *runs out through the right door.*

LU TA-HAI. (*Shouts*) Seize him, Father, seize him! (*LU TA-HAI tries to chase after CHOU P'ING, but his mother is holding*

him back. He staggers forth, dragging his mother across the floor for the distance of a few steps.)

LU. (*Seeing that CHOU P'ING has gone away, she sits on the floor, duhbfounded*) Oh, Heaven!

LU TA-HAI. (*Stamps his feet*) Ma, Ma! How absurd you are!
Enters LU KWEL.

LU KWEL. He has gone. Gee! but where is Shih-fêng?

LU TA-HAI. She has run away—shameless wench.

LU. (*Shouting after SHIH-FENG*) Oh, my child, my child, the water in the canal outside has risen, my child. You mustn't be silly, Shih-fêng! (*Runs for the door.*)

LU TA-HAI. (*Holds her*) Where are you going?

LU. Such a downpour—and she has run out. I want to find her.

LU TA-HAI. All right, I'll go with you.

LU. But I can't wait! (*Runs out, shouting "SHIH-FENG!" Her voice gradually fades into the distance.*)

Suddenly LU KWEL also puts on his hat and runs out, leaving LU TA-HAI alone standing in front of the table. He moves to the bed, takes out his revolver from the trunk underneath, and pockets it after looking at it for a second. Then he goes out quickly. Outside there is the sound of a terrific storm and the voice of LU crying "SHIH-FENG!"

— The curtain falls quickly —

ACT IV

SCENE:—*In the parlour of the Chou House, about 2 o'clock next morning.*

When the curtain rises, CHOU P'U-YUAN is sitting on a sofa and reading some papers under the light of a floor stand lamp; all around him is dark.

Outside there is still a faint rumble of thunder and the tick-tack of the rain. The window curtain has been drawn up and the door in the centre firmly closed. Looking out through the glass ihtne door, one finds the garden entirely buried in shadows. One can only see trees and telegraph poles under the bluish light of the dazzling lightning, when it flashes across the sky, but in the twinkling of an eye all is dark again.

CHOU P'U-YUAN. (*Lays down the papers, yawns and stretches himself wearily*) Attendants! (*Removes his reading glasses and rubs his eyes; calls in a higher voice*) Attendants!

(Wipes his glasses as he goes to the dining-room door on the left side, and assumes his ordinary voice) Is anybody there?
(The lightning winks outside; he pauses and then moves to the clothespress on the right side and presses the bell-button. Quite unwittingly he sees SHIH-P'ING's photograph on the press. He takes it up and puts on his spectacles to look at it.)

Enters a servant.

THE SERVANT. Master.

CHOU P'U-YUAN. I have been calling you for a long time.

THE SERVANT. It's raining outside, so I didn't hear.

CHOU P'U-YUAN. *(Points at the clock)* How is it the clock has stopped?

THE SERVANT. *(Explaining)* Usually it is Shih-fêng who winds the clock. Now that she has gone, it has been neglected.

CHOU P'U-YUAN. What's the time now?

THE SERVANT. H'm—it is about 2 o'clock.

CHOU P'U-YUAN. Awhile ago I gave word to our accountant to remit a certain sum of money to Tsinan. Was that clear to him?

THE SERVANT. Do you mean the remittance to a--to a person there by the name of Lu?

CHOU P'U-YUAN. Yes.

THE SERVANT. It has been attended to already.

The lightning flashes outside; CHOU P'U-YUAN turns his eyes to the garden.

CHOU P'U-YUAN. Has the mistress sent for an electrician to repair the wire on the wistaria arbour?

THE SERVANT. Yes, but the electrician said it was impossible to mend the wire under such a downpour. He will come tomorrow.

CHOU P'U-YUAN. Won't it be dangerous to leave it as it is?

THE SERVANT. Won't it? Yes. A short while ago when the elder young-master's dog passed by there, it touched the wire and was instantly killed. Now the place has been marked off with a rope, so that nobody will bump against it.

CHOU P'U-YUAN. Ah! Well, what's the time now?

THE SERVANT. It's past 2 o'clock now. Are you going to bed, Master?

CHOU P'U-YUAN. Go and ask the mistress to come downstairs.

THE SERVANT. The mistress has retired.

CHOU P'U-YUAN. (*Unwittingly*) Where is the younger young-master?

THE SERVANT. He went to bed long ago.

CHOU P'U-YUAN. Then, you go and look for the elder young-master.

THE SERVANT. The elder young-master went out as soon as he had dined, and has not yet returned.

There is an awkward suspense.

CHOU P'U-YUAN. (*Returns to the sofa and sinks into it lonesomely*) How is it there is no one else awake in this house?

THE SERVANT. Truly there is no one else awake, Master.

CHOU P'U-YUAN. Has any visitor called?

THE SERVANT. No, Master. It's raining hard outside, and everyone prefers to stay at home—if he has one.

CHOU P'U-YUAN. (*Yawns and feels more keenly the emptiness of life*) And here I am, the only one awake.

THE SERVANT. Yes, almost everyone else has gone to sleep.

CHOU P'U-YUAN. Well, you may go now.

THE SERVANT. Is there anything you want?

CHOU P'U-YUAN. No, nothing.

The servant goes out through the central door. CHOU P'U-YUAN rises, fidgets back and forth across the room and finally stops at the clothespress on the right. There he picks up SHIH-P'ING'S photograph again and turns on the light in the centre. CHOU CH'UNG enters from the dining-room.

CHOU CHUNG. (*Not expecting to find his father in the room*)
Father!

CHOU P'U-YUAN. (*Betrays pleasure*) You—you haven't gone to bed yet?

CHOU CH'UNG. No.

CHOU P'U-YUAN. Are you looking for me?

CHOU CH'UNG. No, I thought Mother was here.

CHOU P'U-YUAN. (*Disappointed*) Ah—your mother upstairs.

CHOU CH'UNG. I don't think so. I knocked at her door but it was locked. . . . However, you may be right. . . . I'm going, Father.

CHOU P'U-YUAN. Ch'ung-êrh, (*CHOU CH'UNG halts*) don't go away.

CHOU CH'UNG. What can I do for you, Father?

CHOU P'U-YUAN. Nothing. (*Kindly*) How is it that you haven't gone to bed even at this hour?

CHOU CH'UNG. (*Obediently*) Right, Father, I have stayed up too late. I'll go to bed at once.

CHOU P'U-YUAN. Did you take the medicine given you by Dr. Krieg, after meals?

CHOU CH'UNG. Mmmm, I did.

CHOU P'U-YUAN. Did you play tennis?

CHOU CH'UNG. Mmmm.

CHOU P'U-YUAN. Are you happy?

CHOU CH'UNG. Mmmm.

CHOU P'U-YUAN. (*Rises and holds CHOU CH'UNG's hand*) Why are you afraid of me?

CHOU CH'UNG. Yes, Father,

CHOU P'U-YUAN. (*Dryly*) You seem to be somewhat unsatisfied with me, are you?

CHOU CH'UNG. (*In embarrassment*) I—I don't know what to say, Father.

An awkward suspense. CHOU P'U-YUAN returns to the sofa and sits down with a deep sigh. He beckons to CHOU CH'UNG and the latter draws near to him.

CHOU P'U-YUAN. (*Lonesomely*) Today—h'm your father feels that he is getting somewhat old. (*pauses*) Do you know that?

CHOU CH'UNG. (*Coldly*) No, Father, I don't know that.

CHÉU P'U-YUAN. (*Suddenly*) Are you not afraid of having no one to take care of you when one day your Papa dies?

CHOU CH'UNG. (*Expressionlessly*) Yes, I am.

CHOU P'U-YUAN. (*Amicably, so that his son may be amicable with him*) You said this morning that you wanted to put aside a part of your tuition money to help somebody. Now will you tell me about it again? I may permit you.

CHOU CH'UNG. (*With repentance*) It was my silliness. In future I'll never talk like that again.

Another awkward suspense.

CHOU P'U-YUAN. (*Solicitously*) We are moving into our new house day after tomorrow. Don't you feel happy about that?

CHÉU CH'UNG. Mmmm.

Another awkward suspense.

CHOU P'U-YUAN. (*Looks at CHOU CH'UNG reproachfully*) You have spoken very few words to me.

CHOU CH'UNG. (*Spiritlessly*) Mmmm, I—I don't know what to say. Usually you seem to be always unwilling to see us.

(*Stammeringly*) Today you are somewhat queer. I—I—
CHOU P'U-YUAN. (*Does not want him to go on*) Mmmm, you
may go now.

CHÉU CH'UNG. Yes, Father. (*Exits through the dining-room.*)

In disappointment CHOU P'U-YUAN watches his son going out,
then he rises, picks up SHIH-P'ING's photograph again and lone-
singly gazes dull-eyedly around him. He turns off the floor
stand lamp and faces the study.

CHOU FAN-YI enters through the central door without making
a noise, her hair being somewhat wet and her raincoat still drip-
ping water. She looks awfully pallid, her entire face resembles
that of a plaster figure. Her pale prominent bridge and her thin
crimson lips are immobile as though they were embossed on a
mask. All her features are expressionless, with the exception of
her eyes which are burning with the mad fire in her heart.
Nevertheless, even that is cold and bitter. Love and hatred have
burnt to ashes all the womanliness in her. She seems to have
loathed and given up everything, with only the thought of
vengeance ebbing and flowing in her heart.

She sees CHOU P'U-YUAN, and he stares at her in astonishment.

CHOU FAN-YI. (*Not at all surprised*) Haven't you gone to bed
yet? (*Stands motionless in front of the central door.*)

CHOU P'U-YUAN. You—(*Moves near her and asks in a low and
heavy voice*) Where did you go? (*Pauses and looks at
her*) Ch'ung-êrh has looked for you all night.

CHOU FAN-YI. (*In a matter-of-fact way*) I went out to take a
walk.

CHOU P'U-YUAN. Such a downpour, and you went out to take a
walk?

CHOU FAN-YI. Mmmm— (*Suddenly and revengefully*) I'm
insane.

CHOU P'UYUAN. I'm asking you where you were awhile ago.

CHOU FAN-YI. (*Disgusted*) None of your business.

CHOU P'U-YUAN. (*Scanning her*) Your clothes are all wet and
you still don't take them off!

CHOU FAN-YI. (*Coldly but meaningly*) My heart was burning,
I wanted to get a freezing outside.

CHOU P'U-YUAN. (*Impatiently*) Don't talk nonsense. Where
did you actually go awhile ago?

CHOU FAN-YI. (*Looks at him with dull eyes but speaks dis-
tinctly*) In your house!

CHOU P'U-YUAN. (*Disgusted*) In my house?

CHOU FAN-YI. (*Feels the pleasure of revenge and smiles*) Yes, in the garden—enjoying the rain.

CHOU P'U-YUAN. All right?

CHOU FAN-YI. (*With increasing satisfaction*) Yes, I have been soaked in the rain all night.

For awhile CHOU P'U-YUAN *looks at her puzzled and with fear, while she still stands in front of the door like a marble statue.*

CHOU P'U-YUAN. Fan-yi, I think you had better go upstairs to take a rest.

CHOU FAN-YI. (*Coldly*) No, no. (*Abruptly*) What are you holding in your hand? (*Contemptuously*) Humph! that woman's photograph again! (*Stretches out her hand to take the photograph.*)

CHOU P'U-YUAN. You may as well not see it; it's the photograph of P'ing-êrh's mother.

CHOU FAN-YI. (*Snatches it from him, advances a few steps and looks at it under the lamp*) P'ing-êrh's mother was very pretty. (CHOU P'U-YUAN *does not reply to her but seats himself on the sofa*) I'm asking you: wasn't she pretty?

CHOU P'U-YUAN. Mmmm.

CHOU FAN-YI. She looks very gentle. (CHOU P'U-YUAN *looks before him*) And also very intelligent.

CHOU P'U-YUAN. (*Meditates*) Mmmm.

CHOU FAN-YI. (*High-spiritedly*) So young!

CHOU P'U-YUAN. (*Unconsciously*) No, she has grown old now.

CHOU FAN-YI. (*It suddenly occurs to her*) Didn't she die long ago?

CHOU P'U-YUAN. Yes, you're right, she died long ago.

CHOU FAN-YI. (*Puts down the photograph*) Strange, I seem to have seen her somewhere.

CHOU P'U-YUAN. (*Lifts his head suspiciously*) No, impossible. Where did you see her?

CHOU FAN-YI. (*Suddenly*) Her name is very classical—Shih-p'ing, Shih-p'ing—only that it has the suggestion of a slave girl's name.

CHOU P'U-YUAN. Well, I think you had better go to bed now. (*Rises and takes the photograph.*)

CHOU FAN-YI. What do you want to take it for?

CHOU P'U-YUAN. We're moving into our new house day after

tomorrow and I'm afraid of its being lost.

CHOU FAN-YI. No, no. (*Takes it from him*) It won't be lost (*laughs weirdly*) to be put here overnight. Let me keep it under guard for you. (*Places it on the table.*)

CHOU P'U-YUAN. Don't play the lunatic! You are now behaving absurdly. ♯

CHOU FAN-YI. I am a lunatic. Please don't mind me.

CHOU P'U-YUAN. (*Somewhat offended*) Well, go upstairs. I want to rest here alone.

CHOU FAN-YI. No, I want to rest here alone. I want you to get out of here.

CHOU P'U-YUAN. (*Seriously*) Go, Fan-yi. I demand that you go upstairs!

CHOU FAN-YI. (*Contemptuously*) No, I'm not willing. Let me tell you, (*fuming*) I'm not willing.

An awkward suspense.

CHOU P'U-YUAN. (*In a low voice*) You must take care of this (*points at his head*), and remember Dr. Krieg's words. He wanted you to be quiet and talk less. He will come again tomorrow, I have already arranged about it.

CHOU FAN-YI. Thank you! (*Stares in front of her*) Tomorrow? Humph!

CHOU P'ING, *crestfallen and sad, enters from the dining-room and moves toward the study.*

CHOU P'U-YUAN. P'ing-êrh.

CHOU P'ING. (*Startled and lifts his head*) Father! You haven't yet gone to bed!

CHOU P'U-YUAN. (*Reproachfully*) What! You have just come back!

CHOU P'ING. No, Father, I came back long ago and then L went out again to buy something.

CHOU P'U-YUAN. What are you doing now?

CHOU P'ING. I'm going to the study to see if your letter of introduction for me is there.

CHOU P'U-YUAN. Are you not going by the morning train?

CHOU P'ING. It has suddenly occurred to me that there is a train leaving at half past two tonight, so I intend to leave right now.

CHOU FAN-YI. (*Suddenly*) Now?

CHOU P'ING. Yes.

CHOU FAN-YI. (*Meaningly*) Are you so anxious at heart to

leave?

CHOU P'ING. Yes, Mother.

CHOU P'U-YUAN. (*Kindly*) It's raining hard outside. Won't it be inconvenient to leave at midnight?

CHOU P'ING. If I leave now, I'll get there by dawn. That will give me more time to meet people.

CHOU P'U-YUAN. If you want to leave now, it's all right. The letter is on my desk in the study. (CHOU P'ING *nods and goes toward the study*) But you needn't go. (To CHOU FAN-YI) You go to the study and fetch the letter for him.

CHOU FAN-YI. (*Looks at CHOU P'U-YUAN incredulously*) Yes! (*Goes into the study.*)

CHOU P'U-YUAN. (*Watches her going out and then speaks gingerly to CHOU P'ING*) She is unwilling to go upstairs. I want you first to see her upstairs and tell the servants to see her safely to bed.

CHOU P'ING. (*Helplessly*) Yes, Father.

CHOU P'U-YUAN. (*Exercising even greater care*) Come here! (*In a low voice when CHOU P'ING comes near him*) Tell the servants to be careful. (*Vexed*) I see that her insanity has grown worse. Awhile ago she suddenly went out alone.

CHOU P'ING. Went out?

CHOU P'U-YUAN. Yes. (*Gravely*) And was soaked in rain all night. The way she talked is also extraordinarily strange. I am afraid it is not a good sign. (*As though he has seen an ill omen*) I am getting old and I wish my family would get along peacefully.

CHOU P'ING. (*Uneasily*) I think if you will not take things too seriously, they'll pass over soon.

CHOU P'U-YUAN. (*Timidly*) No, no, there are many things which are undreamt of. The will of Heaven is quite strange. The last twenty-four hours have made me suddenly realize that life is too—too risky, too—too nonsensical.

(*Wearily*) I feel utterly tired. (*Then, as if he is relieved of a heavy burden*) It seems that this fated day has passed. (*Consoling himself*) I think hereafter . . . there shouldn't be any more trouble. (*Shudders*) No, there shouldn't be!

CHOU FAN-YI *re-enters with a letter in hand.*

CHOU FAN-YI. (*With disgust*) The letter is here!

CHOU P'U-YUAN. (*As though awakening from a dream; to CHOU*

- P'ING) Well, you may go now. I'm going to bed. (*Puts on a cheerful look and turns to CHOU FAN-YI*) We are moving into our new house day after tomorrow. You had better take a good rest for a couple of days.
- CHOU FAN-YI. (*Expecting him to leave*) Yes, all right. (CHOU P'U-YUAN goes out into the study. Upon his departure, she turns gloomy) So, you are leaving for certain.
- CHOU P'ING. (*His voice betrays a little indignation*) Yes.
- CHOU FAN-YI. (*Suddenly turns impatient*) What did your father say to you a moment ago?
- CHOU P'ING. (*Evasively*) He said he wanted me to see you upstairs and ask you to go to bed.
- CHOU FAN-YI. (*Sneers*) He ought to have called several men to drag me upstairs and lock me in.
- CHOU P'ING. (*Purposely feigns to be puzzled*) What do you mean by that?
- CHOU FAN-YI. (*Erupting*) You needn't conceal it from me. I know it, I know it. (*Bitterly*) He says I am insane. I know, and he wants you to treat me as such—he wants everyone else to treat me as such.
- CHOU P'ING. (*With fright*) No, please don't think that.
- CHOU FAN-YI. (*Her face looks strange*) You—you also deceive me? (*Gloomily and in a low voice*) I can discern it from your eyes that both you and your father have wished that I was a lunatic! (*Hatefully*) You—father and son—were backbiting me, talking about me, sneering at me, and plotting against me behind my back.
- CHOU P'ING. (*Controls himself*) Don't be hyper-sensitive. Let me see you upstairs.
- CHOU FAN-YI. (*Suddenly and in a high voice*) I don't want you to see me upstairs. Get away! (*Suppresses herself and continues with hate and in a low voice*) I do not yet need your father to tell you on the sly and behind my back to be careful and see a lunatic upstairs.
- CHOU P'ING (*Suppressing his own impatience and disgust*) Then, give me the letter and let me go.
- CHOU FAN-YI. (*As if she doesn't understand*) Where are you going?
- CHOU P'ING. (*Having no alternative*) I want to leave here. I want to pack up my personal effects.
- CHOU FAN-YI. (*Turns cool suddenly*) Let me ask you: where

did you go tonight?

CHOU P'ING. (*Antagonistically*) You needn't ask; you know.

CHOU FAN-YI. (*Intimidatingly and in a low voice*) So, after all you went to her place. (*For a moment she looks at him and he hangs down his head.*)

CHOU P'ING. (*Gravely and decisively*) Yes, I did, I did. (*Challenging*) How about it?

CHOU FAN-YI. (*Turns soft*) Nothing. (*Forces a smile*) I spoke wrongly this afternoon, please excuse me. I only want to ask you what you intend to do with her after your departure?

CHOU P'ING. After my departure? (*Boldly*) I'll marry her!

CHOU FAN-YI. (*Abruptly*) Marry her?

CHOU P'ING. (*Decisively*) Yes.

CHOU FAN-YI. (*As if her heart had been stung*) What about your father?

CHOU P'ING. (*Listlessly*) I'll take it up with him later.

CHOU FAN-YI. (*Mysteriously*) P'ing, now let me give you a chance.

CHOU P'ING. (*Not understanding her*) What?

CHOU FAN-YI. (*Whedding*) If you will not go away tonight, I shall put your case through with your father.

CHOU P'ING. There is no need. I deem it to be a dignified and open-to-all matter, and I can tell everybody about it. Only she is—she is poor, that's all.

CHOU FAN-YI. (*Angrily*) You are now talking just like your brother. (*Sadly*) P'ing!

CHOU P'ING. What do you want?

CHOU FAN-YI. (*Gloomily*) Do you know what will happen to me after you leave?

CHOU P'ING. No, I don't

CHOU FAN-YI. (*With fear*) Just look at your father. Can't you imagine it?

CHOU P'ING. I don't understand what you are saying.

CHOU FAN-YI. (*Pointing at her own head*) It's right here. Don't you know that?

CHOU. (*Somewhat puzzled*) What do you mean?

CHOU FAN-YI. (*As though speaking of someone else's affair*) To begin with, that specialist of a Dr. Krieg would inevitably call everyday, wanting me and forcing me to take his medicine. Medicine, medicine, medicine! Then gradually

there would be more and more people attending on me, watching me, and watching me as if I were a monster. They—

CHOU P'ING. (*Bored*) I say, will you please not brood over such nonsense?

CHOU FAN-YI. (*Indifferent to him*) They would soon pick up your father's expression: "Take care, take greater care; she is somewhat insane!" And behind my back they would gossip and whisper in a low voice. By and by everybody would take care and not dare see me. And finally they would lock me up with an iron chain and I would then actually become a lunatic.

CHOU PING. (*As his wit's end*) Ugh! (*Looks at his watch*) It's late now. Give me the letter, I must pack my things.

CHOU FAN-YI. (*Entreatingly*) P'ing, it's impossible. (*Pleads*) Please think, P'ing—is your heart not in the least moved?

CHOU P'ING. You—(*Intentionally ferocious*) You yourself choose to go that way. What can I do about it?

CHOU FAN-YI. (*Angrily*) What? Have you forgotten that your own mother was driven to her death by your father?

CHOU P'ING. (*To end it all, he provokes her still more relentlessly*) My mother was not like you. She understood what love meant. She loved her own children, and she had done nothing which she felt ashamed of before my father.

CHOU FAN-YI. (*Erupts, her eyes emitting raging fire*) Have you the right to talk like that? Have you forgotten what you were three years ago in this very room? You have forgotten that it is you yourself who are the sinner. You have forgotten that we— (*Suddenly stops, checks herself and bursts into a sneer*) Hum, that is a thing of the past and I am not going to mention it. (*His head hanging low and his body trembling, CHOU P'ING sinks into the sofa. Repentance is wrenching his heart and the muscles of his face give an unnatural convulsion. CHOU FAN-YI turns to him and continues despairingly, in a voice that verges upon weeping.*) Ah, P'ing, well—this is the last time I shall ever entreat you. I have never condescended to talk to people in such a humble way. Now I implore you to pity me. I really cannot bear to live in this house any longer (*Speaks in a pensive and luring way*) You have seen the fortune I suffered today. This is not a matter of one day,

but will last through the whole month, the whole year, until my death. He loathes me, your father. He knows that I know all his secrets and he is afraid of me. He wants everyone to take me as a monster, a lunatic, P'ing—!

CHOU P'ING. (*His heart in confusion*) You—would you please stop?

CHOU FAN-YI. (*Urgently*) P'ing, I have no relatives, no friends, no one whom I can trust. Now I entreat you: first of all please don't go away—

CHOU P'ING. (*Evasively*) No, impossible.

CHOU FAN-YI. (*Entreatingly*) Even if you must go, please take me away from here also

CHOU P'ING. (*Horriified*) What! You are simply talking nonsense!

CHOU FAN-YI. (*Again entreatingly*) No, no, please take me with you—take me away from here. (*Throws off all restraint*) In future even if you want to send for Shih-fêng to live together, it will be all right with me—only that . . . only that—(*with heat and vigour*) only that you mustn't leave me.

CHOU P'ING. (*Looks at her in terror and backs a few steps. After a brief suspense he replies in a trembling voice*) I—I'm afraid you have really gone insane!

CHOU FAN-YI. (*Consolingly*) No, don't talk like that. I alone understand you. I know your weaknesses and you also know mine. I know you through and through. (*Smiles seductively and beckons queerly to CHOU P'ING, then smiles seductively again*) Come here. What are you afraid of?

CHOU P'ING. (*Stares at her and cannot help shouting out*) Oh, I don't want you to smile like that! (*More emphatically*) Don't smile at me like that! (*Painfully beats his own head*) Oh, I hate myself. I hate—I hate—why should I want to live!

CHOU FAN-YI. (*Broken-hearted*) Have I been the cause of all your troubles? But you know I have not many more years to live.

CHOU P'ING. (*Chagrined*) Don't you know that such a relationship will be loathed by everybody who hears of it? Do you know I have been drinking and going wild everyday because I hate myself?

CHOU FAN-YI. (*Coldly*) How many times have I told you that

such is not the way I look at it. My conscience is made of different stuff. (*Gravely*) P'ing, I have done the wrong thing today. If you will listen to my words and not leave home, I may call Shih-fêng back.

CHOU P'ING. What?

CHOU FAN-YI. (*Distinctly*) It's still not too late to call her back.

CHOU P'ING. (*Advances to her and speaks slowly in a heavy tone*) You get away!

CHOU FAN-YI. (*Pauses, then slowly*) What?

CHOU P'ING. You don't seem to be in your senses. You had better go upstairs to bed.

CHOU FAN-YI. (*Realizing her fate*) Then, that's that.

CHOU P'ING. (*Fatigued*) Yes, you had better go now.

CHOU FAN-YI. (*Forlorn and dejected*) Awhile ago I saw you and Shih-fêng in Lu's house.

CHOU P'ING. (*Astonished*) What? Did you go to Lu's house?

CHOU FAN-YI. (*Sits down*) Yes, I loitered about their house for quite awhile.

CHOU P'ING. (*With fear and regret*) When were you there?

CHOU FAN-YI. (*Drooping her head*) I saw you go in through the window.

CHOU P'ING. (*Anxiously*) And you?

CHOU FAN-YI. (*Gazes spiritlessly in front of her*) I went to the window and stood in front of it.

CHOU P'ING. Then, were you the woman who was heard sighing?

CHOU FAN-YI. Yes.

CHOU P'ING. And later, how long did you remain standing there?

CHOU FAN-YI. (*Slowly and distinctly*) Until about the time you left.

CHOU P'ING. So! (*Advances to her and speaks in a low voice*) It was you who closed the window, wasn't it?

CHOU FAN-YI. (*Sombrely and in a still lower voice*) Yes.

CHOU P'ING. (*Cruelly and with utter hatred*) You are an unthinkable monster!

CHOU FAN-YI. (*Lifts her head*) What?

CHOU P'ING. (*Violently*) You are really a lunatic!

CHOU FAN-YI. What do you want to do?

CHOU P'ING. (*Fiercely*) I want you to die! Goodbye! (*Goes out quickly into the dining-room and slams the door behind*)

him.)

CHOU FAN-YI. (*Remains sitting dumbfoundedly and looking at the dining-room for awhile. Then LU's photograph catches her glance, and she takes it and speaks in a gloomy low voice*) That's your child! (*Slowly rips the photograph from the cardboard and tears it to pieces. Then she solemnly stands up and paces a few steps*) Strange, it's very quiet in my heart!

The central door is pushed open slowly. CHOU FAN-YI turns her head and finds LU KWEL coming in slovenly, his cunning eyes looking smilingly at her.

LU KWEL. (*Bows and slightly bends his back*) How do you do, Mistress?

CHOU FAN-YI. (*Somewhat surprised*) What have you come here for?

LU KWEL. (*Puts on a false smile*) I have come here to enquire after your health. I have waited for quite awhile outside the door.

CHOU FAN-YI. (*With composure*) Ah, were you outside the door a moment ago?

LU KWEL. (*In a low voice*) Exactly. (*Still more surreptitiously*) I saw you and the elder young-master at daggers drawn, so I—(*smirks again*) so I didn't dare come. in.

CHOU FAN-YI. (*Unruffled and calm*) What do you intend to do?

LU KWEL. (*With self-assurance*) I intend to report to you that the elder young-master was drunk tonight and went to my house. Now, since you also went there, there is no need for me to say more.

CHOU FAN-YI. (*With disgust*) What have you in mind now?

LU KWEL. (*Contemptuously*) I intend to see the master.

CHOU FAN-YI. The master has gone to bed. What do you want to see him for?

LU KWEL. Nothing particular. If you would like to take the matter up, it may not be necessary for me to see the master. (*Meaningly and emphatically*) It all depends on what you are going to do about it.

CHOU FAN-YI. (*After a brief suspense, she decides to tolerate him*) Say it then, I may be able to help you.

LU KWEL. (*Repeats the proposal cunningly*) If you are willing to take the matter up instead of having me see the master and causing a lot of trouble, (*smirks again*) then the matter

- would be simpler for everybody.
- CHOU FAN-YI. (*Still composedly*) What is it? Will you speak now?
- LU KWEL. (*Flatteringly*) If you will take the matter up, it will be a great kindness on your part. We are only pleading with you to give us a bowl of rice to eat.
- CHOU FAN-YI. (*Displeased*) Do you think— (*Turns calmer*) Well, it's all right.
- LU KWEL. (*Graified*) Thank you, Mistress. (*Cleverly*) Then, will you please give us the exact date?
- CHOU FAN-YI. (*Explicitly*) You may come back the day after we move into the new house.
- LU KWEL. (*Bows*) Thank you for your great mercy! (*Suddenly*) By the way, Mistress, have you seen the younger young-master?
- CHOU FAN-YI. No.
- LU KWEL. Awhile ago didn't you ask the younger young-master to give us one hundred dollars?
- CHOU FAN-YI. (*With disgust*) Yes.
- LU KWEL. (*In a roundabout way*) But...but the money was returned by my own young-master.
- CHOU FAN-YI. Your own young-master?
- LU KWEL. (*Explaining*) That is, Ta-hai, that dog-born son of mine.
- CHOU FAN-YI. What now?
- LU KWEL. (*In a refined manner*) As a matter of fact, it is not yet known to my Shih-p'ing.
- CHOU FAN-YI. (*Surprised and in a low voice*) Shih-p'ing? (*Pulls a long face*) Who is Shih-p'ing?
- LU KWEL. (*Contemptuously, thinking that he is being despised*) Shih-p'ing is Shih-p'ing—that is my wife, Lu, the amah.
- CHOU FAN-YI. You mean to say that Shih-p'ing is the name of Lu, the amah?
- LU KWEL. (*With pride*) She has also read books, so her name is quite elegant.
- CHOU FAN-YI. 'Shih-p'ing' . . . Do you know how to write these two characters?
- LU KWEL. I—I—I— (*Embarrassed, forces a smile*) I don't remember. However, I remember that the character 'p'ing' is identical with the P'ing of the elder young-master's name.
- CHOU FAN-YI. Ah! (*Suddenly picks up the torn pieces of the*

photograph on the floor, puts them together and shows them to LU KWEI) Look, do you know this woman?

LU KWEI. (*Takes a look and then lifts his head*) No, Mistress, I don't know her.

CHOU FAN-YI. (*Anxiously*) Is there no one you know who looks like her? (*Pauses*) Try to think, and think about those who are near.

LU KWEI. (*Shakes his head*) Not a single one, Mistress, not a single one. (*Suddenly with suspicion and fear*) What's the matter, Mistress?

CHOU FAN-YI. (*Meditates and then grows dubious*) Most probably my mind is confused. (*Sits down.*)

LU KWEI. (*Greedily*) Ah, Mistress, didn't you give us one hundred dollars awhile ago? But my own young-master returned the money. Please think—

The central door is slowly pushed open.

LU KWEI. (*Turns his head*) Who is it?

LU TA-HAI *enters through the central door, his clothes wet all over and his countenance gloomy and solemn. He looks around uneasily, his every movement betrays clearly his fatigue and hatred.*

CHOU FAN-YI *stares at him in astonishment.*

LU TA-HAI. (*To LU KWEI*) You are here?

LU KWEI. (*Loathingly*) Yes. How did you manage to come in here?

LU TA-HAI. (*Coldly*) The iron gate was closed and there was no one to open it in spite of my calling. So I came in by climbing over the wall.

LU KWEI. What are you coming here for? Why don't you go and see what has happened to your mother who is looking for Shih-fêng?

LU TA-HAI. (*Wipes off the rain from his face with a wet towel*) Shih-fêng is not yet found and Ma is waiting outside the gate. (*Gravely*) Have you seen Shih-fêng?

LU KWEI. (*With disdain*) No, I haven't seen her. (*Knits his brow with disgust, feeling that LU TA-HAI has made a fuss of the matter*) Don't mind her. She'll be back home in awhile. (*Advances to LU TA-HAI*) Go back with me. The matter here is all settled. Let's go.

LU TA-HAI. No, I won't go.

LU KWEI. What do you want to do?

LU TA-HAI. You shall not go either. Call the elder young-

- master to come out here for me. I can't find him.
- LU KWEI. (*Feels his own chin with fear and suspicion*) What's the matter with you? I have just mended the whole thing and you again want to create trouble, eh?
- LU TA-HAI. (*Calmly*) No matter. I only want to have a talk with him.
- LU KWEI. (*Disbelieving him*) I see there is something wrong with you. Probably you again want to—
- LU TA-HAI. (*Ferociously seizes LU KWEI by the chest*) Will you find him or not?
- LU KWEI. (*Cowardly*) Yes, I will, I will. But take your hand away from me first.
- LU TA-HAI. All right. (*Releases him*) You go.
- LU KWEI. But Ta-hai, you must promise me you will only speak a few words with the elder young-master and won't—
- LU TA-HAI. Well, let me tell you I have not come here to fight.
- LU KWEI. Really?
- LU TA-HAI. (*Goes menacingly to LU KWEI and speaks in a low voice*) Will you go or not?
- LU KWEI. (*Frightened into stammering*) I—I—I—Ta-hai . . . you—you—you—
- CHOU FAN-YI. (*With composure*) Go and call him out, Lu Kwei. I am here. It doesn't matter.
- LU KWEI. All right then. (*To LU TA-HAI*) But when I have called the elder young-master, I'll leave by the door there. I—(*smiles*)—I have some business to attend to.
- LU TA-HAI. (*Imperatively*) Tell them to open the gate to let Ma in and take her into the house to give her shelter from the rain.
- LU KWEI. All right. (*Goes toward the dining-room*) When it is done, I'll leave here to attend to some business.
- LU TA-HAI. Stop! (*Goes one step further toward LU KWEI and speaks in a low voice*) You go in and, if you should run away before you get him to come out here, beware of my going back home after awhile. Humph!
- LU KWEI. (*Turns angry*) You—you—you— (*To himself in a low voice*) That small egg of a tortoise! (*Goes out helplessly into the dining-room.*)
- CHOU FAN-YI. (*Rises*) Who are you?
- LU TA-HAI. (*Rudely*) Shih-fêng's brother.
- CHOU FAN-YI. (*Softly*) Have you come here to look for her?

LU TA-HAI. Yes. (*Abruptly*) Why do you ask this question?
CHOU FAN-YI. I am also one of the Chous. Do you want to see our elder young-master?

LU TA-HAI. Yes.

CHOU FAN-YI. (*Her eyes deep set*) I am afraid he won't see you.

LU TA-HAI. (*Calmly*) Maybe you are right.

CHOU FAN-YI. (*Slowly*) I have heard that he is leaving by train now.

LU TA-HAI. (*Turns his head*) What!

CHOU FAN-YI. (*Hinting darkly*) He is leaving now.

LU TA-HAI. (*Fuming*) So, he's running away. He—

CHOU FAN-YI. Yes, he—

CHOU P'ING *re-enters from the dining-room, his face looking a little perturbed. Seeing LU TA-HAI, he unwillingly nods to him.*

CHOU P'ING. (*To LU TA-HAI in a slightly trembling voice, trying desperately to pull himself together*) Ah!

LU TA-HAI. Good. You're still here. (*Turns his head*) Tell that woman to go out. I have something to speak to you alone.

CHOU P'ING. (*Casts a glance at CHOU FAN-YI but she does not move; then he goes to her*) Please go upstairs.

CHOU FAN-YI. All right! (*Goes out through the dining-room door with her chin up.*)

A suspense. The two men both clench their fists tightly and stand motionless; LU TA-HAI stares hatefully at CHOU P'ING.

CHOU P'ING. (*Unable to bear it any longer, and in a slightly trembling voice*) I did not expect that you would come here.

LU TA-HAI. (*Sombrely*) I've heard that you're leaving.

CHOU P'ING. (*Surprised; composes himself and forces a smile*)

But it is still not late for you. You have come in the nick of time. Well, what do you intend to do? I am quite ready.

LU TA-HAI. (*Laughs rancorously*) You are quite ready, eh?

CHOU P'ING. (*Looks at him reservedly*) Yes.

LU TA-HAI. (*Goes to him*) You! (*Slaps CHOU P'ING's face hard, causing his previous laceration to bleed anew.*)

CHOU P'ING. (*Holds his fists and controls himself*) You—you— (*Swallows his own fury and produces a white silk handkerchief from his pocket to wipe off the blood from his face.*)

LU TA-HAI. (*Grinds his teeth*) Humph! And now you want to run away!

Another suspense.

CHOU P'ING. (*Suppresses his own anger and purposely speaks in a low mellow voice to clarify his case*) I've long planned to do so.

LU TA-HAI. (*Laughs malignantly*) You've long planned to do so, eh?

CHOU P'ING. (*Calms down*) I think there is too much misunderstanding between us.

LU TA-HAI. Misunderstanding? (*Looks at the blood that has stained his own hand and wipes it off on his clothes*) I have not misunderstood you. I know you are a hundred per cent silly egg, selfish and devoid of manly blood.

CHOU P'ING. (*Softly*) The two occasions we met I was in the worst of temper, thus giving you the worst impression of myself.

LU TA-HAI. (*Contemptuously*) There is no need of making excuses. You are a young-master, hence you're rotten to the core! You are all too easily fed with rice and do not know how to spend your energy. So you have picked up a poor man's daughter to amuse yourself, and won't take any responsibility after she is done for.

CHOU P'ING. (*Disappointed as he discerns LU TA-HAI's attitude*) Now I think it's no use for me to explain. I know you have come here with a purpose. (*Calmly*) Well, produce your dagger or revolver. I'm willing to let you handle me as you please.

LU TA-HAI. (*Disdainfully*) Could you take it to easy! You're very clever, for it's in *your* home! Humph! But it is not worthwhile for me to do so: I'm not yet willing to exchange my useful life for such a half-dead thing like you.

CHOU P'ING. (*Looking straight at LU TA-HAI, courageously*) I imagine you're presuming that I'm afraid of you. But you're wrong there. I should say that I'm afraid of myself rather than afraid of you. I have committed one blunder already, and I don't want to commit another.

LU TA-HAI. (*Mockingly*) To my mind, for a man like you to live is in itself wrong. Had it not been for my mother, I would have slaughtered you awhile ago! (*Threateningly*) Even now your life is still in my hand.

CHOU P'ING. It would be a blessing to die. (*Painfully*) You think that I am afraid of death. No, I am not, I am not. I

hate to live and I welcome your coming here. I have had enough, and I am a man tired of living.

LU TA-HAI. (*Loathingly*) Ah, so you are tired of living, and yet you still cling to my silly young sister.

CHOU P'ING. (*At his wit's end and forces a smile*) Do you mean to say that I am selfish? Do you think that I am really heartless and interested only in playing with her? Please ask your sister. She knows that I really love her and she provides the only motive for me to continue living.

LU TA-HAI. You have certainly said it very well! (*Abruptly*) But then, why don't you—why don't you marry her?

CHOU P'ING. (*Hesitates slightly*) That is exactly what I regret most. My environment is too bad. Please think, how can a family like mine ever permit such a thing to happen!

LU TA-HAI. (*Acrimoniously*) Ah, that's why on the one hand you have represented to her that you love her truly so that you may do to her whatever shameless thing you wish, while on the other hand you still have to think of your family and your Chairman father; and they tell you to desert her without caring a damn and to marry a swell lady of an appropriate family to match you. Is this right or not?

CHOU P'ING. (*Unable to bear it any longer*) I want you to ask Shih-fêng. She knows my departure this time is in order to leave my family and get away from my father so as to find an opportunity to marry her.

LU TA-HAI. (*Mocks him*) An excellent excuse! But how are you going to explain the fact of your going to my house awhile ago at midnight?

CHOU P'ING. (*Exploding vehemently*) What I have said is no excuse and there is no need for me to explain the matter to you. It is because you are Shih-fêng's brother that I have spoken to you like this. I love Shih-fêng and she also loves me. We are both young and we are both human. Being together everyday, we two cannot help going to the extreme in the end, but I believe I shall feel unashamed before her. I shall marry her. I have no guilty conscience.

LU TA-HAI. Then you seem to be fully justified. But, elder son of the Chairman, who would believe that you could love a worker's sister and the poor daughter of an amah?

CHOU P'ING. (*Pauses and stammers*) Then—then—then I may tell you there is a woman who has been persecuting me and

provoking me into doing so.

LU TA-HAI. (*Tensely and in a low voice*) What? Is there still another woman?

CHOU P'ING. Yes, that's the lady you saw a moment ago.

LU TA-HAI. She?

CHOU P'ING. (*Miserably*) She is my step-mother! . . . Oh, I have kept the secret in my heart for so many years and not dared tell it to anybody . . . She has read books and received a very good education. She—she—she had an affection for me from the time we met and she wanted me—(*Suddenly stops*) Of course I should also bear part of the responsibility.

LU TA-HAI. Does Shih-fêng know that?

CHOU P'ING. She knows it and I know she knows it. (*Depressed and with painful tears in his eyes*) I was too silly then. But later as I got along, I feared, hated and loathed it more and more. I hate such an unnatural relationship, don't you know that? I want to get away from her, but she won't let me go. She clings to me and won't loose her hold. She is a devil and she doesn't care a damn for anything else. Don't you know that I am really tired of living? I drink and I go wild. I am willing to die just to leave her. She makes me hate all women who have received a good education and appear to be very virtuous outwardly. And then I met Shih-fêng. It's Shih-fêng who has made me turn sensible and continue to live for one year.

LU TA-HAI. (*Heaves a sigh in spite of himself*) Ah!

CHOU P'ING. All this I have never told anyone all these years. But—(*slowly*) strange, I have unexpectedly told you all about it.

LU TA-HAI. (*Murkily*) Probably that's the price you have to pay for your father's sins.

CHOU P'ING. (*With disgust, as the idea didn't occur to him*) You—you are talking nonsense! (*Feeling himself carried away by the impulse to tell his heart's secret to such a stranger, he pauses for awhile, calms down and tries to divine the reason of his making the slip. Then suddenly and slowly*) Now let me tell you: because you are Shih-fêng's brother, I want you to believe my sincerity—I don't have the least intention to deceive her.

LU TA-HAI. (*Betrays more friendliness*) Then are you really going to marry Shih-fêng? You know, Shih-fêng is a stupid

child and she won't marry anybody else.

CHOU P'ING. (*Sincerely*) No. I will leave today and come back to take her after a couple of months.

LU TA-HAI. But, son of the Chairman, could anyone believe that?

CHOU P'ING. (*Produces a letter from his pocket*) You may read this letter, which I have just written to her, explaining the whole situation.

LU TA-HAI. (*Evades purposely*) There is no need to let me read it. I am illiterate.

CHOU P'ING. (*Lifts his head after a brief suspense*) Then I have no other assurance at the moment. That instrument-for-killing in your pocket is my guarantee. Should you still not believe me, my life is still in your hands.

LU TA-HAI. (*Bitterly*) Elder young-master, do you think I'll let it go like that? (*Malignantly*) Do you think I am really willing to let my sister marry such a mug like you? (*Suddenly whips out his revolver.*)

CHOU P'ING. (*Taken aback*) What do you want to do?

LU TA-HAI. (*With hatred*) I want to kill you. Although your father is wicked, he is still not so bad to look at. But you are really the most useless and boring creature in the world.

CHOU P'ING. Ah! All right, come and do it! (*Shuts his eyes in terror.*)

LU TA-HAI. But— (*Heaves a sigh and hands the revolver to CHOU P'ING.*) You had better take it. It belongs to your mine.

CHOU P'ING. (*At a loss*) What? (*Takes the revolver.*)

LU TA-HAI. (*Distressed*) Nothing. You know, women are most absurd as a rule. I know my mother. My sister is her life. So long as you can coax Shih-fêng to live peacefully, I can leave everything else out of the question. (*CHOU P'ING intends to say something, but LU TA-HAI shakes his hands to stop him. Dejected, CHOU P'ING moves to the table and puts the revolver in a drawer. LU TA-HAI continues imperatively*) Now, please call my sister to come out.

CHOU P'ING. (*Astonished*) What?

LU TA-HAI. I mean Shih-fêng. Of course she is here.

CHOU P'ING. No, no. I thought she was at your house.

LU TA-HAI. (*Puzzled*) That's strange. I tried to find her with Ma for two hours out in the rain, but we couldn't find her.

Naturally I thought she was here.

CHOU P'ING. (*Concerned*) She walked in the rain for two hours! Couldn't she have gone somewhere else?

LU TA-HAI. (*Decisively*) Where else could she have gone at midnight?

CHOU P'ING. (*Suddenly horror-stricken*) Ah! she wouldn't—
(*Sits down and stares ahead in stupefaction.*)

LU TA-HAI. (*Sees his meaning*) You think— Oh, no, she wouldn't. (*With contempt*) No, I don't think she's got the courage.

CHOU P'ING. (*Tremblingly*) Yes, she would. You don't know her. She cares a great deal for 'face' and she has a strong character. She—but she ought to see me first. She (*as if he actually saw her drown herself in a canal*) shouldn't be so rash.

A brief suspense.

LU TA-HAI. (*Suddenly*) Humph! You certainly have played up very well. You want to make a fool of me, eh? She is right here with you! She is right here with you!

A whistling from the distance is heard.

CHOU P'ING. (*Gesticulates to LU TA-HAI to stop*) No, please don't lift your voice. (*Brightens up as the whistling comes nearer*) She—she is coming! I can hear her!

LU TA-HAI. What?

CHOU P'ING. That's her call. It's the signal every time we meet.

LU TA-HAI. Where is she?

CHOU P'ING. Probably right there in the garden. (*Opens the window and whistles. The whistling in reply comes still nearer; he turns his head and smiles with tears in his eyes*) She is coming!

A knock on the central door.

CHOU P'ING. (*To LU TA-HAI*) Please hide yourself in the adjacent room for the time being. She certainly wouldn't expect to find you here, and I don't think she can stand another shock. (*Quickly leads LU TA-HAI into the dining-room. As soon as LU TA-HAI disappears, a voice outside is heard.*)

THE VOICE. (*At a low pitch*) P'ing!

CHOU P'ING. (*Quickly runs to the central door*) Fêng-êrh!
(*Opens the door*) Come in!

SHIH-FENG enters; her hair dishevelled and her clothes wet.

Rain and tears trail down her face; wet hair is stuck on the corners of her eyes. With her clothes adhering to her body, the coldness after soaking in the rain makes her shudder and her teeth chatter. She stares at CHOU P'ING dumbfoundedly like a lost child seeing its mother again.

SHIH-FENG. P'ing!

CHOU P'ING. (*Greatly moved*) Fêng!

SHIH-FENG. (*Timidly*) Is there anyone else?

CHOU P'ING. (*Painfully and with pity*) No. (*Holds her hand.*)

SHIH-FENG. (*Emboldened*) Oh, P'ing! (*Throws her arms around him and begins to sob.*)

CHOU P'ING. (*As though he has missed her for a long time*)

How are you? How is it that you are in such a shape?

How have you managed to find me? (*Gushing*) How did you come in?

SHIH-FENG. I stole in through the small door.

CHOU P'ING. Fêng, your hands are terribly cold. You must first change your clothes.

SHIH-FENG. No, P'ing, (sobs) let me first look at you.

CHOU P'ING. (*Takes her to sit on the sofa beside him. Passionately*) Where—where have you been, Fêng?

SHIH-FENG. (*Looks at him and smiles through her tears*) P'ing, you're still here. It seems to me as if so many years have elapsed.

CHOU P'ING. (*Picks up a purple cotton rug on the sofa and throws it about her*) My poor Fêng, why were you so crazy? Where did you go, my crazy child?

SHIH-FENG. (*Wipes away her tears and holds the hand of CHOU P'ING, who is crouching beside her*) I was running alone in the rain and didn't know where I was. It was thundering. Before me I saw only a blur. I forgot about everything. I seemed to hear my mother calling me, but I was afraid. I ran as fast as I could and then I wanted to find that canal in front of our door.

CHOU P'ING. (*Holds her hand tightly*) Fêng!

SHIH-FENG. But I don't know how it was that I went round and round but couldn't find it.

CHOU P'ING. Oh, Fêng, I really can't face you. Please pardon me. It is I who made you do that. Please pardon me, and don't feel resentful towards me.

SHIH-FENG. I forgive you. I shall never be resentful toward you

no matter what happens. (*Continues her story*) Out of my senses I again bumped into this place. When I passed by the live wire on the wistaria arbour in the garden, I suddenly thought of committing suicide. I knew that by just touching the wire I should be able to forget everything. I love my mother. I was afraid of the oath I swore to her awhile ago. I was afraid that she would say I was a bad daughter. I would rather die. But, when I was on the point of touching that wire, I suddenly saw the light in your window, and realized that you were in. Oh, P'ing, I felt that I couldn't die like that. I couldn't die alone because I couldn't bear to give you up. It then occurred to me that the world was immensely vast and that we could go away—only that we must leave here together. Oh, P'ing, you—

CHOU P'ING. (*Gravely*) We leave here together?

SHIH-FENG. (*Anxiously*) That's the only way, P'ing. I have no longer a home now. (*Painfully*) Brother hates me to death and I have no face to see mother again. I have nothing now: I have no relatives, no friends, and I have no one else but you, P'ing. (*Pleadingly*) Please take me away tomorrow.

A suspense.

CHOU P'ING. (*Gravely shakes his head*) No, no—

SHIH-FENG. (*In despair*) P'ing!

CHOU P'ING. (*Looks at her and speaks in a grave tone*) No, no—we are going right now.

SHIH-FENG. (*Incredulously*) Going right now?

CHOU P'ING. (*With tender pity*) Yes, I originally planned to leave alone and to come back and take you later. But that is unnecessary now.

CHOU P'ING. Yes, really.

SHIH-FENG. (*Enraptured, throws off the cotton rug, stands up and kisses CHOU P'ING's hand while wiping off her own tears*) Really, really, really! P'ing, you are my saving grace, you are the best man in the world. You are my—oh, I love you! (*Bursts into tears.*)

CHOU P'ING. (*Moved, wipes off his tears with a handkerchief*) Fêng, in future we shall be together, and never be separated.

SHIH-FENG. (*In CHOU P'ING's arms and self-consolingly*) Ah, we shall leave here and never be separated.

CHOU P'ING. (*Controlling himself*) All right, Fêng, let us see

one man before we go, and we'll go immediately after seeing him.

SHIH-FENG. One man?

CHOU P'ING. Your brother.

SHIH-FENG. My brother.

CHOU P'ING. He has been looking for you, and is now in the dining-room.

SHIH-FENG. (*Terror-stricken*) No, no, please don't see him. He hates you and he will do you harm. Go, let's go right away.

CHOU P'ING. (*Consolingly*) I have already seen him. We must now see him once more, (*resolutely*) otherwise we shan't be able to leave.

SHIH-FENG. (*Timidly*) But, P'ing, you—

CHOU P'ING. (*Moves to the dining-room door, opens it and calls*) Lu Ta-hai, Lu Ta-hai! . . . Why, he is not here. That's strange! Probably he has gone out through the other door of the dining-room. (*Casts a glance at SHIH-FENG.*)

SHIH-FENG. (*Goes to CHOU and pleads*) P'ing, please don't mind him. Let's go. (*Drags him toward the central door*) Let's just leave like this.

When SHIH-FENG has dragged CHOU P'ING to the central door, it opens and in come LU and LU TA-HAI.

LU's appearance has completely changed in two hours. Her voice has turned hoarse as a result of crying and calling in the rain; her eyelids hang down in despair, the wrinkles have furrowed deeper on her forehead. And excessive excitement has so completely stunned her that she has become the very incarnation of pain. Part of her clothes seem to have got dry, her hair is still a little wet and a few strands of it stick to her temples. Her hands trembling as she enters timidly.

SHIH-FENG. (*Startled and afraid*) Ma! (*Shrinks in fear.*)

There is an awkward suspense, during which LU looks at SHIH-FENG with sad pity.

LU. (*Stretches out her hands to SHIH-FENG and speaks painfully*)

Come, Fêng-êrh, come!

SHIH-FENG runs to her mother and falls upon her knees in front of her.

SHIH-FENG. Ma! (*Claps her mother's knees.*)

LU. (*Strokes the top of SHIH-FENG's head with love and pity*)

Child, my poor child.

SHIH-FENG. (*Her voice broken by sobbing*) Ma, please pardon

- me, I have forgotten my promise.
- LU. (*Pulls SHIH-FENG to her feet*) Why didn't you tell me earlier?
- SHIH-FENG. (*Hangs her head down*) I love you, Ma, and I was afraid—I was unwilling to give you any cause to dislike me and despise me, so I didn't dare tell you.
- LU. (*In extreme suffering*) It is rather that your Ma was too absurd. I should have thought of this earlier. (*Painfully sad*) But Heaven, who could know that there would be such a thing in this world and that it should have occurred among my own children? Oh, your Ma's fate is too bad and the fate of us all is also too bad.
- LU TA-HAI. (*Nonchalantly*) Let's go, Ma. Let Shih-fêng first go home with us. I have already reached an agreement with him (*points at CHOU P'ING*) that he should go first and come back later to take Shih-fêng.
- LU. (*Bewildered*) Who said that? Who said that?
- LU TA-HAI. (*Looks at his mother coldly*) I know what's in your mind, Ma. But this is the only way to settle it. Therefore, I shall let them go and never again bother about the affairs of the Chou House.
- LU. (*Still bewildered and sits down*) What? Let them go?
- CHÉU P'ING. (*Hesitantly*) Mrs. LU please believe in me. I will certainly treat her nicely. And we have decided to leave right now.
- LU. (*Holds SHIH-FENG's hand tremblingly*) Fêng, are you . . . are you going with him?
- SHIH-FENG. (*Droops her head and holds LU's hand tightly and helplessly*) Ma, I have to leave you for the time being.
- LU. (*Unable to bear it*) It's impossible for you to go together!
- LU TA-HAI. (*Surprised*) Ma, what's the matter?
- LU. (*Rises*) No, impossible!
- SHIH-FENG. (*Turning anxious*) Ma!
- LU. (*Pays no heed to her but drags her by the hand*) Let's go. (*To LU TA-HAI*) Go out and call a rickshaw. Shih-fêng is probably unable to walk any more. Let's go, and go at once.
- SHIH-FENG. (*Retreats desperately*) Ma, how can you do this?
- LU. No, impossible. (*Dumbfoundedly and monotonously*) Let's go, let's go.
- SHIH-FENG. (*Pleading*) Ma, do you want your daughter to die of anxiety right in front of you?

CHOU P'ING. (*Goes to LU*) Mrs. Lu, I know I can't face you.
But I shall try to redeem my fault to the best of my ability.
Now that the matter has already come to its present state,
you—

LU TA-HAI. Ma, (*puzzled*) this time, I really can't understand you!

LU. (*At her wit's end and sternly*) You go and get a rickshaw!
(*To SHIH-FENG*) Fêng-êrh, listen to me: I would rather lose you than let you live together with him. Go!

The moment LU TA-HAI reaches the door, SHIH-FENG cries out aloud.

SHIH-FENG. (*Screams*) Oh, Ma, Ma! (*Swoons and collapses into her mother's arms.*)

LU. (*Embraces SHIH-FENG*) My child, you—

CHOU P'ING. (*Anxiously*) She has fainted.

LU feels SHIH-FENG'S forehead and calls her name in a low voice, her tears trickling down in spite of herself. CHOU P'ING runs to the dining-room.

LU TA-HAI. (*To CHOU P'ING*) It's unnecessary to—it doesn't matter. Some cold water will do. This has happened to her since childhood.

CHOU P'ING takes some cold water and sprinkles it on her face. SHIH-FENG gradually comes to, her face having turned pale and ashen.

LU. (*Pours the cold water on SHIH-FENG'S face*) Fêng-êrh, my good child. Come back, come back, my poor child.

SHIH-FENG. (*Gradually opens her mouth and eyes and breathes heavily*) Oh, Ma!

LU. (*Consoles her*) Child, please don't blame Ma for being unsympathetic. There is something Ma can't tell you.

SHIH-FENG. (*Sighs*) Ma!

LU. What is it, Fêng-êrh?

SHIH-FENG. (*To CHOU P'ING*) I cannot but tell you, P'ing!

CHOU P'ING. Are you better, Fêng?

SHIH-FENG. P'ing, I have kept it secret from you, (*looks at her mother imploringly*) and I haven't told you about it either, Ma. You—

LU. What is it, child? Please tell me quickly.

SHIH-FENG. (*Sobs*) I—I—(*turns courageous*) I have already had . . . with him— (*Bursts into tears.*)

LU. (*Urgently*) What? You say you have already had—

CHOU P'ING. (*Holds up SHIH-FENG's hand*) Shih-fêng! What?
Is it true that you—

SHIH-FENG. (*Cries*) Yes.

CHOU P'ING. (*Between joy and sorrow*) How long is it?

SHIH-FENG. (*Droops her head*) About three months already.

CHOU P'ING. (*Happily*) Oh, Shih-fêng, why didn't you tell me? My—my—

LU. (*In a low voice*) Heaven!

CHOU P'ING. (*Goes to LU*) Mrs. Lu, please don't be obstinate. It is I who am to be blamed. I entreat you! (*Falls on his knees*) I entreat you to let her go. I will guarantee you that in future I shall not be ashamed of my self before her, or before you.

SHIH-FENG. (*Rises, goes to her mother, and kneels down before her*) Ma, please have pity on us and give us your promise to let us go.

LU. (*Speechless and sitting there in utter confusion for a moment. Then—*) I am dreaming. My children, my own children, . . . thirty years—oh Heaven! (*Covers her face to weep and waves her hand at the two lovers*) You get away, you get away, I don't know you. (*Turns her head away.*)

CHOU P'ING. Thank you. (*Rises*) Let's go, Fêng! (SHIH-FENG also rises.)

LU. (*Turns back her head and bursts out in spite of herself*) No, impossible!

SHIH-FENG again kneels down.

SHIH-FENG. (*Imploring*) Ma, what's the matter with you? I have made up my mind. It doesn't matter whether he is rich or poor, or whoever he may be, I am his. He is the first man to whom I have given my heart. He is the only man I can see. Ma, I don't care who he is, or what his name is. I have now come to such a situation that I will go with him wherever he may go, and I am willing to be whatever he may become. Ma, don't you understand, I—

LU. (*Gesticulates for her to stop; painfully*) Child!

LU TA-HAI. Ma, since Sister is situated like this, it's better to let her go.

CHOU P'ING. (*Sombrely*) Mrs. Lu, if you insist on not letting her go, we cannot but disobey you and go away ourselves. (*To SHIH-FENG*) Fêng!

SHIH-FENG. (*Shakes her head*) P'ing! (*Still looks at LU*) Ma!

LU. (*Sad and heavy at heart, and in a low voice*) Oh, Heaven knows who has sinned, who has sown the seed of such a doom! They are both pitiful children, not knowing what they are doing. Oh, Heaven, if there must be punishment, please punish me alone. I alone am guilty. It was I who first took the wrong step. (*Painfully*) Now I see, I see: it is already done, and it is useless to resent unjust Heaven. Once a man sins, a second sin will naturally follow him. (*Feels SHIH-FENG'S head*) They are my clean children and they deserve to live in well-being and enjoy happiness. The sin is in my heart, and the punishment for it should also be suffered by me alone. They are merely being happy. How could they know it was a sin? They are young and they have not intentionally committed the blunder. (*Rises and stares at the sky*) It is I who let them go together tonight, and I alone know the sin of it. But since it is I who have sinned in their place, I should be responsible for all the sins. My children are all good children and purehearted. Therefore, Heaven, if there really should be any consequence, please let me alone take it. (*Turns her head*) Fêng-êrh—

SHIH-FENG. (*Uneasily*) Ma, you are troubled at heart, but I don't know what you are talking about.

LU. (*Kindly*) Nothing. (*Smiles*) Get up, Fêng-êrh, you may go together.

SHIH-FENG. (*Rises, greatly moved, and embraces her mother*) Ma!

CHOU P'ING. Let's go. (*Looks at his watch*) It's late. Only twenty-five minutes more. Tell them to have the motor-car ready. Let's go.

LU. (*Quietly*) No, this time you are going in darkness, and you shouldn't arouse other people. (*To LU TA-HAI*) Ta-hai, please go out and call a rickshaw. I am going home. Please see them to the station.

LU TA-HAI. Yes. (*Exits through the central door.*)

LU. (*To SHIH-FENG, dolefully and softly*) Come here, my child, let me caress you. (*SHIH-FENG goes to her and holds her in her own arm. LU turns to CHOU P'ING*) You also come here and let me look at you. (*CHOU P'ING goes to her with his head drooping. LU gazes at him and dries her tears*) All right, you may go! . . . But I want both of you to promise me one thing before you leave.

CHOU P'ING. Please say it.

LU. If you don't promise me, I won't let Shih-fêng go.

SHIH-FENG. Pleas say it, Ma. I'll promise.

LU. (*Looks at them*) Now that you are leaving, it is better for you to go farther and farther and not to look back. After your departure tonight, whether dead or alive, you are not to see me again.

SHIH-FENG. (*Painfully*) Ma, won't it then—

CHOU P'ING. (*Gives her a meaning glance and speaks in a low voice*) She has spoken like that because she is now suffering at heart. She'll be all right afterwards.

SHIH-FENG. Yes. All right then, Ma, we are going. (*Falls on her knees and k'otous to her mother with tears flowing from her eyes. LU tries her best to control herself.*)

LU. (*Waves her hand*) Go.

CHOU P'ING. Let's go out through the dining-room. I've put a few of my things there.

CHOU P'ING, SHIH-FENG and LU go together to the dining room door, which is open and in comes CHOU FAN-YI, to the amazement of the three.

SHIH-FENG. (*The word slips out from her lips*) Mistress!

CHOU FAN-YI. (*Calmly*) Why, where are you going? It's still thundering outside!

CHOU P'ING. (*To CHOU FAN-YI*) What? Were you eavesdropping outside?

CHOU FAN-YI. Yes, and not alone. There is still someone else. (*Turns to the dining-room door*) Come out, you!

CHOU CH'UNG enters timidly from the dining-room.

SHIH-FENG. (*Astonished*) Younger young-master!

CHOU CH'UNG. (*Uncasily*) Shih-fêng!

CHOU P'ING. (*Displeased, to his brother*) Brother, how can you be so inconsiderate?

CHOU CHUNG. (*At a loss*) Ma told me to come. I don't know what you are doing here.

CHOU FAN-YI. (*Coldly*) Now you'll know it.

CHOU P'ING. (*Annoyed and anxious, to CHOU FAN-YI*) What are you doing?

CHOU FAN-YI. (*Mockingly*) I have called your brother to give you a send-off.

CHOU P'ING. (*Furiously*) You are truly mean—

CHOU CH'UNG. Brother!

CHOU P'ING. I am sorry, Brother! (*Suddenly to CHOU FAN-YI*)
 But there is not such a mother like you in this world!

CHOU CH'UNG. (*Bewildered*) Ma, what is this all about?

CHOU FAN-YI. Look! (*To SHIH-FENG*) Shih-fêng, where are you going?

SHIH-FENG. (*Stammers*) I—I . . . I . . . ?

CHOU P'ING. Don't tell a single lie. Tell them, and tell them with your head up that we are going together.

CHOU CH'UNG. (*Divines the situation*) What? Shih-fêng, are you going together with him?

SHIH-FENG. Yes, younger young-master, I—I am—

CHOU CH'UNG. (*Almost imperiously*) Why didn't you tell me earlier?

SHIH-FENG. (*Explains*) Not that I didn't tell you. For I told you not to go after me because I—I was no longer a good girl.

CHOU P'ING. (*To SHIH-FENG*) No, why should you say that you are bad? Tell them! (*Points at CHOU FAN-YI*) Tell them that you are going to marry me!

CHOU CH'UNG. (*Slightly surprised*) Shih-fêng, you—

CHOU FAN-YI. (*To CHOU CH'UNG*) Now you understand. (*CHOU CH'UNG droops his head.*)

CHOU P'ING. (*Suddenly and bitterly to CHOU FAN-YI*) You are heartless through and through! Did you think that your son would spell our ruin for you? (*To CHOU CH'UNG*) Brother Ch'ung, please speak out. Please speak out whatever you now have in mind and what you are going to do about it. Speak out! Your brother will excuse you.

CHOU CH'UNG *looks at CHOU FAN-YI and SHIH-FENG, and then hangs his head down.*

CHOU FAN-YI. Speak out, Chung-êrh! (*Waits for a moment and then demands anxiously*) Chung-êrh, why don't you speak? Why don't you get hold of Shih-fêng and pop the question at her? Why don't you seize your brother and talk to him? (*Again pause. All eyes look at CHOU CH'UNG, but he remains speechless*) Speak out, Chung-êrh! What's wrong with you? Are you a dead man, a dumb fool, or a silly child? Are you not angry to see your lady love stolen by someone else?

CHOU CH'UNG. (*Lifts his head like a lamb*) No, no, Ma! (*Again looks at SHIH-FENG and droops his head*) So long as Shih-fêng is willing, I have nothing to say.

- CHOU P'ING. (*Goes to CHOU CH'UNG and holds his hand*) Oh, my good brother, my sensible brother!
- CHOU CH'UNG. (*Dubiously, meditatively*) I have suddenly discovered something . . . I feel . . . I seem to be not really in love with Shih-fêng; (*hazily*) formerly, . . . I—I—I—was just being silly.
- CHOU P'ING. (*Gratefully*) But, Brother—
- CHOU CH'UNG. (*Looks at CHOU P'ING's ardent countenance and retreats*) Well, please take her away—only you must treat her well!
- CHOU FAN-YI. (*Entirely defeated and in despair*) Oh, you! (*With sudden wrath*) You are not my son. You are not like me. You—you are simply a dead swine.
- CHOU CH'UNG. (*Feeling insulted*) Mother!
- CHOU P'ING. (*Shocked*) What's the matter with you!
- CHOU FAN-YI. (*In confusion*) You really haven't the least bit of manliness. If I were you, I would have beaten her, burnt her, and killed her. You are really a silly worm, without a bit of life. You are your father's son, your father's little lamb. I have taken you amiss. You are not mine, you are not my son.
- CHOU P'ING. (*Righteously indignant*) Are you Brother Chung's mother? You talk like that?
- CHOU FAN-YI. (*Painfully*) P'ing, speak, speak out. I am not afraid. Tell him I am now no longer his mother!
- CHOU CH'UNG. (*Distressed*) Ma, what's wrong with you?
- CHOU FAN-YI. (*Throws away all restraint*) At the time when I called him to come here, I had already forgotten myself. (*To CHOU CH'UNG, half insanely*) Don't think that I am your mother. (*Lifts her voice*) Your mother has long died—long been crushed and suffocated to death by your father. I am no longer your mother now. I am the dead woman who has come back to life after seeing Chou P'ing. (*Recklessly*) I am also a woman who wants a man to love her truly and who wants to live in reality!
- CHOU CH'UNG. (*Broken-hearted*) Oh, Ma!
- CHOU P'ING. (*Casts a meaning glance at CHOU CH'UNG*) She is ill. (*To CHOU FAN-YI*) Please go upstairs with me! You probably need a rest.
- CHOU FAN-YI. Nonsense! I have no illness, I have no illness. I haven't the least bit of mental disease. Do you think that

I am talking nonsense. (*Dries her tears and goes on in a sad tone*) I have tolerated it for so many years. I have kept the company of a King of Hades for eighteen years in this dead place, this gaol-like Chou mansion. My heart hasn't died. I have merely borne Ch'ung-êrh to your father. But my heart and the person in me are still mine. (*Points at CHOU P'ING*) Only he has wanted the whole of me. But now he no longer wants me, he no longer wants me!

CHOU CH'UNG. (*Extremely pained at heart*) Ma, my most beloved Ma, what are you talking about?

CHOU P'ING. Don't mind her. She is going insane!

CHOU FAN-YI. (*Vehemently*) Don't imitate your father. Not insane—I haven't gone insane! I want you to speak, I want you to tell them . . . This is my last breath!

CHOU P'ING. (*Between the devil and the deep sea*) What do you want me to say? I think you had better go upstairs to bed.

CHOU FAN-YI. (*Sneers*) Don't play the innocent! Tell them, tell them I am not your step-mother.

Everyone else is astonished. A brief suspense.

CHOU CH'UNG. (*At his wit's end*) Mother!

CHOU FAN-YI. (*Recklessly to CHOU P'ING*) Tell them. Tell Shih-fêng, tell her!

SHIH-FENG. (*Unable to bear it*) Oh, Mother! (*Flings herself into LU's arms.*)

CHOU P'ING. (*Looks at his brother and then turns to CHOU FAN-YI*) Why should you? Why should you talk about a thing of the past and make Brother unhappy for life.

CHOU FAN-YI. (*Shouts, having lost her maternal nature*) I have no child, I have no husband, I have no home, I have nothing whatsoever. I only want you to say that I—I am yours.

CHOU P'ING. (*Miserably*) Oh, Brother! (*To CHOU FAN-YI*) Please look at Brother's pitiful appearance. If you still have a mother's feelings in your heart—!

CHOU FAN-YI. (*Retorting*) Now you have also copied your father to a nicety, you hypocrite. Remember, it is you who have deceived your brother; it is you who have deceived me; and it is you who have deceived your father!

CHOU P'ING. (*Furiously*) Nonsense! I haven't. I haven't deceived them! Father is a good man, father has been virtu-

ous all his life. (CHOU FAN-YI *laughs through her nose*. *He turns to SHIH-FENG*) Don't mind her. She has gone insane. Let's go.

CHOU FAN-YI. You needn't go. The gate has been locked. Your father will come here in a minute, I have sent for him already.

LU. Oh, Mistress!

CHOU P'ING. (To CHOU FAN-YI) What does that mean?

CHOU FAN-YI. (Coldly) I want your father to see his future good children before you go. (Calls) P'u-yüan, P'u-yüan!

CHOU CH'UNG. Ma, please don't!

CHOU P'ING. (Goes to CHOU FAN-YI) Lunatic, dare you shout again!

CHOU FAN-YI *runs to the study door and calls again*.

LU. (Getting anxious) Shih-fêng, let's go out.

CHOU FAN-YI. No, he has already come!

CHOU P'U-YUAN *enters from the study*. *Everyone is motionless and dead silent*.

CHOU P'U-YUAN. (At the door) What are you calling me for? Why haven't you yet gone upstairs to sleep?

CHOU FAN-YI. (Haughtily) I am inviting you to meet your good relatives.

CHOU P'U-YUAN. (Sees that LU and SHIH-FENG are also there, and is astonished) Ah, you—you—what are you doing here?

CHOU FAN-YI. (Drags SHIH-FENG) This is your daughter-in-law, please meet her. (To SHIH-FENG—points at CHOU P'U-YUAN) Call him your father! (To CHOU P'U-YUAN, pointing at LU) Please also make the acquaintance of this old lady.

LU. Mistress!

CHOU FAN-YI. (To CHOU P'ING) P'ing, come here! Come here in the presence of your father and k'otou to your mother-in-law.

CHOU P'ING. (Embarrassed) Father, I—I—

CHOU P'U-YUAN. (With full realization) What—(To LU) Shih-p'ing, so after all you have come back.

CHOU FAN-YI. (Astonished) What?

LU. (Anxiously) No, no, you are mistaken.

CHOU P'U-YUAN. (In repentance) Shih-p'ing, I thought that you would come back.

LU. No, no! (Droops her head) Oh, heaven!

CHOU FAN-YI. (Overwhelmed with surprise) Shih-p'ing? What? Is she Shih-p'ing?

CHOU P'U-YUAN. Yes. (*With disgust*) Fan-yi, you needn't purposely ask me. She is P'ing-êrh's mother, who is supposed to have died thirty years ago.

CHOU FAN-YI. Heaven!

An awkward suspense.

SHIH-FENG bursts out with a painful cry and stares at her mother, who is hanging her head down in suffering. Mentally confused, CHOU P'ING looks in bewilderment at his father and LU. Meanwhile, CHOU FAN-YI slowly moves to CHOU CH'UNG. Now she has suddenly discovered a tragedy which makes her turn sympathetic towards CHOU P'ING. She has come to realize her own madness of a moment ago, and this restores her normal maternal feelings. She looks shamefacedly in spite of herself at her own CH'UNG-ERH.

CHOU P'U-YUAN. (*Overwhelmed with pain*) P'ing-êrh, come here. Your mother is not dead, she is still living.

CHOU P'ING. (*Half-insane*) It isn't she! Father, tell me that it isn't she!

CHOU P'U-YUAN. (*Sternly*) Silly fool! Don't talk nonsense, P'ing-êrh. Though she has not had a decent life, she is still your mother.

CHOU P'ING. (*Extremely pained*) Oh, Father!

CHOU P'U-YUAN. If you should think that your 'face' won't look nice because you have the same mother as Shih-fêng, then you have forgotten about family relations and human nature.

SHIH-FENG. (*To her mother*) Oh, Ma! (*Painfully*)

CHOU P'U-YUAN. P'ing-êrh, please pardon me. All my life I only committed this one blunder. I have never suspected that she was still living to this day and that she would find her way to this place. I think I can only say that this is the will of Heaven. (*Sighs; to LU*) I have grown old. I regret very much that I told you to leave, and I had planned to send you twenty thousand dollars. Now that you have come, I think P'ing-êrh is a pious child and he will certainly take good care of you. He will make reparation to you for what I have felt sorry for.

CHOU P'ING. (*To LU*) You— Are you my—

LU. (*In spite of herself*) P'ing— (*Turns her head away and sobs.*)

CHOU P'U-YUAN. Kneel down, P'ing-êrh! Don't think you are in a dream. This is your real mother.

SHIH-FENG (*In confusion*) Ma, this can't be true. (LU *doesn't*
reply but continues to sob.)

CHOU FAN-YI. (*Goes to CHOU P'ING with profound regret*) P'ing
I—I—I've never thought that is was like this. P'ing—

CHOU P'ING. (*Laughs weirdly to CHOU P'U-YUAN*) Father!
(*Laughs weirdly to LU*) Mother! (*Looks at SHIH-FENG and*
points at her) You—

SHIH-FENG. (*Stares at CHOU P'ING in return and laughs weirdly;*
then suddenly bursts out) Oh, Hevean! (*Runs out through*
the central door. CHOU P'ING flings himself on the sofa; LU
stands there dazed and motionless.)

CHOU FAN-YI. (*Shouts anxiously*) Shih-fêng, Shih-fêng! (*Turns*
to CHOU CH'UNG) Ch'ung-êrh, there is something wrong
from her looks. Go out at once and look for her.

CHOU CH'UNG *runs out through the central door, calling* SHIH-
FENG.

CHOU P'U-YUAN. (*Goes to CHOU P'ING*) P'ing-êrh, what is this
all about?

CHOU P'ING. (*Suddenly rises*) Father, you shouldn't have be-
gotten me! (*Runs out through the dining-room.*)

From a distance SHIH-FENG's terrifying scream is heard. Then
comes CHOU CH'UNG's frantic yelling: "Shih-fêng!" Following
this, his piercing scream rends the air.

LU.

CHOU FAN-YI. (*Shouts simultaneously*) Shihfêng, what's happen-
ed? My child, my Ch'ung-êrh!

The two run out together through the central door.

CHOU P'U-YUAN. (*Goes anxiously to the window and draws a side*
the curtain. In a trembling voice) What? What?

A servant runs in through the central door.

THE SERVANT. (*Panting*) Master!

CHOU P'U-YUAN. Tell me quickly what has happened!

THE SERVANT. (*His voice broken with excitement*) Shih-fêng
. . . is dead . . .

CHOU P'U-YUAN. (*Anxiously*) What about the younger young-
master?

THE SERVANT. Also . . . also dead.

CHOU P'U-YUAN. (*In a trembling voice*) No, no . . . H-h-
how?

THE SERVANT. Shih-fêng touched that live wire. The younger
young-master didn't know it. In a hurry he tried to drag

her away, and both of them were killed by the electric current.

CHOU P'U-YUAN. (*Almost faints*) That couldn't happen. That—that—that is impossible, impossible!

CHOU P'U-YUAN *runs out with the servant*. CHOU P'ING *re-enters from the dining-room, his face palled but his countenance quiet. He goes to the table and opens the drawer, in which he had put aside LU T'AI-HAI's revolver awhile ago, takes it out with slightly trembling hands and moves slowly into the study on the right side.*

Outside there is a hubbub—with crying, shouting and yelling all in a discordant chorus. LU re-enters through the central door like a plaster figure, her face looking more stupefied. An old servant follows her with a flashlight in hand. She posts herself in the centre of the stage without uttering a word.

THE OLD SERVANT. (*Consolingly*) Old lady, please don't be dumbfounded! That won't do. You must cry, and cry to your heart's content.

LU. (*Spiritlessly*) I cannot cry!

THE OLD SERVANT. That's the will of Heaven, and it can't be helped. But you must cry.

LU. No, I want to clam myself a little. (*Stands in stupefaction.*) *The central door is opened. CHOU FAN-YI is seen in the midst of many servants, not knowing whether she is crying or laughing. One of the servants addresses her from the outside.*

THE SERVANT. Please look no more, Mistress, but go in.

CHOU FAN-YI. (*Being jostled to the central door, she leans her back against it and laughs weirdly*) Ch'ung-êrh, why do you hang your mouth agape like that? Why do you appear to be laughing at me? Ch'ung-êrh, you silly child.

CHOU P'U-YUAN. (*Reappears at the central door with tears trailing down his face*) Come in, Fan-yi! My hands have grown numb. You had better look no more either.

THE OLD SERVANT. Please come in, Mistress. They are already burnt black by the electric current and beyond all help.

CHOU FAN-YI. (*Enters and cries with dry eyes*) Ch'ung-êrh, my good child. You were alive and sound only a moment ago. How could you have died? And how could you have died so horribly? (*Stands in stupefaction.*)

CHOU P'U-YUAN. (*Having entered already*) You must clam yourself a little. (*Dries his tears.*)

CHOU FAN-YI. (*Laughs hysterically*) Ch'ung-êrh, you deserve your death, you deserve your death! You deserve your death, since you have such a mother!

The noise of LU TA-HAI engaged in a scuffle with the servants outside is heard.

CHOU P'U-YUAN. Who are they? Who are fighting at such a time? (*The old servant goes out to enquire, and in an instant another servant enters*) What's happening outside?

THE SERVANT. That fellow Lu Ta-hai who came here this morning has come again and is fighting us.

CHOU P'U-YUAN. Tell him to come in.

THE SERVANT. But Master, he has beaten several of us black and blue and then ran away through the small door.

CHOU P'U-YUAN. Ran away?

THE SERVANT. Yes, master.

CHOU P'U-YUAN. (*Pauses, then suddenly*) Chase him. Chase him for me.

THE SERVANT. Yes, Master. (*All the servants depart in compliance with the order, leaving only CHOU P'U-YUAN, LU and CHOU FAN-YI in the room.*)

CHOU P'U-YUAN. (*Sadly*) I have lost one son and I cannot afford to lose another.

LU. (*Sighs and sinks into the sofa*) Let them all be lost! It is better for him to be gone. I know that child. He hates you, I know, and he won't come back to see you.

CHOU P'U-YUAN. (*Quietly, and he himself feels strange to be so*) The young ones have gone ahead of us, and now there remain only us old— (*Suddenly*) Where is P'ing-êrh? where is the elder young-master? (*Calls*) P'ing-êrh, P'ing-êrh (*Hearing no answer*) Attendants! Attendants! (*Still hearing no answer*) Go and see for me, where is my elder son?

The noise of a shot is heard from the study. Dead silence in the room.

CHOU FAN-YI. (*Suddenly*) Oh! (*Runs out into the study; CHOU P'U-YUAN stands motionless. In an instant CHOU FAN-YI runs in again, shouting hysterically*) He . . . he

CHOU P'U-YUAN. Heaven!

CHOU P'U-YUAN and CHOU FAN-YI run out together into the study. LU rises and stumbles toward the study for a few steps until she

reaches the centre of the stage, where she gradually collapses on her knees like the old woman in the Prologue before the fall of the curtain.

The stage gradually grows dark. As in the Prologue, the sound of the chorus of Bach's High Mass in B Minor, "Blessed be he that cometh in the Name of the Lord," is heard. It begins faintly as if from a distance, and reaches its crescendo when the stage becomes completely dark, as at the end of the Prologue.

—The Curtain—

The curtain rises again immediately; the Epilogue is in order.

THE EPILOGUE

When the curtain rises, the stage is all dark; only the sounds of the huge organ, the chorus of the Messiah in the distant church, and the voices of the sister and brother in the Prologue are heard.

VOICE OF THE SISTER. *(At a low pitch)* No, you ask her. You ask her.

The stage grows bright, showing the same scene as that in the Prologue. The time is again shifted forward to the afternoon of the thirtieth of the Twelfth Moon, ten years later. The old woman (that is LU) is still bent low, with the sister and brother beside her.

THE SISTER. You ask her, she knows.

THE BROTHER. No, I won't. I am afraid. You—you go. *(Pushes his sister; the chorus outside stops.)*

SISTER B *enters from the central door, is greatly astonished to find the old woman fallen on the floor, and quickly helps her to get up.*

SISTER B. *(Supporting her)* Get up, Mrs. Lu, get up! *(Supports her to a seat by the fireplace on the right side and quickly moves to the sister and the brother in a consoling way)* Little brother, you are not scared, eh? Please go quickly. Your Ma is waiting for you outside. Now little, sister, go with your brother.

THE SISTER. Thank you, Sister. *(Puts her brother's top-coat on him.)*

SISTER B. It's very cold outside. You must both put on your top-coats.

THE SISTER. Yes, goodbye.

SISTER B. Goodbye. *(The sister leads her brother out through*

the central door. SISTER B hurriedly goes to the fireplace to look after the old woman. SISTER A enters from the dining-room on the left) Hush! (*Points at LU*) She has come out.

SISTER A. (*In a low voice*) Mr. Chou is coming downstairs in a minute to see her. Please look after her, I am going.

SISTER B. All right. Wait a minute. (*Takes an umbrella from the corner of the wall*) I am afraid it's going to snow. You may as well take this umbrella.

SISTER A. (*Kindly*) Thank you. (*Takes the umbrella and goes out through the central door. The old man appears at the door at the left and stands there, looking.*)

SISTER B. (*Points at LU; to the old man*) She is here!

THE OLD MAN. Ah! (*A suspense. To sister B concernedly*) How is she now?

SISTER B. (*Sighs lightly*) Still as usual.

THE OLD MAN. How is her appetite?

SISTER B. Not so good.

THE OLD MAN. (*Points at his own head*) How about her—?

SISTER B. (*Shakes her head*) No, she still can't recognize people. (*A brief suspense.*) Have you seen your wife upstairs?

THE OLD MAN. (*Dully*) Yes.

SISTER B. (*Encouragingly*) She is pretty well these days.

THE OLD MAN. Yes. (*Points at LU*) Has there been anyone coming to see her.

SISTER B. Do you mean her son?

THE OLD MAN. Yes, a certain man by the name of Lu Ta-hai.

SISTER B. (*Sympathetically*) No. The pity of it. She is always thinking of her son, and on every festival she will look out of the window for him all evening.

THE OLD MAN. (*Sighs; in despair and to himself*) I am afraid—I am afraid he is dead.

SISTER B. (*Hopefully*) Not likely.

THE OLD MAN. (*Shakes his head*) I've been looking for him for ten years and there is not even a sign of him.

SISTER B. Ugh! I think she'll surely come back to her senses when her son comes back.

THE OLD MAN. (*Goes to the fireplace and calls in a low voice*) Shih-p'ing! (*The old woman turns her head and dull-eyed looks at him as if she doesn't know him. Then she rises without the slightest expression on her face, and goes to the window. The old man still calls in a low voice*) Shih-p'ing!

Shih—

SISTER B. (*Waving her hand at the old man, in a low voice*)
Let her go. Please don't call her.

In front of the window the old woman slowly draws aside the curtain, and looks out stupidly. The old man despairingly turns his head and looks at the flame in the fireplace. Suddenly there is heard the chirping and footfalls of children outside. The central door is pushed open; enter the sister and the brother.

THE SISTER. (*To her brother*) Is it here? Is it surely here?

THE BROTHER. (*In tears and nodding his head*) Yes, yes.

SISTER B. (*Being glad that they have come to break the silence*)
Little brother, why are you crying?

THE BROTHER. (*Sobs*) I have lost my gloves. It's snowing outside and I have lost my gloves, my new gloves.

SISTER B. Don't lift your voice, little brother, I'll find them for you.

THE SISTER. Brother, let's find them.

All three of them start to find the lost gloves in the left corner.

SISTER B. (*To the sister*) Have you found them?

THE SISTER. No.

THE BROTHER. (*Crawls to the rear of the sofa and then suddenly jumps out*) They're here, they're here! (*Waving the gloves in the air triumphantly*) Ma, they're here! (*Runs out.*)

SISTER B. (*Admiringly*) All right, you may go now.

THE SISTER. Thank you, Sister. (*Exits through the central door; SISTER B closes it.*)

A brief suspense.

THE OLD MAN. (*Lifts his head*) What? Is it snowing again outside?

SISTER B. (*Nods quietly*) Yes.

The old man again casts a glance at the old woman in front of the window, then turns to sit in the armchair by the fireplace and gazes into the fire. Meanwhile SISTER B seats herself on the long sofa in the left corner and picks up the Holy Bible to read.

The stage grows dark.

—Curtain—

(*From T'ien Hsia Monthly*)

空白页

「子見南子」的一場風波

「子見南子」一劇，係林語堂氏根據論語『子見南子，子路不說。夫子失之言：子所否者，天賦之！天賦之！』而編成的，劇本的大意是描寫當時孔子會見南子時的情形。中心思想是在表明「禮教與藝術之衝突在藝術中認取人生真義」，劇中一切背景及人物都有歷史根據。

本劇原文載奔流一卷六號，曾在孔子原籍山東省省立第二師範學校上演，當時引起軒然大波。孔氏後裔認為侮辱，羣起反對，呈請教部澈查，後經教部詳細調查，確認此劇思想純正，並無絲毫侮辱。隨得公開上演，後來各地劇團也都上演此劇。

本劇譯文是作者應美國哥倫比亞大學之請而譯成英文，在該地表演，當此劇在山東上演時，孔氏族人曾呈文向教部控告云：『……學生抹作孔子比末脚色；女教員裝成南子，冶豔用神；其扮子路者具有綠林氣概，而南子所唱歌詞則詩鄙風柔中篇也。醜態百出，褻瀆備至，雖萬劇中之「大鐮紅」「小寡婦上墳」亦不是過……』。而省立二師的答辯是：『……至謂本校演「子見南子」一劇，事誠有之，查「子見南子」見於論語，論語者七十子後學者所記，君倫奉為聖經，歷代未加刪節，述者無罪，演者被控，無乃太冤乎？且原劇見北新書局奔流月刊第一卷第六號，係林語堂所編，流播甚廣，人所共見。本校所以排演此劇者，在使觀衆明瞭禮教與藝術之衝突，在藝術中認取人生真義。演時務求逼真，扮孔子者衣深衣，冠冕旒，貌極莊嚴。扮南子者古裝秀雅，舉止大方，扮子路者雄冠劍佩，頗有好勇之致，原呈一切真是信口胡云，若夫所唱歌詞均係「三百篇」舊文，亦原劇本所有。如謂臺中一篇有潛聖明，則各本詩經存而不廢，能受於庭下，吟於堂上，獨不得高歌於大庭廣衆之中乎？原呈以「桑中」之篇比之於「小寡婦上墳」及「大鐮紅」是否孔氏庭訓之真義，異姓不得而知也……』。

陳子展先生讀本劇的感想是：『「行年五十六到今日纔明白藝術與認識人生。是的，這纔是真正的詩，真正的禮，真正的樂，別種的雅頌及別種的揖讓都是無謂的，虛飾的」，這是謹守周公之禮的孔子會見了南子，看了她和幾個歌女的「桑中」的樂舞而發的贊聲。所謂禮教也者似已暫時在藝術空氣之中被屈服了。如果我們承認詩經真正經過孔子之手的刪定，那末，他不刪去鄉衛鄆郟諸國的許多詩——屬於所謂淫褻的詩，似乎也可以說他認識了真正的詩。同時似乎還可以說他明白了藝術，認識了人生……』

「我想，飲食男女，就是人生的真義，就是生命之河的活源，得着這活源，滾滾不絕的灌溉，然後能暢茂向榮，男女關係是人之至情，至情動，然後發為詩歌，有詩歌然後有文學」；這是南子對着孔子說的。原來「男女有別，這是三代相傳，周公制定的」，孔子既是謹守「周公」之禮，常常夢見周公的，但是他到衛國偏要去拜見衛靈公夫人南子；刪詩的時候又要存留「桑中」之會，「城隅」之盟，「蔓草」之樂，一類淫奔野會的詩，孔子何嘗一點也不懂得「飲食男女，就是人生的真義」？祇因為周公的禮和南子的禮根本不同，他相信周公太過了，他就不能相信南子，他感河周公主義和南子主義根本不能相交，結果他就不能不離開衛國，離開他所謂當今之賢君衛靈公及其賢臣公子渠牟林國慶足，蘧伯玉、史魃一班人了。』

編者鑒於近來「尊孔」之風大盛，故特意把本劇選入，目的使讀者明白「尊孔」乃在尊重孔子的人格，且不可把孔子的「人性」丟開，當做偶像一樣來崇拜，不要忘記孔子是「人」，而不是「神」，不然我們的「尊孔」與以前年間張宗昌之流的「尊孔」有什麼分別呢？林語堂氏在「思孔子」一文中曾說過下列的話：「當今世人只認孔子做聖人，不讓孔子做人，不許以有人之常情，然我思孔子豈板板六十四寒酸道學若汝輩哉！儒家以近情自許，獨不許孔子近情，是豈所以崇孔及所以認識孔子人格之道哉！夫孔子一多情人也。有笑，有怒，有喜，有憎，好樂，好歌，甚至好哭，皆是一位活靈活現之人的表記，其好樂至三月不知肉味且不說，聽人家唱得好，必要「再來一次」，Encore，然後同他一齊唱，（使人歌，善則使復之，然後和之，）此非一活靈活現近情之人而何？且吾嘗謂孔子好哭頗似虛梭，慟哭顏回且不說，程弓曰：「孔子之術，過舊館人之喪，入而哭之哀，出使子貢脫驂而搏之曰：『子鄉者入而哭之，遇於一哀而出涕，予惡夫涕之無從也。』孔子入弔，本不想哭，及遇一哀，竟而出涕，至自愧出涕之無端，嗚呼，非至情者能如此乎？及其憎也，亦不客氣，孺悲欲見孔子，既托病不見，復不待人走遠，稍留情面，竟爾取瑟而歌，使之聞之，令人難堪，其意若曰：「我非真病，我不高興見你吧了。」故孔子者，能喜能怒，能樂之大丈夫，安在而見得其為喜怒不形於色之偽君子乎？惟其能喜能怒能哀能樂，故七情備，惟其七情備，故足為萬世師長，否則立一不喜不怒不哀不樂之聖人為師長，吾輩將何以學之，不能學之，亦何貴乎師長之有無乎？」

CONFUCIUS SAW NANCY

子 見 南 子

獨 幕 悲 喜 劇

A One-act Tragicomedy

By LIN YUTANG (林語堂著)

Translated by the Author (作者自譯)

Dramatis Personae

人 物

CONFUCIUS (孔子), well-known philosopher of Lu 魯之哲人

JUPOYU (蘧伯玉), former premier of Wei 前衛國首相

TSELU (子路) disciple of Confucius 孔丘門人

MICIUS (彌子瑕), court favourite of the King and Queen
and brother-in-law of Tselu
衛靈公及南子嬖臣, 子路的僚婿

YUNG (雍渠), eunuch attendant on the Queen (宦者)

NANCIA (南子), Queen of Wei (衛靈公夫人)

Four dancing girls 歌女四人

Time: 497 B.C. (魯定公十四年)

Place: In the Kingdom of Wei (衛國)

(In the parlour of the King of Wei, richly but austere furnished with chairs and tea-tables, placed against the walls on both sides of the room. Back of the sets of tables and chairs are latticed windows with curtains. In the middle of the wall is a door, with bead curtains. The scene opens with two old persons sipping tea and engaged in talking, seated on the left side of the room. One of these gentlemen looks over fifty years old, with a high forehead, a pair of big, penetrating eyes, kindly, good-humored lips and a respectable beard. Sitting opposite him across the tea-table is a white-haired old gentleman, looking considerably older, gentle in appearance, smaller in stature, but out of his grey eyes shines a forceful, energetic personality, still youthful in spirit. This impression is strengthened by the up-

ward curve of his lips, which wear the habitual smile of an old, confounded cynic. The former is Confucius, while the latter is Japoyu, Confucius' old friend and former premier of Wei. Although the room looks warm and cozy, it seems from the rather constrained attitude of the two gentlemen that an air of rigidity and heaviness hangs over the place. Confucius sits erect and attentive, with an air of suspension, as if anticipating a dreadful calamity or a fateful interview, while the attitude of Japoyu is considerably easier and more natural. Behind the cold exterior of Confucius' appearance, however, one discerns in him a man of great wisdom, natural dignity, **but** above all, an exceptionally keen practical sense.)

JUPOYU. (*Feeling annoyed by waiting*) Oh, well... why doesn't Tselu turn up yet?

CONFUCIUS. Oh, Tselu? He is always late. That's just like him. But he always apologizes, too. He's a good fellow. Don't blame him.

JUPOYU. I am not blaming him. (*Turning to the serious topic*) I believe the affair will turn out a success. You see, with your great prestige and Tselu pulling the wires through Micius, you cannot but succeed.

CONFUCIUS. (*very formally*) Thank you. Of course my ambition and sole purpose is just to put my political doctrines into practice. The other arrangements do not concern me....

JUPOYU. (*as if not hearing him*) I understand your salary will be forty thousand—no, sixty thousand bushels of rice, the same as you received in your country.

CONFUCIUS. (*very polished*) Oh, that's all right. You see the salary is—eh—what d'you call a certain indication of courtesy and respect—merely. Nevertheless, (*quizzically showing his practical turn of mind*) it will do. It's always all right with me.

JUPOYU. (*Warmly responding*) Of course, of course. But one has to live on something. Remember what you said once. We can't go without food like a dried gourd that you hang on the wall. (*CONFUCIUS steals a glance at him, and they both laugh.*) You see I like plain speaking. And besides (*sipping his tea*)—eh, I've been thinking. Here's a wonderful chance. We have at present in this country as good a group of scholars as you could gather together anywhere, although I do say it of my own country. You see, there's

Minister Kung, an excellent scholar, always so courteous and so broad-minded, and there's Shihyu, and there are Tselu and Tsekung both counted among your best disciples. The king himself is a nice fellow and the country is rich. You could do wonders here.

CONFUCIUS. That's exactly it. When a gentleman receives the pay of a country, he always wants to accomplish something worthwhile. Before King Wen and King Wu founded the present great dynasty, they started out with only a very small city, not bigger than thirty square miles and now . . .

JUPOYU. (*not heeding him*) But the most important person is the Queen, Her Royal Highness, Nancia. But you see we have got Micius (*showing contempt*) on our side. His wife and Tselu's wife are sisters. You know women always rule the world, don't they?—Here comes Tselu! (*Enters TSELU, looking over forty years old, his face quite flushed and panting, rushing in almost backwards.*)

TSELU. Damn the gate-keeper! He pretended not to know me, and would not let me in, until I put my hand on my sword . . . Then he apologized. (*Then, remembering himself, he made a low bow to the old gentleman.*) I am awfully sorry. Did I keep you waiting very long?

JUPOYU. Oh, no!

CONFUCIUS. (*simultaneously, but absent-mindedly*) Oh, fairly. (*TSELU somewhat offended, looked straight at CONFUCIUS. CONFUCIUS correcting himself*) No, not so very long.

TSELU. Micius has agreed to come here to meet us. He will be here in a minute. He says he has something to speak to you about. (*Confucius pulls a long face, somewhat embarrassed.*) Yes, I think he has arranged everything already. But he has something to tell you. The salary is sixty thousand bushels of rice, the same as what you received in Lu.

CONFUCIUS. (*still more embarrassed*) Now, now, Tselu. You should always think before you talk. A gentleman does not always have to secure an official job. Of course it was foolish of Poyi and Shuchi to insist on leaving politics, but one does not have to insist on becoming an official. You see it is my cardinal principle of conduct, never to insist on anything. All depends on the courtesy and respect you receive. It's always all right with me, either way.

TSELU. I am sorry. I didn't mean it. Of course all depends on

the courtesy and respect a gentleman receives. But sixty thousand bushels—that's plenty of respect. I have been thinking, Master, you must stay in Wei. As to securing official jobs, why not? You said once that a good scholar must be an official. If he does not become an official, what's the use of all his scholarship? Why, what will become of the king, if there are no officials? If there are no officials, there will be no king, and what will become of your whole theory of benevolent monarchy? And if the scholars should not become officials, who else should? So my way of looking at it is, to become an official is the divine duty of a gentleman.

JUPOYU. Now, now Tselu, you are running loose with your tongue again.

CONFUCIUS. Not at all. On the other hand, I think his views extremely interesting. I have been thinking of this question, too. And I was hesitating whether I should go or stay. He is convincing me. Perhaps I should stay. But it's not all so simple to hold on to an official job, as you might think in your simple-hearted way, Tselu.

JUPOYU. (*records an understanding smile*) Oh yes, Tselu, you still could learn a lot from your master.

CONFUCIUS. (*suddenly becoming familiar*) How old is the Queen, I mean Her Royal Highness Nancia?

TSELU. About thirty, I think. Why?

CONFUCIUS. Hm! (*Knitting his brow*) I hear the King always listens to her. Is it true?

TSELU. It's absolutely and entirely true.

CONFUCIUS. Then, she is more powerful than the King himself?

TSELU. Certainly.

CONFUCIUS. Is she—I mean, Her Royal Highness, very talkative?

TSELU. (*smiling*) That's an interesting question. Well, they say she is very talkative. What has that to do with our business?

CONFUCIUS. (*smiling understandingly*) Does she really see the men officials herself? (*Tselu's face becomes serious. JUPOYU breaks out into a laughter, which embarrasses TSELU still more. CONFUCIUS tries to look unperturbed.*)

JUPOYU. (*smiling gently, and speaking as if to himself*) Well, well, the one who believes in the divine duty of becoming an official does not understand how to be an official. And the one who does not insist on becoming an official understands

the art of being an official. Oh, well, this is a funny world.
(CONFUCIUS *throws a side glance at JUPOYU. Both understand one another.*)

CONFUCIUS. Tselu, come here. I want to talk to you. You said that the King obeys the Queen in everything?

TSELU. Everything.

CONFUCIUS. And she is more powerful than the King himself?

TSELU. Decidedly.

CONFUCIUS. Then the whole government of the Kingdom is in the hands of Nancia—(*correcting himself*)—I mean of Her Royal Highness?

TSELU. Yes. Why even your own appointment is arranged with her, and decided by her, through Micius. Of course she is only the power behind the throne, the Kingdom is governed by the King.

CONFUCIUS. (*contemptuously, but affectionately*) Oh, you green-horn of a politician! (*Rising leisurely and thoughtfully, pacing the room. He loses his constrained attitude and becomes familiar while he hums.*)

dum—di—dum—di dum—di dum
di di dum—di dum—di dum

(*Then as if a thought had flashed through his mind and turning directly to TSELU.*) It's one thing to talk about the divine duty of becoming an official. It is quite another thing to hang on to it. (*Resuming his humming.*)

dum—di dum—didum—di dum
di di dum—di dum—di dum

(*Singing an old proverb*)

Beware of a woman's tongue,
Sooner of later you'll get stung.
Beware of a woman's pleasure,
Capricious as a merchant's measure.

TSELU. Could you tell me, Master, what's the meaning of the song you are singing?

(*Enters MICIUS silently, visible to JUPOYU and TSELU, but unobserved by CONFUCIUS.*)

CONFUCIUS. Why, beware of a woman! (*Looking at JUPOYU*) Isn't it so, Jupoyu? Beware of a woman's tongue, sooner or later you'll get stung. Woman's tongue and stung rhyme perfectly, you see? (*JUPOYU. "Ah-hem!" gesturing to him to stop on account of MICIUS, and TSELU eyes CONFUCIUS, but CONFUCIUS does not realize his presence.*) And beware of a woman's pleasure... (*then suddenly observing MICIUS who*

has come quite close to him, but continuing unperturbed
Unchangeable like the King's measure.

Dum—di dum—di dum—di dum

(Both JUPOYU and TSELU cannot help laughing. CONFUCIUS slowly stops as if nothing has happened.)

MICIUS. *(smiling suavely)* Mr. Kung, you seem to be in a very gay mood to-day. Ha, Ha! I am extremely sorry to be late. I must beg your pardon.

CONFUCIUS. Oh, it's a great pleasure to see you. You are sacrificing your valuable time.

(MICIUS pulls TSELU aside, talking in whispers. CONFUCIUS and JUPOYU try to talk, but always stealing an uneasy glance in MICIUS' direction. Both MICIUS and TSELU look rather concerned. Having finished their short conversation, they turn toward CONFUCIUS, TSELU going first, with an embarrassed air.)

MICIUS. *(full of courteous smiles)* It is great honour for our country to receive the visit of such a distinguished scholar as yourself. Both the King and Queen feel highly honoured by your visit. The Queen—I mean the King—has long heard of your great reputation and your beautiful moral and political theories and is very desirous of obtaining your personal assistance in carrying them out in this country. She—I mean He—wishes to give you the rank of a minister.

CONFUCIUS. *(a wave of instinctive delight pausing over his face, which is quickly covered by a decorous appearance)* A gentleman always obeys a King's orders.

MICIUS. Everything has been settled already by the Queen. Only I wish to be perfectly frank with you. The customs of this country have fallen very low, and I am afraid they will not measure up to your high standards. You know the kind of folk-songs they sing and the way young men and girls gather along the river bank in the evenings. Perfectly disgraceful. They have departed very far from the rules of the Duke of Chou, I am afraid. I hope you will exercise some patience with us.

CONFUCIUS. *(suddenly courageous, magnanimously)* Oh, modern customs are bad in every country nowadays. You do not have to worry about that. Besides you have such an enlightened ruler and such able ministers like yourself and Jujoyu. *(JUPOYU and MICIUS make a show of humility, by rising and bowing while they look at each other with*

jealousy.) Why, I think you have the most distinguished group in the government of this country! (*laughs courtously.*)

MICIUS. (*more at ease*) Then I hope you can perhaps comply with the Queen's request? (*All three persons' eyes are focussed upon CONFUCIUS.*)

CONFUCIUS. (*magnanimously, with a smile*) Of course I am always at her service.

MICIUS. (*exchanging a glance with TSELU*) Eh—eh—(*abruptly looking straight at CONFUCIUS*) the Queen wishes very much to have a personal interview with you. (*MICIUS and TSELU look serious, JUPOYU on the other hand, tries vainly to conceal a hearty smile.*)

CONFUCIUS. (*coolly*) Oh, is that it? I thought there was something more scandalous than that. Why, I should feel it a great honour to have a personal interview with Her Royal Highness Nancia. (*Smiling after a light pause*) She really takes such a deep interest in the affairs of her people.

(*JUPOYU conceals a smile, while TSELU remains silent for a long while, almost transfixed. MICIUS' silence adds to the temporary awkwardness of the moment.*)

CONFUCIUS. (*trying to save the situation by assuming a casual, natural air*) TSELU! Ha, ha! What's the matter with you? Surprised I should accept the invitation of the Queen?

(*TSELU raises his head, but remains silent, and again bends his head.*)

CONFUCIUS. (*rising from his seat, speaking very decorously; TSELU also rises.*) TSELU! Don't be a crank. When a gentleman enters a country, he always tries to learn how its government is run. I have always said so. Now if you don't find it out from the women, how else are you going to find it out? A gentleman must act according to the requirements of the situation. Don't be impractical. It has never been my principle to stick to a principle. You must learn more wisdom.

(*TSELU does not reply, but casts a glance at Micus, makes a sigh, shakes his head and returns to his seat in silence.*)

MICIUS. (*smilingly*) I am awfully glad to hear that you see no objection to meeting the Queen. I am going in directly to tell her. Only I wish to warn you. You have probably heard that Her Royal Highness Nancia is a woman of many new

ideas. She does not believe, for instance, in the separation of men and women in public. So I hope you will overlook many of the things she does or says which may not exactly conform to your moral rules and tenets. You know, she is very fond of holding conversations with men. She is a brilliant conversationalist and a clever dialectician, extremely unconventional in her ideas and manners. *(Pause)* So I may ask her to come out now?

CONFUCIUS. *(slightly intimidated and hesitating)* It's always all right with me. It's my principle never to insist on anything. *(aside)* I'll be damned! *(Tselu tries twice to open the conversation but ends by drinking tea.)* *(Micius disappears through the middle door. Tselu and Confucius stare at each other.)*

CONFUCIUS. Tselu! Have you got a lockjaw? Or under a spell? Tselu. Have you heard, Master, that there is certain notoriety connected with the court life of this country?

CONFUCIUS. No, not to my knowledge.

Tselu. Then you are going to hear about it pretty soon. Or you are going to see it for yourself. *(A slight pause)* Master!

CONFUCIUS. Well?

Tselu. Nancia, well, Her Royal Highness, has said something which Micius did not tell you.

CONFUCIUS. What is it?

Tselu. Micius thought that in any case you would see her, so he did not think it necessary to tell you. Nancia admires—ch—adores your scholarship very much.

CONFUCIUS. *(taken aghast.)* She—adores—me?

Tselu. Yes, because she heard all about you from Kungtse Jumou. At first, she thought she was going to write you a letter.

CONFUCIUS. She—writes a letter—to me?

Tselu. *(with increasing sureness, thinking he is murdering his master)* Yes, to invite you to tea.

CONFUCIUS. Invite—me—to tea?

Tselu. *(Going at a faster pace)* And she has a great scheme *(intimidating tone)* so I understand from Micius, for forming a literary club for the study of the six classical arts in her home. She is going to invite Kungtse Jumou, Micius, Wang-linkuo, Chingchu and the ladies of the court to discuss

literature, poetry, music and painting. (*CONFUCIUS thoroughly nonplussed, but Tselu joyously continues.*) Well, Micius told her that he would convey the idea, so the letter was not written after all. Besides, she says that all scholars who visit her country and wish to remain as guests of the court must see her about it. Although of course she admires your scholarship, nothing is really settled until she sees you personally. I believe there is no question about the sixty thousand bushels, but that is what she says. You see Micius wanted to tell you, but could never bring himself to do so. (*It is Confucius' turn to be silent and thoughtful.*) Now I think this is a very delicate situation. She is very young and beautiful. . . . (*Tselu stops to look at Confucius, the former rather sad and downhearted and the latter not knowing what to reply.*)

CONFUCIUS. (*suddenly with a noble courage striking his breast*) Tselu! If I have a dishonourable thought, may Heaven strike me; May Heaven strike me!

ЖУПОУ. Tselu! You are too impractical. You don't know the world yet. I lived to fifty years to realize the mistakes of the previous forty-nine, and have lived to sixty to see the utter nonsense of many things of this life. What's the harm in an interview?

TSELU. (*unconvinced*) No, you don't understand me, I am afraid. You know the Queen is not just an ordinary female. She is highly unconventional, pampered, capricious, and very liberal with her charms. Now it will be the Master's duty to correct her manners, if he stays, but you must remember she is a queen, and a powerful queen at that. All I can see is that if the Master ever attempt to correct her manners, he will be courting the displeasure of a highly temperamental queen, that is all.

CONFUCIUS. (*slightly impetuous*) Well, if I displease her, am I not free to quit any time?

TSELU. I understand, of course. You never insist on anything, including holding jobs. You can stay or leave any time you like. But don't you see the impossibility of your getting along with such a—licentious queen? So why see her at all? (*After a pause*) Now that it is all settled, there is no use talking about it. If she insists on seeing you, what can you do? Besides, I know she is going to invite you to a ride

in her grand carriage. She loves to ride through the streets, side by side with the King, pandering her charms, as it were, or to take strolls with Micius to the riverside and listen to the people singing their folksong. Are you going to enjoy the ride with her?

CONFUCIUS. (*determinedly*) I can take care of myself, can't I? (*Then more gently, resigned*) So be it! What must come, will come! (*Juoyu rises and approaches Tselu.*)

JUOYU. Well, let us go! I think the Queen wishes to see Confucius only. (*Imitating Confucius, Juoyu sidles gently out of the room, with his hands behind his back, singing.*)

Dum—di dum—di dum—di dum

✓ Beware of a woman's tongue,
Sooner or later you'll get stung,
Beware of a woman's pleasure,
Capricious as a merchant's measure.

(*CONFUCIUS remains seated alone, going through some strenuous mental process. After a short silence, jingling sounds of jade are heard from behind the stage, followed by female voices of laughter, by no means unattractive, but withal quiet and refined. Confucius becomes fidgety and pulls his dress, adjusts his hat carefully—He hears the sound and again adjusts his girdle and his beard. The bead curtain moves, and the eunuch appears.*)

EUNUCH. (*entering and standing in position, announces*) Her Royal Highness Nancia!

(*Nancia appears behind the bead screen and takes her seat there. Through the screen one can see a white, small face, with jet-black hair done in a high coiffure, with curls coming in front of the ears, which bear long ear-rings. She is dressed in beautiful blue satin. Confucius hurries forward to kneel before her, and makes three kotos on the ground. In the meanwhile Micius has come out and stands at the right of the door. Nancia moves about a little in her seat, so that one can hear the jingling of her jade bracelets.*)

NANCIA. (*graciously*) Be seated, Confucius. Take your seat. (*Confucius rises from the ground and retreats slowly backwards towards a seat on the left, sitting on the edge of the chair in a perfect courtier's manner.*) It gives me the greatest pleasure to see you, Confucius.

CONFUCIUS. (*slightly rising from his seat*) It gives me great honour, Your Royal Highness.

NANCIA. Oh, I have heard so much about you, Confucius, and

have long wished to have the pleasure of meeting you, Confucius. Isn't it lucky for us and for our people that you have chosen to honour us with your visit? May I present you with a pair of white jade, as a token of our high respect. *(She gives the pieces of jade to the servant, who hands them to Confucius.)*

(Confucius hurrying forward to receive the royal gift, curtsying three times in front of the queen. After receiving the gift, he returns to his seat.)

NANCIA. Are you fond of jade, Confucius?

CONFUCIUS. Of course I am, Your Royal Highness.

NANCIA. I am very fond of it, too. What kind of jade do you like best, white jade, or green jade, like emerald or turquoise, for instance.

CONFUCIUS. *(hopelessly seeking for an answer)* I like white jade.

NANCIA. I am more fond of green jade. You can make earrings, finger rings, brooches or bracelets with it. It has such a delightful cool lustre.

CONFUCIUS. Yes! Yes! The white jade has its beauty and the green jade has its beauty, too. Both are beautiful. In fact, all kinds of jade are beautiful and lovely.

NANCIA. And may I ask why?

CONFUCIUS. You see jade has the five virtues of a gentleman. Its soft lustre typifies Benevolence. Its clearness typifies Wisdom. Its hardness typifies Courage. Its cleanliness typifies Courtesy. And its unyielding nature typifies Righteousness. Because of these five virtues, jade is lovely.

NANCIA. *(amused)* Hm . . . m! *(After a pause, turning to Micius)* Micy, what is your opinion of jade?

MICIUS. *(irivolously)* Why, I love it because when you wear it, it makes such delightful jingling sounds.

NANCIA. Pfu! Behave yourself in front of the Great Master *(But while saying this, she purposely moves about in her seat, creating a very musical jingle, which rather corroborates Micius' argument.)*

MICIUS. *(hearing the sound)* Isn't it true? My theory is correct. *(Nancia laughs, which is caught successively by Micius, the servant, and even by Confucius.)*

NANCIA. *(to Confucius)* Do you see some beautiful purple marks on that piece of jade? There is a curious mark on

it, like some paleographic (*pronouncing this word rather clearly and sententiously*) script. . . . (Confucius tries to turn the jade around and look for the mark, but fails foolishly.) . . . No, turn the other side, . . . at one end of it . . . don't you see? (Confucius still hopelessly turns it about; Micius rushes forward to help him, but does not succeed, either.) . . . Now, on the other side. (*losing her patience, she commands the eunuch.*) . . . Pull the curtain aside! (Confucius and Micius both turn around, and Confucius looks lost in consternation, and Nancia leaves her seat and comes forward towards Confucius, who at once rises from his seat.) . . . Give it to me . . . (*stretching her hand to Confucius, but the latter passes it to the eunuch, who then hands it to her.*) . . . Don't you see here is clearly a mark, resembling the ancient character for "hand"? (*She bends very closely to Confucius, in fact too closely to be comfortable for him, showing it to him, while Micius and the eunuch also stand close by to look.*) . . . There you see how clear the curving lines are . . . Isn't it lovely? . . . And this one looks like the character for "extend." Isn't it curious? . . . (*receding a little, and addressing Confucius*) This is the most precious pair I have, and that is why I am giving it to you to show my great admiration . . . (*She seems to have finished talking. Micius and the eunuch retire, while Nancia walks backwards towards her seat, but first hands the jade back directly to Confucius. Confucius hesitates whether to receive it from her or not, and yet feels forced to stretch his hand gingerly. Nancia drops the jade, but Confucius fails to catch it, and the jade falls with a jangle on the ground, Nancia is frightened.*) Oo . . . la! la! *Her face flushed, she stamps her feet.*) What a pity! (*The eunuch rushes forward to pick up the broken jade. Nancia and Confucius look at each other, then Nancia smiles graciously.*) Well, never mind. It's a pity because it is the best piece I have. But tomorrow I will send another pair to you, will that do? (*She returns to her seat, and the eunuch attempts to let the curtain down again.*)

NANCIA. (to the eunuch) Don't let the curtain down! You know it is impossible to talk through a curtain. It is inconvenient both for the speaker and the hearer. (*A short silence.*)

NANCIA. (*breaking the silence like a good conversationalist*)
I understand you just came by way of the city of Pu, is that correct?

CONFUCIUS. Yes, Your Royal Highness.

NANCIA. I have been told there was a little incident while you were travelling in Kuang, is it true?

CONFUCIUS. It is true, the people there took me for Yanghu, so they mistook me for him.

NANCIA. Outrageous!

CONFUCIUS. Well, because I look like Yanghu, so they mistook me for him.

NANCIA. Which Yanghu? Is he the same one as the Yanghu of your country who sent you a nice ham?

CONFUCIUS. Yes, it is the same one. He did not give me ham, he gave me a leg of roast pork.

NANCIA. That's my mistake.

MICIUS. Anyway he is more courteous than Chihuantse of your country.

NANCIA. I understand you left your country because Chihuantse neglected to send you the roast pork which was your due as a minister—is it true? (*Confucius nods.*) Well, it has been rumoured over here that when Yanghu wanted to present you with the bacon,—or rather with the roast pork, he chose a time when he knew you would not be at home, and that when you paid a return call to thank him for the present, you also took care to leave your card when he was not at home. Is all this true?

CONFUCIUS. Yes, it is that same Yanghu.

NANCIA. You don't like Yanghu, do you?

CONFUCIUS. No, indeed I don't. That is why I did not wish to remain an official in the same court with him.

NANCIA. Then why did you pretend to make a return call on him?

CONFUCIUS. (*cornered*) Well . . . that was the only way out of it.

NANCIA. Hm! I should like to hear your opinion of our country.

CONFUCIUS. Very wonderful, very indeed. A fine people and a very rich producing country. If you could rule the country according to my moral principles, teach the people to respect their elders, and separate the men and women and teach them ceremony and music, why, in three years, you will

make Wei the strongest country in China.

NANCIA. Really?

CONFUCIUS. Of course. Ceremony, dance and music laid the basis of this great Chinese Empire.

NANCIA. The reason I ask about this point is this. I was thinking that, since we have such a wonderful teacher like you with us, we would avail ourselves of this unusual opportunity to improve ourselves intellectually. There I propose that we start a literary club for the study of the six classical arts, ceremony, music. . . .

MICIUS. Shooting, riding. . . .

NANCIA. Reading and mathematics. We shall have you lecture to us, and we can hold two meetings every month, on the first and fifteenth. We won't have any rules and regulations, but will just meet informally in a social way to discuss the various topics. As regards the refreshments, of course, that is my business, as hostess of the land. Last night, I asked the King about it, and he agreed heartily with my idea, and he has promised to attend our meetings too. Sometime we will have a change, with a programme of shooting, or music, or sword-fencing or riding—in other words, we will include all the six classical arts in our programme. I am sure Tselu will like the idea. What do you think about it?

CONFUCIUS. Excellent! Excellent!

NANCIA. (*in an impressive of feminine eloquence*) But there is one point on which I wish to consult you. If we found such a club, of course, I will take part, personally, and all the ladies must take part, too, in it, a sort of co-ed system. . . . Yes, co-education, gentlemen and ladies studying together. (*Micius interrupting with a "May I join?" but Nancia rattles off.*) Isn't the idea grand? First of all, it will save you time and trouble in teaching two separate classes, one for the gentlemen and the other for the ladies. Secondly, I shall be able to attend to the refreshments personally. I can assure you that you will have the coolest drinks, the choicest tea and the most delicious cakes. Thirdly, there will be more fun in such mutual discussion partaken in by the gentlemen and the ladies together. Fourthly, among the cardinal human relationship there is, to my mind, none more important than that between the sexes in social intercourse. Sometimes I cannot help laughing at the glum, awkward

manners of some of you scholars when in the presence of ladies. Why, they just don't know how to entertain the ladies. That is because they lack actual practice. If we study the proper manners of social intercourse together, we can get a great deal more actual practice, which is a thousand times better than learning them from the books. Fifthly, there are many passages in classics which deal with women, like folk-lore and social customs which only we women understand thoroughly. You often find them in songs and poetry and drama. I am quite sure that we women can repeat them better and interpret them more correctly than yourself, if you will excuse me for saying so. And in history too. There are so many important women figures in history. You men always interpret them from your egoistic male point of view, and never really understand woman psychology. Take, for instance, the famous case of the Queen of King Yu. She was a very virtuous queen. She was not frivolous. Her only fault was in being beautiful. Because she was virtuous and was not fond of giggling, the wicked King insisted on making her laugh. In order to make her laugh, King Yu acted like a school boy of thirteen—sent a rocket to raise false alarm for his vassals. His vassals came with their troops and saw they had been made fools of. Oh, of course, she laughed then. But, mind you, she was not laughing at the false alarm, but at the folly of your men. Well, who was to blame for this childish foolishness? And yet when men begin to write history, they universally make the Queen responsible for the loss of the kingdom, as if she, and not the King himself played with official war signals. Well, if you allow us women-folk to participate in the discussion we may be able occasionally to throw in interesting suggestions, you see.

MICIUS. And sixthly. . . .

NANCIA. And sixthly, of course we cannot compete with you in riding and shooting, but in painting and music, for instance, are we really totally useless? Besides, even in shooting matches and racing contests, you need us women to stand by as spectators. I am sure you all fence much better and race much swifter when there are women spectators standing by to clap hands for you. Isn't that so (Micius interrupts with a "Quite so, indeed!") Oh, I think this

theory about the seclusion of women, is all nonsense. What do you think, Confucius?

CONFUCIUS. (*dumbfoundtd by her flow of eloquence*) Aw . . . aw . . . aw . . .

NANCIA. Is my opinion correct in your judgement?

CONFUCIUS. (*forced to defend himself*) The seclusion of women is a time honoured tradition handed down from the Duke of Chou.

NANCIA. (*pressing for a straight reply*) Do you think this arrangement for a literary discussion club satisfactory?

CONFUCIUS. (*smiling*) I am sure the refreshments will be excellent.

NANCIA. And the dresses? Won't the general atmosphere be more refined?

CONFUCIUS. The men will dress more neatly too, I am sure.

NANCIA. (*musng*) Ah, Sometimes I think the meaning of life is really no deeper than our food and clothing. Take Yung here, for instance. His life work is to hand tea to me. Now do you think the meaning of life for him is the handing of tea, or does it rather lie in his enjoyment of food or clothing? If we have good food and beautiful clothing, won't life be really fuller and richer?

CONFUCIUS. (*impressed*) Your Royal Highness, I have never heard such words of wisdom from the lips of a woman. Only allow me to make a suggestion; instead of saying "food and clothing" you might say "wine, food and women."

NANCIA. Then you approve of the literary discussion club?

CONFUCIUS. (*with a newborn interest*). It will be my duty, as well as my pleasure, to obey a queen's orders. Only I wish to emphasize one thing. I understand Your Royal Highness will assume the responsibility and leadership of the Club, but since there will be both men and women among its members, I hope you will see to it that there will be no improprieties or misdemeanors among the men and women.

NANCIA. Now, now. (*Sarcastically*) Aren't you a delightful moralist? What improprieties or misdemeanors do you mean? Sexual? You have just said that the meaning of life lies in wine, food and women. Sometimes I think that without the element of sex, life would be a horrible, fatuous vacuum. Sex gave rise to all the beauties of life and nature, and our life could be made fuller and richer by a more

through enjoyment of the things that you just refer to as "wine, food and women." Sex gives rise to literature, our songs and our poetry. Why without sexual misdemeanors, there will be no novel, no drama, no love lyrics and no literature in the world at all! Have you ever heard the folk songs of our country?

CONFUCIUS. Why, I am making a collection of them.

NANCIA. Do you like them?

CONFUCIUS. Why, Wei poetry is the most marvellous poetry I know.

NANCIA. Do you know why Wei poetry is marvellous? Simply because we have the greatest variety and number of sexual improprieties in our country. Why, the best love songs are composed by young lovers who know nothing about your fine ceremonies and seclusion of women, but can sing beautifully about their rendezvous around the city corners, and their secret meetings in the mulberry fields. (*A pause*) Would you like to take a drive with me some evening? The weather is so beautiful just now, and I often drive along the River Chi late in the afternoon, and listen to the groups of lovers and sweethearts singing their songs on the banks, and come back by way of Tunchiu during sunset. Why, it is most beautiful.

CONFUCIUS. (*really not knowing what to say*) Well, good! What must come, will come.

NANCIA. I often drive with the King. These songs are so wonderful. (*Someone knocks at the door. The servant goes to open it and sees it is no other than Tselu. Tselu remains outside and asks to see CONFUCIUS. The servant returns.*)

EUNUCH. Tselu wishes to see you.

(*Confucius goes out through a side door. They talk to one another.*)

TSELU. Well, how about it?

CONFUCIUS. (*singing*) I am afraid there is no use.

TSELU. What is the matter?

CONFUCIUS. Nancia is a brilliant and beautiful talker. Confound her beauty! She has too many new ideas. She is going to start that literary discussion club you mentioned, and want it to be co-ed. I will do my best under the circumstances for a while, but sooner or later I must leave this

country.

(Tselu remains silent for a while. A sound of music rises in the room. Some one is humming a song, soft and sweet. Confucius returns to the room.)

NANCIA Is it Tselu? Why not ask him to come in?

CONFUCIUS Oh, he didn't want to intrude.

NANCIA. Ask him to come in.

(Confucius goes out to invite Tselu. Tselu enters and makes a bow to Nancia, who stops playing on her guitar.)

NANCIA. I was just asking Confucius to take a drive with me one of these evenings. Can you come along?

TSELU. (*politely*) It will be a great pleasure.

NANCIA. (*beginning again on her guitar*) Ah . . . in the dusk of twilight . . . when soft breezes are blowing . . . at the River Bridge . . . where lovers are wooing . . . singing their song . . . (*almost crooning*) how soothing . . . how beautiful!

The ripe plums are falling,—
One-third of them gone;
To my lovers I'm calling,
“ 'Tis time to be popping!”

The ripe plums are falling,—
Two-thirds are away;
“ 'Tis time to be popping!
To my lovers I say.

Down has dropt every plum;
In baskets they lie.
What, will no lover come?
“Now or never!” say I.

What a beautiful love lyric that is. (*Somewhat drunk with emotion.*) Sometimes I think life is so short and empty . . . so short and empty . . . so why not make it . . . short and merry? The poet says well—

The cricket is on the hearth,
The year is drawing to a close;
Why not make merry to-day
Ere fleeting Time forward flows?

(*Brilliantly*) Tselu!

TSELU. (*as if awakened from some meditation*) Your Royal

Highness!

NANCIA. I was suggesting to your master a while ago, that we should form a literary club, say, of six or seven young scholars and ladies of about equal age and similar tastes, to study the classical arts. We will have a meeting on the first and fifteenth days of each month. The King and myself will act as hosts, and we will ask Confucius to lecture to us. Besides the lectures, we will have feasts and entertainments and really have a good time. What do you think of the idea?

TSELU. (*delighted and yet undecided what to say*) Why . . . with Your Royal Highness and the King as patrons of art and literature and such a distinguished philosopher as Confucius as our teacher, why . . . it will be a most wonderful success, I am sure.

NANCIA. Good! The other day, I composed a tune, after the model of the folk songs. May I present it to-day in commemoration of my first meeting with our Great Philosopher?

(*Nancia looks toward Confucius. Confucius feels miserable, as if in a trance, while Tselu, rather overcome by her physical charms, nods his approval and looks pleased. Nancia reclines on her chair, in a rather suggestive and indecorous position of her body, her hand thrumming the guitar, while she hums the air, sweet and plaintive.*)

NANCIA. Ask the dancing girls to come in! (*The eunuch goes out. Nancia continues her humming, moving her legs rather showily about, Tselu feels uncomfortably delighted, while Confucius is lost in a trance, but suddenly wakes up and checks himself.*)

CONFUCIUS. (*softly to Tselu*) I must leave Wei! (*Nancia continues with her innocent flirtations, unheeding them. She is at her best now.*)

TSELU. Because your principles do not agree?

CONFUCIUS. (*slowly and deeply*) I am afraid. I am afraid. (*Tselu understands.*)

NANCIA. (*half singing and half reciting*)—

Her skin fair as frozen lard,
Her hands white as the milkweeds,
Her neck soft like the caterpillar,

(*Micius joins in an undertone from the 3rd line.*)

And her teeth like the melon-seeds.

And what is she?
The sister-in-law of the Duke,

TSELU. (*catching the phrases of the popular song*)

And sister of the Heir-Apparent.

CONFUCIUS. And Queen of Wei is she. (*Suddenly aware of the unusual appropriateness of the text, makes a gesture of self-rebuke.*)

NANCIA. (*laughing lasciviously*) Oh, thank you for your compliment, Confucius. (*Both Confucius and Tselu feel themselves to be in a highly awkward position.*)

MICIUS. (*laughing out loud*) Why, I have never heard that song repeated so appropriately.

(*The eunuch comes in with the dancing girls in gorgeous costumes. Confucius and Tselu look on with renewed interest. Nancia sits up and takes her guitar.*)

NANCIA. You are an expert in music. I hope you will favour me with your criticism.

(*Again she sings and plays a sweet, plaintive tune. The girls begin to dance to the music. Confucius and Tselu are both delighted and tortured, while Micius gives himself up entirely to the enjoyment of the spectacle.*)

NANCIA. (*sings*)

Don't come in, Sir please,
Don't break my willow-trees!
Not that *that* would very much grieve me;
But alack-a-day! What would my parents say?
And love you as I may,
I cannot bear to think what that would be

(*While the girls dance, Nancia throws the guitar aside and taking off her gown, revealing beautiful vests and undergown, joins in the dance, flirting all the while with Confucius. Micius takes up the guitar and plays for them.*)

Don't cross my wall, Sir please!
Don't spoil my mulberry-trees!
Not that *that* would very much grieve me;
But, alack-a-day! What would my brothers say?
And love you as I may,
I cannot bear to think what that would be.
Keep outside, Sir, please,
Don't spoil my sandal-trees!
Not that *that* would very much grieve me;

But alack-a-day, what would the world say!
And love you as I may,
I cannot bear to think what that would be.

(As they finish their song and dance, they close around Confucius and Tselu. They finish and resume their seats.)

MICIUS. *(enthusiastically)* Great! Wonderful!

TSELU. Why, Your Royal Highness, I never realized you were such a wonderful dancer and singer.

NANCIA. Do you like it really? *(She suddenly turns to Confucius, who seems wrapt in thought.)* What do you think of this dance and song, Confucius?

CONFUCIUS. *(as if awakened from a dream, and speaking slowly almost to himself)* I never really understood music and dancing till this moment. *(Recovering his self-possession)* You must be tired, Nancia *(emotional and affectionate)*.

NANCIA. Oh, I enjoy it.

CONFUCIUS. *(somewhat formally)* I must thank you for this great entertainment.

NANCIA. Well, if you like it, you may accept this as the homage of a young new pupil *(smiling very warm-heartedly)*. So you consent to my suggestion about the Club? *(Confucius makes no reply, while Nancia advances still closer.)* Yes? No? You will not consent? *(Her innocent ways rather overpower CONFUCIUS.)*

CONFUCIUS. *(muttering to himself)* I have lived fifty-six years, and to-day for the first time, I begin to understand the real meaning of art and life. . . . Yes, this is real ceremony, real music . . . What is the ceremony of Duke of Chou . . . All formalism . . . Cold . . . artificial . . . lacking in vitality. . . .

NANCIA. *(highly delighted)* Oh, I am highly honoured by your compliment. Then you will consent? Yes? You will excuse me now. Suppose you come to call on me day after to-morrow, and we shall have a drive together. You will excuse me now.

MICIUS. You must be tired now. So we will ask Confucius to excuse us.

NANCIA. Well, day after to-morrow, don't forget . . . And Tselu, you come along, too *(very sincerely and affectionately)*. The King and myself are going to wait for you. So please do come, yes? So long! *(A last parting wave with her white hand.)* Don't forget . . . day after to-morrow . . .

both of you! (Nancia, Micius, *the eunuch and the dancing girls go out through the central door. Tselu and Confucius stare at one another.*)

TSELU. Now, what are you going to do?

CONFUCIUS. (*not replying to the question*) If I were not a believer in the Duke of Chou, I should be a believer in Nancia.

TSELU. Then, you are going to stay?

CONFUCIUS. (*decidedly*) No!

TSELU. Because Nancia does not understand ceremony and music?

CONFUCIUS. Did I understand ceremony and music myself till Nancia taught it to me a while ago?

TSELU. Then, why not stay on?

CONFUCIUS. I do not know . . . I have to think . . . (*meditating*) . . . Nancia's ceremony . . . Nancia's music . . . Life . . . Rhythm . . . Simplicity . . . Naturalness . . . no seclusion of women . . . all freedom . . . emancipation . . . (*For the twinkling of an eye, he seems to see a new world opening before him. A new vision appears before him as he gazes upwards.*) . . . Ah! . . . (*Suddenly his face changes, his head droops, and he looks much older, grim, austere.*) No! I must go!

TSELU. Where will you go, Master?

CONFUCIUS. I do not know. I will leave this country, I must leave this country!

TSELU. Are you not going to carry out your doctrines and save the world any more?

CONFUCIUS. (*slowly*) I do not know. I have to save myself first.

TSELU. So you are really going away?

CONFUCIUS. Yes, I must go away. Sooner or later I must go away! (*His face visibly withers, while his figure seems to collapse, and his head slowly bends, supported by arms resting on his knees, a crouching, pathetic figure.*)

(*Tselu stands erect near by over him. In the silence, a long, slow, tortuous sigh escapes from Confucius . . . the sigh dies down . . . Silence . . . Curtain.*)

(*From Confucius Saw Nancy & Essays About Nothing*)

關於「湖上的悲劇」

無疑的，田漢是中國最有名的戲劇家，曾辦過南國學院，造就戲劇人才。「湖上的悲劇」是他在南國社時所寫的一部獨幕劇，演出多次，轟動一時。因為結構佳妙，導演家卜萬蒼在明星影片公司，曾把他搬上銀幕，似乎就是楊耐梅主演的「湖邊春風」。最近上海的新華影片公司楊小仲也根據此劇改編成電影，同時易名為「女鬼」足證此劇的吸引力。

戲劇家顧仲彝曾評論此劇：『…這齣戲，對話的流利，佈局的有層序，修辭的動人都能使人看了不覺厭倦，這是作者對於戲劇有研究的事實。同時字裏行間詩才洋溢……』

作者田漢自己也認為此劇是他幾年來最難忘的作品，「這是反映當時世界底一首抒情詩」他曾這樣說。本劇的開始是講一位無產詩人，曾有過一個不因為他窮而還熱戀着他的愛人白薇。但後來為了她的父親的反對，他們分離了，而且不久以後他又聽到了她自盡的死耗，他在悲痛之餘為了她寫了一篇小說，他帶了他的弟弟到西湖上來找屋子就是為了要完成了這篇小說。但是他的愛人白薇並沒有死，她為愛她的自由去自殺而又被人救活過來後，一直隱姓埋名，家裏人都以為她死了，只有別墅裏老僕的妻子王媽知道這個秘密。這屋子正是白薇的臥室，當詩人出去步月的時候，她在驚喜交集中看了他的文稿，又從他弟弟的嘴裏知道了他已受不過父母的逼迫而已經結婚的消息，於是為了不破壞人家的幸福與完成他的藝術，她又自殺了，在她斷氣以前，她說過：「生命是短促的，藝術是不朽的」

空白页

A WEST LAKE TRAGEDY

湖 上 的 悲 劇

獨 幕 悲 劇

(A Tragedy in One Act)

By T' IEN HAN (田漢著)

Translated by KU TSONG-NEE (顧宗沂譯)

人 物

Characters:

Yang Meng-mei (楊夢梅)

P'ing Pai-wei (平白薇)

Meng-mei's younger brother (夢梅之弟)

An old servant of Pai-wei (白薇之老僕)

Time: Present

Place: West Lake, Hangchow

SCENE: *A bed-room in the Wang Villa by the West Lake, neatly furnished and decorated, with a large number of fine pictures. The room faces the lake, with a door at the left opening to the rockery in the garden and another, at the right, leading to the corridor. The dinner on the table has not been cleared away. As the curtain rises, the room is in complete darkness. But through the window curtain at the back, which is fluttering in the wind, can be seen the twilight on the lake. The dripping of the rain outside can be heard distinctly. With a lighted candle in his right hand and a tea tray in his left, the old servant ushers Meng-mei and his younger brother slowly into the room.*

THE SERVANT. Take care, you two. Be on your guard against slipping—the stones are very smooth here.

YOUNGER BROTHER. I nearly fell just now. Oh, how thick the grass is here! Are there any snakes in it?

THE SERVANT. Snakes? There are no snakes, but take care of your feet—don't let them get wet. It has been raining these days, and it is full of water. Well, here is the room. Let me open the door . . . see, everything is nicely fixed up.

You two better rest a while and then go to bed early.

MENG-MEI. Old man, your room is superb! Please rent it to us. It is seldom that one can find a room so beautiful and clean. Will you let us have it for half a year?

THE SERVANT. No, that can't be done. If my master should learn of it, I don't think I can bear all his reprimand, and if my wife should hear of it, then there will be no end of trouble.

MENG-MEI. But why? Didn't you say that the room was unoccupied?

THE SERVANT. The room is indeed unoccupied; at the same time it can never be rented out. This time last year some one insisted upon renting it, too. I promised at first; but as soon as my wife discovered it, she would give me no peace, threatening to report the matter to my master. Today, it is quite exceptional, because I was requested to take care of you by my neighbor Mr. Shen and, besides, you haven't brought your bedding with you—and it's raining, too. I think it will not matter if I let you stay here just one night. . . . Well, you had better go to bed right away and get up early tomorrow morning, so that my wife won't get to know of your being here. She has gone to visit her relatives and will be back soon. . . . I'll think of some way out for you tomorrow. Perhaps I can let you have the side room in front.

YOUNGER BROTHER. Elder brother, I prefer to have this room.

MENG-MEI. Yes; old man, do let us have this room.

THE SERVANT. No it will be bad for me if my wife comes to know it tomorrow.

YOUNGER BROTHER. Ha! ha! Fancy an old man like you being still a hen-pecked husband!

THE SERVANT. I am not afraid of her, but she is too troublesome. (*Lowering his voice*) . . . Now, rest a while and then go to bed. Don't fail to blow out the candle. (*Turns round when he is about to leave. Looks carefully at the two brothers.*) There are two of you; so it will be all right.

MENG-MEI. Two of us. What do you mean?

THE SERVANT. Oh, nothing . . . nothing . . . (*Turns round again as he is about to leave. Then in a whispering tone.*)

If you hear any sound at night, don't get frightened. . . .

MENG-MEI. What? Are there robbers around here?

THE SERVANT. Robbers? There are no robbers. . . .

MENG-MEI. Then, there are ghosts?

THE SERVANT. No. . . there are no ghosts. . . .

YOUNGER BROTHER. My brother has returned from foreign countries; he is afraid of nothing.

THE SERVANT. O, I see, Mr. Yang, you have returned from foreign countries. I have heard people say that foreigners are not afraid of ghosts; then you ought not to be afraid of them. But how about your younger brother?

YOUNGER BROTHER. I? I have already gone to school; so I am not afraid of ghosts, either.

THE SERVANT. Since you both are not afraid of ghosts, I'll talk. Let me sit down first. Well, to tell you the truth, the house is. . . Oh, my goodness!

MENG-MEI. The house is . . . what?

THE SERVANT. The house is haunted!

YOUNGER BROTHER. (*Nestling closer to his brother*) Has the ghost a big head or a small head?

MENG-MEI. (*Smiles as he asks*) Male or female?

THE SERVANT. Female.

MENG-MEI. Young or old?

THE SERVANT. Young.

MENG-MEI. Did she die of sickness or of other causes?

THE SERVANT. She committed suicide.

MENG-MEI. Why did she commit suicide?

THE SERVANT. Because of the marriage question.

MENG-MEI. (*With a curious smile*) Well, well. (*Speaks to himself*). A young girl commits suicide for the sake of love . . . may be she was a beautiful girl. . . . The spirit of a beautiful girl appears after her death in a villa by the side of a lake. . . . In the present state of my withered heart, it'll make a rather interesting subject for a poem. . . . (*Then as if he has suddenly remembered something painful, his face becomes melancholy.*)

Oh, Pai-wei!

THE SERVANT. No, sir, her name is not Pai-wei, but Su-p'ing.

MENG-MEI. So her name is Su-p'ing. This is quite interesting; I'm very anxious to know about it. Old man, please tell me every detail of the story. . . . But, for whom are these dishes prepared? Were they meant for us? Then why should there be only one pair of chopsticks?

THE SERVANT. (*Feeling embarrassed*) O, you haven't had your dinner? Well, I'll tell the amah to get it ready for you. But these dishes are not meant for you two.

YOUNGER BROTHER. Then for whom?

THE SERVANT. For our young mistress.

MENG-MEI. Didn't you say a moment ago that nobody lived in this room?

THE SERVANT. Formerly our young mistress lived in this room.

MENG-MEI *and his* YOUNGER BROTHER. Where is she now?

THE SERVANT. Now? She still lives in this room.

MENG-MEI. Then, where has she gone to?

THE SERVANT. Where? She has gone to heaven.

YOUNGER BROTHER. Is she the same person who committed suicide?

THE SERVANT. Indeed, she is.

YOUNGER BROTHER. Good gracious! (*Sits closer to his brother.*)

MENG-MEI. Tell us, how did your young mistress come to commit suicide?

THE SERVANT. Perhaps it's better to tell you tomorrow.

MENG-MEI. Certainly not, just go ahead.

THE SERVANT. Well then, I'll be brief. It is nearly three years since the thing happened. My master has no sons, but only one daughter. He loved her very much, but our young mistress had a very peculiar disposition. At that time our young mistress lived with her father in Peking and studied in a certain college. It happened that a certain young gentleman fell in love with her and asked her father's permission to marry her. Being a very intimate friend of the young gentleman's father, my master felt that such a marriage would be rather helpful to both parties and so consented to it. However, our young mistress would not agree to the match.

MENG-MEI. Why should she object to it?

THE SERVANT. Why, indeed? It was said that the young gentleman was satisfactory in every respect; I can't understand why she didn't like him.

MENG-MEI. Maybe she had a lover already?

THE SERVANT. Yes. My wife did tell me that our young mistress, while studying in Peking, had already fallen in love with another young man.

MENG-MEI. How did your wife know?

THE SERVANT. She used to wait upon the young mistress.

MENG-MEI. Did your wife know what kind of a person your young mistress loved?

THE SERVANT. It was said that he was some kind of a "poet."

YOUNGER BROTHER. Did he have any money?

THE SERVANT. Being a servant, I don't know what a poet does, but it is said that all poets are poor. . . . They have in their pockets everything except money.

YOUNGER BROTHER. Then why should your young mistress have fallen in love with him?

THE SERVANT. That's why our young mistress was so queer. No matter how much my master was opposed to it, she fell violently in love with that poet. Then my lord became very angry, brought her back, and imprisoned her in this villa for three months. Indeed, this very room was her prison.

MENG-MEI. So this was the very prison for your young mistress! (*To himself*) Every time I beheld these fine buildings from the lake I took it for granted that they were inhabited by goddesses and fairies. Who would dream that they were the prisons for their owners' sons and daughters?

THE SERVANT. That certainly is true. When our young mistress was confined in this beautiful prison, my wife served her with tea and food every day. But she never felt like eating; she only wept all the time before my wife. A few days before the day that my master was to give her away in marriage, my wife came in as usual to serve the dinner, but the young mistress was nowhere to be found.

YOUNGER BROTHER. Where did she go?

THE SERVANT. Let me tell you. After her disappearance we found a letter on the table.

MENG-MEI. What did she say in the letter?

THE SERVANT. She said she knew how much her father had loved her. . . .

MENG-MEI. But according to what you've just told us, how can it be said that your master really loved her?

THE SERVANT. Yes, very much, indeed. I've never seen a father who loved his daughter as much as he did. For instance, when she was seventeen or eighteen years old, my master still treated her as if she was only seven or eight. Every evening, before retiring, he would go to see that her bed-clothes were carefully tucked and that the curtain was well

arranged. It's because he loved her so much that he got very angry when she disobeyed him. In her letter she said she was deeply obliged to her father for his love. She said she, too, loved him very much, but as she loved her freedom more she could not help disobeying him. So there was nothing else for her to do but end her own life.

YOUNGER BROTHER. What happened afterwards?

THE SERVANT. Having loved his daughter dearly, my master felt extreme grief and deep remorse when he read the letter. He at once sent people to different places to search for her. At last they found her fan in a pavilion by the Ch'ien-tang River on which were written several poems. Receiving the fan, my master wept for several days; then he collected all the clothes and jewels his daughter liked to wear, and buried them in a tomb he had built for her at the foot of Lone Hill. He also ordered that everything in this room should be kept just as before; and that my wife should sweep this room every day, make the bed, and serve the food as if the young mistress were still living. Formerly every spring my master used to come to stay in the villa for one or two months. Since the death of his daughter, however, he felt that even a flower or stone might bring tears into his eyes. During the last three years he has come here only once, and that was on the first anniversary of her death. After that he never came again, but he frequently sent a person or a letter down instructing us to keep on waiting upon the young mistress.

MENG-MEI. Now if you are ordered to serve food as usual to your young mistress, it is because your master wants to perpetuate his daughter's memory. What is there to be afraid of?

THE SERVANT. The funny thing is that sometimes the young mistress really partakes of the food. That is why we are afraid.

YOUNGER BROTHER. How can you be sure that the food was really eaten by her?

THE SERVANT. Why not? The young mistress was very fond of bamboo shoots. One day I forgot to prepare her dish of bamboo shoots. When I came to clear the table, I found all the dishes broken. That night my wife saw the angry young mistress in her dream. So we have not dared to come into this room very often. One morning, I was brave enough

to come here to sweep the room. When I touched the bed covers, I found they were still warm, as if some one had really slept in them.

MENG-MEI. Maybe some one else did sleep in them?

THE SERVANT. Some one else? That's impossible! You see, this room faces the lake on one side and adjoins the rockery on the other side, while the door opening to the rockery has long been sealed up.

MENG-MEI. Why should that door be sealed up?

THE SERVANT. One day my wife told me she saw the shadow of the young mistress behind the rockery.

MENG-MEI. Probably your wife had some trouble with her eyesight?

THE SERVANT. So I said. But one afternoon, when the sun was setting behind the Lone Hill and the willow trees outside of the window were being fanned by the evening breeze from the lake, Old Wang, our nearest neighbor, dimly saw our young mistress passing by the rockery. Ever since then nobody has dared to go near there. And usually the door on this side is locked, too.

YOUNGER BROTHER. Maybe it was a cat?

THE SERVANT. Cat: There is not even a hole for the rats, how could there be a cat?

YOUNGER BROTHERS. O, what can we do, brother? The house is haunted! We had better move to a hotel!

MENG-MEI. I hate living in a hotel. It's too noisy there, and moreover, I have no money. I like this room very much.

THE SERVANT. Well, if you two really like this villa, you may stay over there in the side room in front. But if you stay in this room and some thing should happen, I am afraid I can't shoulder such heavy responsibility.

MENG-MEI. I am in love with this room and am most anxious to rent it for two or three months. Here I can do some writing.

THE SERVANT. Was this written by you?

YOUNGER BROTHER. No, by my brother.

THE SERVANT. Quite a big volume. Please, sir, what's it all about?

MENG-MEI. It is a novel, and there are poems, too.

THE SERVANT. O, you are a poet then? . . . Well, our young mistress likes poets best. I think she will do you no harm.

Well, goodnight. You had better go to bed early. . . .
(*Lights the candle, starts to go, stops, turns round, and addresses himself to Meng-mei's brother*) Young Master, let me tell you . . . if you hear any sound at night, you had better pull the blanket over you head; don't peep through the blanket or it will horrify you.

MENG-MEI. All right, you had better go.

THE SERVANT. Well, see you tomorrow. Be careful! If you hear any noise, just call me.

YOUNGER BROTHER. See you tomorrow! (*Exit the servant*).

MENG-MEI. See you tomorrow! Ha! Ha! That old man seems to see ghosts everywhere!

YOUNGER BROTHER. Ah! (*Drowsily*).

MENG-MEI. Younger brother, you had better go to bed right away.

YOUNGER BROTHER. I'm afraid of the ghosts. I want you to sleep with me.

MENG-MEI. Don't talk rubbish! Go and sleep.

YOUNGER BROTHER. How about you?

MENG-MEI. I . . . I want to do some writing.

YOUNGER BROTHER. Writing again! I see you write every day, yet you never seem to finish it. Come and sleep . . . Oh! How comfortable it is to sleep with mamma at home!

MENG-MEI. (*Returns to his seat, urges his brother to go to sleep, takes up the fountain pen, and continues writing. Remembering suddenly what the servant has said a moment ago, he sighs deeply*). A young girl . . . a martyr for her love to a penniless poet. Her name is called Su-p'ing . . . how similar were her circumstances to those of Pai-wei! If this villa were not called Wang Villa, I might suspect her of being Pai-wei.

(*Keeps on writing, but after a while stops again*). Ghost, eh? That idea has long been killed by modern science. But if ghosts really still do exist, it is quite desirable. The ghost of this girl has appeared often. Why didn't my Pai-wei do so even once, even in my dreams (*Keeps on writing*) Oh, Pai-wei! If I could only see you once more! If I could only see your spirit once more!

(*Writes again*) But if ghosts really do exist, and spirits do appear, won't I be ashamed to see her? How could a walking corpse like me, who avoided the struggles of life, dare

to face my Pai-wei who took life so seriously? Poor me!
This is dreadful! (*Hides his face and weeps regretfully.*)

YOUNGER BROTHER. Brother, why are you weeping again? Come to sleep—I'm afraid.

MENG-MEI. No, you sleep first; I'll join you in a moment. There's nothing to be afraid of.

YOUNGER BROTHER. Aren't you afraid?

MENG-MEI. What should I be afraid of?

YOUNGER BROTHER. Then why did you say just now that it was "dreadful"?

MENG-MEI. Don't talk, but go and sleep. . . . Ah, horrors! You may change the objects of your fears as you grow older, but you can never reduce the power of fear itself. Who knows that the stings of conscience are more terrible to bear than the appearance of a ghost?

YOUNGER BROTHER. (*Speaking in his dream*) Oh, ghost!

MENG-MEI. Have a sound sleep and don't be afraid!

YOUNGER BROTHER. (*Makes no answer, but sleeps on.*)

MENG-MEI. Well, he has fallen asleep. Blessed are those who are only afraid of ghosts! . . . The rain has stopped and the moon is out again. How beautiful it must be on the lake at this moment!

"Each year, when the moon shines bright,
With a pair of oars, the waves we fight."

Oh! Pai-wei! Isn't this the poem that I gave you when we played together at the North Sea Park in Peiping? Here I am tonight on the West Lake, and there is moonlight over it, but where are you?

(*All of a sudden, the breeze brings the sound of some one weeping.*) Ah, who is that weeping by the lake at this hour of the night? (*Listens intently.*) It really sounds as if some one is weeping. This is indeed strange! . . . (*Leaves the room to find out where the sound comes from.*)

(*The window curtains flutter in the gentle breeze. The atmosphere becomes tense. From the folding screen at the left emerges slowly a neatly dressed girl. Greatly surprised at the lighted candle on the table, she walks up to the bed with a light tread, draws the curtains aside, sits down, and speaks softly.*)

THE GIRL. Wang-mah! (*Realizes her mistake, and is shocked.*
Rising to go, she sees the manuscript on the table. Seized with curiosity, she reads it and is very pleased to find herself

mentioned as the heroine. As she reads on, memories of the past come back to her. She smiles at some places and leaps with joy, while at other places she knits her brows and sheds tears. The pleasant passages she marks with circles and dots; against the disagreeable ones, she adds comments. When she comes to the pathetic passages, she is reminded of the past and weeps aloud.)

MENG-MEI'S BROTHER. (*Awakened*) Brother, come to sleep; why are you weeping again? (*Receiving no answer, he draws the curtains aside, espies the girl and is astounded.*)

Good heaven! Who are you? You

THE GIRL. (*She makes no reply and approaches him*)

M. M.'s BROTHER. (*Frightened, leaves the bed, and walks around the room*) Who are you?

THE GIRL. (*Running after him*) Don't be afraid! . . Who are you?

M.M.'s BROTHER. My name is Yang. Who are you? A human being or a ghost?

THE GIRL. Don't be afraid.

M.M.'s BROTHER. Where did you come from?

THE GIRL. I live in this room.

M.M.'s BROTHER. Is this room yours?

THE GIRL. Yes, this is my room.

M.M.'s BROTHER. Then you are the girl who, the old servant said, committed suicide?

THE GIRL. (*Smiling*) Yes.

M.M.'s BROTHER. Good heavens, then you are a ghost! Please don't harm me! I'm only a small boy.

THE GIRL. No, I'm not a ghost. Don't be afraid! I was only joking with you. I am a relative of the old servant.

M.M.'s BROTHER. Are you really a human being or a ghost? (*Doubting.*)

THE GIRL. You see, a ghost has no shadow. Do I have a shadow? Just feel my hands. A ghost has no heat. Are my hands warm?

M.M.'s BROTHER. Yes.

THE GIRL. Now you can believe that I am a human being.

M.M.'s BROTHER. But you may not be a human being, even if there are only the shadow and the heat. (*Looks at her critically.*)

THE GIRL. Look at me. Don't ask whether I am a human being

or a ghost. Just tell me whether you like me or not?

M.M.'s BROTHER. I like you.

THE GIRL. Good. Let me ask you: With whom did you come?

M.M.'s BROTHER. I came with my brother.

THE GIRL. Did your brother come with you just for recreation?

M.M.'s BROTHER. My brother felt depressed all the time, so mamma asked me to accompany him here for a change. Besides, my brother thinks he can do some writing here.

THE GIRL. (*Pointing to the manuscript on the table*) Is this written by your brother?

M.M.'s BROTHER. Yes.

THE GIRL. When did he begin writing that? Why hasn't he finished it?

M.M.'s BROTHER. He has been writing for three years even since the death of the girl friend whom he loved best.

THE GIRL. Did he write all the time?

M.M.'s BROTHER. No, he began it three years ago. As he had to earn money to support his family, he could not spend all of his time in writing. But while he wrote, . . . I don't know what was on his mind . . . he always wept.

THE GIRL. (*With a mixed expression of grief and comfort.*) In spite of these three years of bitterness and gloom, I have not lived in vain . . . Is he well?

M.M.'s BROTHER. Not very well. How could a person who weeps all the time keep well?

THE GIRL. Who looks after him?

M.M.'s BROTHER. My sister-in-law.

THE GIRL. . . . How many brothers do you have?

M.M.'s BROTHER. How many brothers? I have only one.

THE GIRL. Then your brother is married?

M.M.'s BROTHER. Yes, married.

THE GIRL. He is married! . . . When did he get married?

M.M.'s BROTHER. Less than half a year after the death of his beloved girl.

THE GIRL. In less than half a year? . . . Why didn't he say in his novel that he had married?

M.M.'s BROTHER. Perhaps it's because he has been thinking of his former girl friend all the time.

THE GIRL. If he really thought of her so much, why did he get married so soon?

M.M.'s BROTHER. Probably it is because my parents were eager

to have a grandson. They urged my brother every day; so he got married.

THE GIRL. Has any baby arrived?

M.M.'s BROTHER. There is one—a pretty, healthy, lovable baby.

THE GIRL. O, he has a pretty and healthy baby?

M.M.'s BROTHER. Yes.

THE GIRL. Is your sister-in-law a good woman?

M.M.'s BROTHER. My sister-in-law is a very good person. She always buys me candies. But she does not get on well with my brother.

THE GIRL. Why?

M.M.'s BROTHER. Because my brother thinks of his former girl friend all the time; so my sister-in-law was displeascd. She says that, since he married her, he should love her; otherwise, why didn't he dig out the corpse of his sweetheart and marry her?

THE GIRL. Well, she was right to have made such a complaint.

M.M.'s BROTHER. So they quarrel very often. Sometimes my brother worries too much and becomes ill.

THE GIRL. His bloodspitting trouble . . . is it any better now?

M.M.'s BROTHER. It is better. But it's strange—how do you know my brother had this blood spitting trouble?

THE GIRL. Why not? Your brother and I were once good friends.

M.M.'s BROTHER. Then, you have come to see my brother. He was here writing a few moments ago. I think he must have gone outside to see the moon. He is particularly fond of walking alone in the moonlight. He will be back in a short while. Wait a minute, please. I heard the old servant say a little while ago that the house was haunted. I was frightened. It's good of you to come. Please keep me company a while. My brother will be back soon.

THE GIRL. Very well, I'll keep you company. Several years have elapsed since your brother and I parted from each other. I am very anxious to see him.

M.M.'s BROTHER. That's fine. Listen! My brother has returned.

THE GIRL. How do you know?

M.M.'s BROTHER. I know his foot steps well enough.

THE GIRL. Little brother, close the door quickly. Let me straighten my hair. I don't know whether he can still recognize me.

M.M.'s BROTHER. How can good friends fail to recognize each other?

THE GIRL. No, the more intimate the friends, the harder it is for them to recognize each other. (*Straightens her hair before the mirror; then with an expression of despondency, she seems to realize something.*) How pale and haggard I look! And I didn't realize it at all during the past three years!

M.M.'s BROTHER. My brother has returned. Let me open the door.

THE GIRL. Wait a minute. Let me see. . . . I think I had better not see him. . . . Shadow and heat will disappear someday, anyway. Don't tell your brother I have been here.

M.M.'s BROTHER. (*Seizing her hand*) No, aren't you my brother's good friend? Why should you change your mind?

THE GIRL. I've decided not to see him. Don't take hold of me. (*The sound of footsteps becomes more distinct.*)

M.M.'s BROTHER. My brother has come. As you are his best friend, you had better see him and advise him not to be so sad.

THE GIRL. But . . . I . . . I don't wish to see him. Take your hands away, good little brother.

M.M.'s BROTHER. I'll never let you go.

THE GIRL. You won't let me go?

M.M.'s BROTHER. No, I won't.

THE GIRL. Do you know who I am?

M.M.'s BROTHER. Who are you? Didn't you say you were a relative of the old watchman of this villa?

THE GIRL. No. To tell you the truth, I am the ghost of the girl of this room—the one who committed suicide.

M.M.'s BROTHER. Oh, you are the ghost! . . . (*Releases her at once.*)

THE GIRL. (*Blows out the candle and runs away.*)

M.M.'s BROTHER. *Ai-yah!* Ghost! Ghost! Help! Help! (*Tries hard to locate the door bolt. After several attempts he succeeds in opening the door.*)

MENG-MEL. (*Rushes into the room, embraces his brother, takes out a box of matches from his pocket, lights the candle, and shakes his brother's head.*) Brother, wake up! What terrible dream have you had?

YOUNGER BROTHER. Brother, brother!

MENG-MEL. Yes, I'm here. What sort of dream did you have?

YOUNGER BROTHER. (*Panting hard*) It's not a dream. I actually saw a ghost!

MENG-MEI. Ha! ha! You saw a ghost? With a big head or a small head?

YOUNGER BROTHER. You think it's so funny, eh? You left the room without telling me. I'll never accompany you again.

MENG-MEI. Now, tell me. What's happened?

YOUNGER BROTHER. After you had gone, I heard, I don't know when, some one crying in my dream.

MENG-MEI. I, too, heard some one crying at some distance a while ago. So I went to hunt for it. I saw nothing—not even a shadow.

YOUNGER BROTHER. But, when I woke up, I found a person sitting at the table. At first I thought it was you, but looking carefully, I saw it was a girl.

MENG-MEI. Did you ask who she was?

YOUNGER BROTHER. I asked her who she was. She said she was the owner of this room. Who else could it be, if she was not the so-called Miss Su-p'ing who committed suicide? I was almost frightened to death. Then she said, "Don't be afraid! Don't be afraid! I was only joking with you." She next said she was a relative of the old watchman in the villa. I didn't believe her. So she asked me to look at her shadow, saying that a ghost had no shadow. She also asked me to feel her warm hands, saying that the hands of a ghost were cold. When I saw her shadow and felt that her hands were warm, I said I was not afraid of her then. So I sat down and talked with her.

When I heard your footstep, I wanted to open the door, but she stopped me and asked me not to open it, saying, "The shadow will disappear, after all. I had better not see him." I seized her hand and wouldn't let her go. Then her face suddenly changed, and she said she was the ghost of the girl who had committed suicide. When I heard it, I let go my hands. She blew out the candle and at once disappeared. Then you came in.

MENG-MEI. What are you talking about? When did you invent such a story? Art you dreaming? Wake up, (*shakes him*) wake up!

YOUNGER BROTHER. I am not dreaming. Don't you see my eyes are wide open?

MENG-MEI. Yet you don't call it a dream! Go to sleep.

YOUNGER BROTHER. I won't sleep. I'm afraid the ghost will come to visit me again.

MENG-MEI. (*Once more urges his brother to go to sleep.*) There won't be any more ghost if you don't let your imagination run wild. (*Returns to his seat.*)

YOUNGER BROTHER. (*Speaking in his sleep.*) My name is Yang. Who are you?

MENG-MEI. Go to sleep! No more dreaming!

YOUNGER BROTHER. Oh, it comes again!

MENG-MEI. Don't be afraid, child. (*Rises and caresses him.*)

YOUNGER BROTHER. Brother, why don't you sleep? Come and sleep with me. I'll complain to mother about you. I'll tell her that you never looked after me while we were here.

MENG-MEI. Go to sleep! I'll come soon. While I was walking in the moonlight, my heart was filled with all kinds of sentiments. I cannot sleep if I do not write them down.

YOUNGER BROTHER. Well, be quick then. . . .

MENG-MEI. When one really comes to such a place which is as silent as death, one is even afraid of his own breathing (*Sits at the table, examines the manuscript, and see the circles and dots.*) Brother, I told you not to soil my manuscript, why should you draw circles here and there? What do you know?

YOUNGER BROTHER. . . . (*Sound asleep*)

MENG-MEI. The circles have not been drawn without good reason. An there're also comments here! (*Turns to the last page, finds a handkerchief, examines it hurriedly.*) Oh! (*Runs to the bed*) Brother, whose handkerchief is this? Brother!

YOUNGER BROTHER. (*With drowsy eyes*) My name is Yang. My name is Yang.

MENG-MEI. Hello, whose handkerchief is this?

YOUNGER BROTHER. (*Awakened from his sleep*) Handkerchief? I don't know. Probably it's Miss Su-ping's. When I awoke, I found her weeping over your manuscript.

MENG-MEI. Where has she gone?

YOUNGER BROTHER. She wriggled from my grasp, blew out the candle, and then disappeared.

MENG-MEI. Oh! Pai-wei! (*Searches the room everywhere. After a brief pause, the report of a gun is suddenly heard outside.*)

YOUNGER BROTHER. Where does the report come from?

MENG-MEI. (*Rushes out of the room in the direction of the gun sound.*)

MENG-MEI. (*From the rockery*) Brother, Get me the candle, quick!

YOUNGER BROTHER. What has happened? (*Holds the candle, trembling all over, goes out.*)

(*After a while, the brother holding the candle enters, followed by Meng-mei supporting Pai-wei. The brother pushes the sofa forward, and Meng-mei assists her to lie down.*)

MENG-MEI. Pai-wei! Pai-wei!

PAI-WEI. (*Murmuring, and raising her eyes*) Oh, Meng-mei, isn't isn't it destined that I should see you again?

MENG-MEI. Pai-wei, I have been weeping for you for three years.

PAI-WEI. Like a fish at the bottom of the sea looking at the light streaming down from the surface of the water, I, too, have been waiting for you for three years.

MENG-MEI. When I heard the old watchman talk about the case of a Miss Sup'ing in this house a while ago, I suspected that she must be you. But I only know you as Pai-wei. Is Sup'ing your other name?

PAI-WEI. You may call me either Su-ping (素蘋) or Pai-wei (白薇). They are both ill-omened names.

(*Having heard the report of the gun, the old servant enters the room hurriedly, with a lighted candle.*)

THE SERVANT. Where did the report come from in the dead of night? Oh, isn't this our young mistress? We've waited upon you for three years. Thank heavens, you are still alive.

PAI-WEI. Old Wang, henceforth there is no longer any necessity to wait upon me. Go and ask your wife to come here at once.

MENG-MEI. Go and send for a doctor quick!

PAI-WEI. A doctor will be of no avail. Ask your wife to come at once. I have something to tell her.

THE SERVANT. How strange all this is! Formerly we thought you had committed suicide, yet you are still alive. And since you are alive, why should you want to commit suicide again?

MENG-MEI. You won't be able to understand it all. Go and send for a doctor at once.

THE SERVANT. Mr. Yang, do you know our young mistress?

MENG-MEI. Don't ask questions. Go at once!

THE SERVANT. I can't understand. (*Exit*).

PAI-WEI. Didn't you receive the long letter I wrote from here?

MENG-MEI. Yes, I did.....

PAI-WEI. Then, why didn't you send me a reply?

MENG-MEI. What do you mean by saying I had not replied?

I spent a whole evening writing you a long letter, saying that no matter how much you might be wronged you should wait for me.... But—why didn't you give me an answer?

PAI-WEI. Yes... My father must have intercepted your letter.

Later, why didn't you write me a single word, when I sent you so many letters?

MENG-MEI. Because I wanted to equip myself for a better position, I risked all and went to Paris. I owed a considerable amount of money for my board and lodging. So I left without giving my address. How could they forward your letters to Paris?

PAI-WEI. How long did you stay there?

MENG-MEI. Less than a year.

PAI-WEI. Why only less than a year?

MENG-MEI. I could find no body to help me. I though I might find a job in Paris, but there was no work to be found. Then I tried to send my poems to some publishers in China, but none would accept them. So I could do nothing but come back to China. As soon as I returned, I learned of your death.

PAI-WEI. During the past three years all but Wang-mah thought I was dead. In fact, I have died twice. The first time was in front of the President's Palace in Peiping. Do you remember the result of our petition that time and how many students were sacrificed? Sister Su-yun and Miss Chiang Wei-hsia and I were standing together. It happened that the militarists' bullets made martyrs of them, while I was lucky enough to escape!

The second time happened three years ago. As I could no longer endure my father's oppression, on the one hand, and could receive no letter from you on the other, I ran away in anger from my home to drown myself in the Ch'ien-t'ang River. Unfortunately, a fisherman rescued me. At the fisherman's home I obtained the information that my father had found my fan by the Ch'ien-t'ang River, had reserved this room for me and built a tomb for me by the side of this

lake. So I decided to use my real name no more. Sometimes I went to the Lone Hill alone, to enjoy the beauties of the sun behind the lake. Sometimes I went to see my own tomb, just like my neighbor Miss Feng Hsiao-ch'ing (馮小青) lamenting over her own shadow. When the evening came, I came back by the secret passage planned by my maidservant Wang-mah and returned to my own room. After they had gone to bed, I began to read the books I liked best when very young, or to adorn myself in the way I was accustomed to, or to reread the letters you sent me. . . . Ah, Meng-mei, I'm really a pessimist. . . . I ought to have ended my life long ago. . . . why did I live like a wandering ghost for these three years? This is because, although I had received no letter from you, I hoped I could see you once more. I looked for your name in all the newspapers; why could I never find it?

MENG-MEI. How could you find the name of a penniless poet in the newspapers, unless when he commits a crime?

PAI-WEI. I had been cherishing this hope all along, and was therefore willing to endure all the hardships and sufferings in the land of the living.

MENG-MEI. Pai-wei! Ever since I learned of your death, I myself became a living corpse. Though I got married soon after your death. . . and have a baby. . . it seems that these were not my own doings at all. . . . During these three years there has seldom been a minute in which I did not dream of you. When your old servant said that the room was haunted, I thought that, if there were really ghosts in the world, I at least could see your spirit. . . Now that we have the unexpected chance to realize our expectations for which we had been suffering these three years, why should you want to commit suicide? Pai-wei, are you greatly disappointed in me?

PAI-WEI. No, no! Not only am I not disappointed with you, but also I am satisfied with you! Didn't you write this novel for my sake?

MENG-MEI. Pai-wei, it represents the tears I shed for you.

PAI-WEI. It's indeed a precious volume recording noble sentiments. A woman who can inspire her lover to contribute something to the culture of mankind has not lived in vain. At the same time, if a woman can learn before her death

how deeply her lover loved her after she is dead, she should be satisfied.

MENG-MEI. Then why should you reopen the pain in my heart?

PAI-WEI. Meng-mei, this...this...then is my purpose. "A dead man can never come to life again." Should you discover that the girl you loved, whom you think dead three years ago, rises from the dead under such unexpected circumstances, you would naturally laugh at your shedding vain tears during the past three years. You would think that life, serious as it is, is only a comedy after all. If that be so, how could you finish your novel, a record of noble sentiments?

MENG-MEI. Pai-wei...If you sacrifice your life merely for the sake of my art, then I will deny every art! Even this unfinished novel, which I have been writing for the past three years...I'll tear to pieces before you.

PAI-WEI. (*Stopping him quickly.*) No, no, Meng-mei, you must never destroy it. If you love me truly, you must preserve it. Our love is bitterly tragic, Meng-mei...then your novel will be a token of our bitter love. Life is short, but art is long. If you could make every drop of your tears a bullet with which to kill the cause of lifelong separation, if you could finish the novel—the serious record of our noble sentiments—then I, though dead, will live with them forever. Moreover, I heard your brother say you have a good wife and a lovely baby. When my existence is only like a strand of silk fluttering in the air, why should I live and destroy the happiness of others? So I—(*in agony and growing weaker*)...Oh, Meng-mei, I can no longer keep up...I have to bid you a long farewell...(*Faint away.*)

MENG-MEI. Pai-wei. Pai-wei, you're mistaken! You have made a great mistake by such a sacrifice. Do you think that it is proof of your love? I know myself I am to blame, too...I thought that my body and my soul could live in separate places. The body and the soul shunned and cheated each other...I took it as harmony...Who knows if it is indeed separation? The result is that I have become a half-dead and half-living creature. But now I understand...we must live on with courage, with unity. You should not die...Oh, send for a doctor! A doctor!

THE SERVANT. (*Entering the room in great haste.*) The doctor

will be here in a minute....

MENG-MEI. Pai-wei! Pai-wei!

THE SERVANT. Ai-yah, my young mistress, my young mistress!

PAI-WEI. (*Regaining consciousness*) Old Wang, where is Wang mah?

THE SERVANT. She left early this morning and hasn't come back yet.

PAI-WEI. Oh, my adopted-mother, I won't be able to see you any more!... (*Gazing at the servant.*) Tell your wife that I am deeply grateful to her for having taken care of me all these years. I have nothing to express my gratitude to her. Also tell her not to report to master that I committed suicide again. Just say that her adopted-daughter has died.

THE SERVANT. Oh, young mistress, how could you say such things? As long as you will live, my wife and I will willingly serve you all our lives.

PAI-WEI. (*Holding the hands of the two brothers.*) Meng-mei... Help your clever brother... love your wife and your baby... complete you novel....

YOUNGER BROTHER. Brother, her hands have become cold....

MENG-MEI. What! (*Holding her hands*) Pai-wei... no matter where you go... be it paradise or hell... or absolute extinction, absolute vacuity... please wait for me there... I will never be cured of blood-spitting. When I have given out all my blood, I'll come....

THE SERVANT. Oh, young mistress, young mistress!... Sir, come here, quick... what can we do?

MENG-MEI. (*Rises and bids his brother*) Shake me, I'm dreaming... shake me, quick!

THE SERVANT. Oh, my young mistress!

YOUNGER BROTHER. Brother, Oh! Brother! (*Supporting his brother.*) Brother!

MENG-MEI. Shake me, ... brother... Oh... Pai-wei, Pai-wei, Pai-wei (*Walks up in zigzag fashion to the side of Pai-wei's dead body and faints away.*)

YOUNGER BROTHER. Brother! Oh, brother!
 (*Curtain*)

(*From The China Press Weekly*)

空白页

空白页

THUNDER AND RAIN

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worn-out 破舊的
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