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爲奴隸的母親
SLAVE MOTHER

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爲奴隸的母親

她底丈夫是一個皮販，就是收斂鄉間各獵戶底獸皮和牛皮，販到大埠上出賣的人。但有時也兼做點農作，忙種的時節，便幫人家插秧，他能將每行插得非常直，假如有五人同在一坵水田內，他們一定叫他站在第一個做標準。然而境況總是不佳，債是年年積起來了。他大約就因爲境況的不佳，烟也吸了，酒也喝了，博也賭起來了。這樣，竟使他變做一個非常兇狠而暴躁的男子，但也就更貧窮下去，連小小的移借，別人也不敢答應了。

SLAVE MOTHER

Her husband dealt in skins—that is to say, he collected cow-hides and the skins of wild animals from hunters all over the countryside, and took them to the larger towns to sell. Sometimes he supplemented this occupation with a little farm labour. During the busy planting season he used to assist the farmers in transplanting the young sprouts. He knew just how to set out each row perfectly straight, and for that reason if there were five working together in a paddy-field he was always put in the head position to act as a marker. Circumstances were against him, nevertheless, and his debts mounted year after year. Probably it was the hard times that made him take to smoking, drinking, and gambling. Soon he had become a surly, hot-tempered fellow, continuing to grow poorer and poorer until people were afraid to make him even the smallest loans.

在窮底結果的病以後，全身便變成枯黃色，臉孔黃的和小銅鼓一樣，連眼白也黃了。別人說他是黃膽病，孩子們也就叫他「黃胖」了。有一天，他向他底妻說：

『再也沒有辦法了，這樣下去，連小鍋子也要賣去了。我想，還是從你底身上設法罷。你跟着我挨餓，有什麼辦法呢？』

『我底身上？……』

他底妻坐在灶後，懷裏抱着她底剛滿三週的男小孩——孩子還在吸着奶，她訥訥地低聲地問。

『你，是呀，』她底丈夫病後的無力的聲音：
『我已經將你出典了……』

『什麼呀！』他底妻幾乎昏去似的。

屋內是稍稍靜寂了一息。他氣喘着說：

Illness followed in the wake of poverty, and his body turned a withered yellow colour. His face grew as yellow as a small brass drum. Even the whites of his eyes changed colour. People said that he had the jaundice, and children began calling him "Yellow-belly." One day he said to his wife:

"There's nothing more I can do. If we go on like this we'll soon have to part with the kettle. I think it would be better to let you save us with your body. If you stay and go hungry with me what can I do for you?"

"With my body?"

His wife sat behind the mud oven, holding her three year-old son on her lap, nursing him at her breast. She spoke in a subdued tone, haltingly.

"Yes, yours!" replied her husband, his voice weak from illness. "I've already leased you——"

"What's that?" she asked, seeming almost to faint.

The room was silent for a moment, and then he spoke, breathing hard.

「三天前，王狼來坐討了半天的債回去以後，我也跟着他去，走到了九畝潭邊，我很不想要做人了。但是坐在那株爬上去一縱身就可落在潭底裏的樹下，想來想去，總沒有力氣跳了。貓頭鷹耳朵邊不住地嘩，我底心被牠叫寒起來，我只得回轉身，但在路上遇見了沈家婆，她問我，晚也晚了，在外邊做什麼。我就告訴她，請她代我借一筆款，或向什麼人家的小姐借些衣服或首飾去暫時當一當，免得王狼底狼一般的綠眼睛天天在家裏閃爍。可是沈家婆向我笑道：

「你還將妻養在家裏做什麼呢，你自己黃也黃到這個地步了？」

我低頭站在她面前沒有答，她又說：

「兒子呢，你只有一個，捨不得。但妻——」

“Three days ago Wolf Wang sat here for hours demanding his money. When he left I went out too. When I got to Nine-Acre Pool I felt I didn’t want to live any longer. I sat down under a tree. All I needed to do was to climb it and let myself drop off into the pool. I kept thinking about it, but I hadn’t the courage to jump. All the time there was an owl screeching in my ear. It turned my heart cold and I came away. But on the road I met the Sun woman. She asked me what I was doing out so late, and I told her. I asked her to try and raise me a loan, or to borrow some girl’s clothes or jewellery that I could pawn, so that I wouldn’t have to see Wang’s wolfish green eyes glittering in my house every day. But the Sun woman laughed at me, and said:

“‘Why do you keep on, then, supporting that wife of yours at home, and you as yellow as you are?’”

“I hung my head and said nothing.

“‘Of course you can’t spare the son,’ she said, ‘having only one. But the wife . . .’”

我當時想，「莫非叫我賣去妻麼？」而她繼續道：

「但妻——雖然是結髮的，窮了，也沒有法。還養在家裏做什麼呢？」

這樣，她就直說出：有一個秀才，因為沒有兒子，年紀已五十歲了，想買一個妾；又因他底大妻不允許，只準他典一個，典三年或五年，叫我物色相當的女人：年紀約三十歲左右，養過兩三個兒子的，人要穩重老誠，又肯做事，還要對他底大妻肯低眉下首。這次是秀才娘子向我說的，假如條件合，肯出八十元或一百元的身價。我代她尋了好幾天，總沒有相當的女人，她說：現在碰到我，想起了你來，樣樣都對的。當時問我底意見怎樣，我一邊掉了幾滴淚，一邊却被她說的答應她了。」

說到這里，他垂下頭，聲音很低弱，停止了。她

"I said to myself, 'Surely she isn't telling me to sell my wife!'

" 'But the wife,' she went on, 'even though she is your proper wife—you're poor, you can't help it—what's the use in keeping her at home?' "Then she came straight to the point and said:

" 'There's a *hsiu-ts'ai* who has no son, although he's already fifty. He has had it in mind to buy himself a secondary wife, but his first wife won't let him. She'll allow him only to lease one for three years or five years, and he has asked me to look out for a woman who might suit him; one somewhere around thirty, who has had two or three sons already, who is quiet and honest and willing to work, and who will be submissive to his major wife. Recently the *hsiu-ts'ai's* wife spoke to me about it herself, and said that if the conditions were satisfied they would be willing to pay eighty or a hundred dollars purchase price. I've been searching for a suitable woman a good many days, but haven't located one.'

"Then she said that as soon as she met me she thought of you, and that you were just the

底妻簡直癡似的。話一句沒有。又靜寂了一息，他繼續說，

『昨天，沈家婆到過秀才底家裏，她說秀才很高興，秀才娘子也喜歡，錢是一百元，年數呢，假如三年養不出兒子是五年。沈家婆并將日子也揀定了一——本月十八，五天後。今天，她寫典契去了。』

這時，他底妻簡直連腑臟都顫抖，吞吐着問：

『你爲什麼早不對我說？』

『昨天在你底面前旋了三個圈子，可是對你說不出，不過我仔細想，除出將你底身子設法外，再也沒有辦法了。』

『決定了麼？』婦人戰着牙齒問。

right one. So she asked me straight away what I thought, and after I had cried a little I let myself be persuaded. At this point his head dropped, while his voice trailed off until it stopped completely. His wife said not a word. She seemed wholly stupefied. After a moment's silence he went on:

“Yesterday the Sun woman went to the *hsiu-ts'ai*'s house, and she says he is quite keen, and that his wife is pleased too. The price is a hundred dollars, and the lease is for three years if there is a son in that time. If not, for five years. The Sun woman has set the date too. It's the eighteenth - five days yet. To-day she's sending the lease agreement.”

The wife was quivering in every limb. “Why didn't you—tell me earlier?” she stammered out.

“I walked a circle in front of you three different times yesterday, but I couldn't get it out. Really and truly, apart from using you as a means, there is absolutely nothing we can do.”

“You've decided on it?” she asked, with trembling lips.

『只待典契寫好。』

『倒霉的事情呀，我！一點也沒有別的方法了麼？春寶底爸呀！』春寶是她懷裏的孩子底名字。

『倒霉，我也想到過，可是窮了，我們又不肯死，有什麼辦法？今年，我怕連插秧也不能插了。』

『你也想到過春寶麼？春寶還只有五歲，沒有娘，他怎麼好呢？』

『我領他便了。本來是已經斷了奶的孩子。』

他似乎漸漸發怒了。也就走出門外去了。她，却嗚嗚咽咽地哭起來。

這時，在她過去的回憶裏，却想起恰恰一年前的事：那時她生下了一個女兒，她簡直如死去一般地臥在牀上。死還是整個的，她那時却肢體分作四碎與五裂。剛落地的女嬰，在地上的乾草堆上叫，『呱

“Just waiting for the agreement to be written out.”

“Oh, what a shameful thing! Isn't there any other way at all, my own Spring Treasure's father?” That was the name of the boy in her arms.

“Shameful? Yes, I've thought about it. But we're poor, and we don't want to die. What else can we do? I'm afraid I'm not going to be able to do any transplanting this year.”

“Have you thought about Spring Treasure? He's only three. What will he do without a mother?”

“I can look after him, can't I? He's ready to be weaned, anyway.”

Little by little he seemed to have grown angry. He now strode out through the door. He began to sob, brokenly.

Out of her memories of the past emerged the thing which had happened just a year ago. She had borne a daughter then, and she lay on the bed like one who had died. No, the dead die whole, but her body was shattered into fragments. On a heap of dry grass on the floor the new-born

呀，呱呀，』聲音很重的，手脚揪縮。臍帶繞在她底身上，胎盤落在一邊，她很想掙扎起來給她洗好，可是她底頭昂起來，身子凝滯在床上。這樣，她看見她底丈夫，這個兇狠的男子，飛紅着臉，提了一桶沸水到女嬰的旁邊。她簡直用了她一生底最後的力向他喊：『慢！慢……』但這個病前極兇狠的男子，沒有一分鐘商量的餘地，也不答半句話，就將『呱呀，呱呀，』聲音很重地在叫着的女兒，剛出世的新生命，用他底粗暴的兩手捧起來，如屠戶捧了將殺的小羊一般，撲通，投下在沸水裏了！除出沸水的濺聲和皮肉吸收沸水的嘶聲以外，女孩一聲也不喊——她疑問地想，爲什麼也不重重地哭一聲呢？竟這樣不響地願意的冤枉的死去麼？啊！——她轉念，那是因爲她自己當時昏過去的緣故，她當時似剝去了心一般地昏去了。

想到這里，似乎淚竟乾涸了。『唉！苦命呀！』

baby was crying loudly. "Caa, caa!" and perking its arms and legs. The navel string was twisted about it. She made a supreme effort to rise and wash the child, but only her head would lift; her body remained inert on the bed. It was then she had seen that brutal husband of hers, with flaming red face, take a pail of boiling water beside the infant. She had put forth a final effort to shout at him, "Wait! Wait!" But the brute had not allowed a moment's discussion, nor had he returned any answer. Like a butcher holding the lamb he was about to slaughter, he had taken in his hard rough hands the new-born life, the little daughter with the cries of "Caa, caa!" and, *plop!* dropped her into the water. She had heard nothing but a splash and the hiss of steaming water. The little girl made no sound. She wondered now why it had not uttered one loud cry. Had it been content to go silently to this undeserved death? Ah, yes! She remembered why she had heard nothing! She had fainted away then, fainted as she would have done if her heart had been cut out.

When she thought of this it seemed as though

她低低地嘆息了一聲。這時春寶拔去了奶頭，向他底母親的臉上看，一邊叫『媽媽！媽媽！』

* * *

在她將離別底前一晚，她揀了房子底最黑暗處坐着。一盞油燈點在灶前，螢火那麼的光亮。她，手裏抱着春寶，將她底頭貼在他底頭髮上。她底思想似乎浮漂在極遠，可是她自己捉摸不定遠在那裏。終於是牠慢慢地跑回來，跑到眼前，跑到她底孩子底身上。她向她底孩子低聲叫：

『春寶，寶寶！』

『媽媽，』孩子含着奶頭答。

『媽媽明天要去了……！』

『唔，』孩子似不十分懂得，本能地將頭鑽進他母親底胸膛。

all tears were drained away. "Ah!" she sighed softly, "fate is bitter!" Spring Treasure dropped the nipple and looked up at her. "Mamma! Mamma!"

* * *

On the evening before her departure she chose the darkest corner of the house to sit in. An oil-lamp was burning in front of the stove, giving out a firefly-like illumination. She held Spring Treasure in her arms, and let her head rest on his hair. Her thoughts seemed to have floated very far away, to what far place she could not tell. Slowly they travelled back, back to the immediate present, back to the child. She called to him in a low voice:

"Spring Treasure, my precious!"

"Mamma!" he answered, pulling on her breast.

"Mamma is going away to-morrow. . . ."

"H'mm," he replied, only half comprehending, but instinctively rubbing his head against her.

『媽媽不回來了，三年內不能回來了！』

她擦一擦眼睛，孩子放鬆口子問：

『媽媽那裏去呢？廟裏麼？』

『不是，三十里路外，一家姓李的。』

『我也去。』

『寶寶去不得的。』

『呃！』孩子反抗地，又吸着並不多的奶。

『你跟爸爸在家裏，爸爸會照料寶寶的：同寶寶睡，也帶寶寶玩，你聽爸爸的話好了。過三年，……』她沒有說完，孩子要哭似地說：

『爸爸要打我的！』

『爸爸不再打你了，』同時用她底左手撫摸着孩子底右額，在這上，有他父親在殺死他剛生下的妹兒後第三天，用鋤柄敲他，腫起而又平復了的傷痕。

“Mamma’s not coming back. She can’t come back, not for three years!”

She wiped her eyes.

“Where mamma going?” asked the child, freeing his mouth. “To temple?”

“No, she’s going ten miles away, to a family named Li.”

“I’m going too!”

“Precious can’t go alone.”

“Ng!” he grunted rebelliously, returning to the little trickle of milk.

“You stay at home with daddy. Daddy will look after my Precious. He’ll sleep with Precious, and take Precious out to play. You do what daddy tells you, that’s all. And after three years——”

“Daddy will beat me!” the child interrupted in a tearful voice.

“Daddy won’t beat you any more,” she said at the same time stroking his right cheek, where a scar was left by the blow from a hoe-handle that his father had given him on the third day after murdering his little sister.

她似要還想對孩子說話，她底丈夫踏進門了。他走到她底面前，一隻手放在袋裏，掏取着什麼，一邊說：

『錢已經拿來七十元了。還有三十要等你到了後十天付。』

停了一息說，『也答應轎子來接。』

又停了一息，『也答應轎夫一早吃好早飯來。』

這樣，他又離開了她，向門外走出去了。

這一晚，她和她底丈夫都沒有吃晚飯。

* * *

第二天，春雨竟滴滴淅淅地落着。

轎是一早就到了。可是這婦人，她却一夜不曾睡。她先將春寶底幾件破衣服都修補好；春將完了，夏將到了，可是她，連孩子冬天用的破爛棉襖都拿出

She seemed to have had something more to say to the child, but just then her husband came stalking in through the door. He walked over to her and, reaching in his pocket with one hand, said:

“I’ve got seventy dollars of the money already. The other thirty will be paid ten days after you arrive there.”

There was a pause. “And they’ve agreed to send a sedan chair for you.”

Another pause.

“And they’ve agreed that the chair-bearers will come directly after breakfast. With that he left her, and went out through the door again.

That evening neither her husband nor herself ate any supper.

* * *

The next day there was a drizzle of spring rain.

The sedan chair arrived early. She had not slept the whole night. First she had mended all of Spring Treasure’s ragged store of clothing. Spring was almost over, and summer would soon

來，移交給他底父親——實在，他已經在床上睡去了。以後，她坐在他底旁邊，想對他說幾句話，可是長夜是遲延着過去，她底話一句也說不出。而且，她大着膽向他叫了幾聲，發了幾個聽不清楚的音，聲音在他底耳外，她也就睡下不說了。

等她朦朦朧朧地離却思索將要睡去，春寶又醒了。他就推叫他底母親，要起來。以後當她給他穿衣服的時候，向他說：

『寶寶你好好地在家裏，不要哭。免得你爸爸打你。以後媽媽常買糖果來，買給寶寶喫，寶寶不要哭。』

而小孩子竟不知道悲哀是什麼一回事，張大口子『唉，唉，……』的唱起來了。她在他底唇邊吻了一吻，又說，

『不要唱，你爸爸被你唱醒了。』

轎夫坐在門首的板棧上，抽着旱烟，說着他們自

be here, yet she brought out even the torn quilted coat that he used in the winter, and turned all his things over to the father, who lay asleep in bed. Then she sat down at his side and tried to talk with him. But the long night dragged slowly through without her having said a word. Once or twice she worked up the courage to call out to him, but she said nothing intelligible, nor was it loud enough for him to hear. Finally she had lain down in silence.

Just as her mind was drifting off into unconsciousness Spring Treasure awoke. He tugged at his mother and wanted to get up. As she put on his clothes she said to him:

“Precious must be a good boy at home here, and not cry, so that daddy won’t beat you. And mamma will buy Precious lots of candy to eat. Precious mustn’t cry.”

The child, without a trace of sadness, opened his mouth and began to sing.

“Don’t sing,” she said, kissing him beside his lips. “You’ll wake daddy!”

On a bench near the door sat the chair-bearers, smoking long pipes and telling each

己要聽的話。一息，鄰村的沈家婆也趕到了。一個老婦人，熟識世故的媒婆，一進門，就拍拍她身上的雨點，向他們說：

『下雨了，下雨了，這是你們家裏此後會有滋長的預兆。』

老婦人忙碌似的在屋內旋了幾個圈，對孩子底父親說了幾句話，意思是討酬報。因爲這件契約之能訂的如此順利而合算，實在是她底力量。

『說實在話，春寶底爸呀，再加五十元，那老頭子可以買一房妾了。』她說。

於是又轉向催促她——婦人却抱着春寶，這時坐着不動。老婦人聲音很高地：

other stories. Shortly after the Sun woman arrived from the neighbouring village. She was an old woman, a matchmaker, with a wealth of worldly experience. On entering she brushed the raindrops from her cloak and said to them:

“It’s raining! It’s raining! That’s a sign that there will be growth after this in your home.”

She took a turn or two about the room in a businesslike manner, and made a few remarks to the child’s father, the general import of which was that she would appreciate a commission. It was due to her efforts, after all, that the lease agreement had been arranged so smoothly and profitably.

“To speak quite frankly, Spring Treasure’s father, for another fifty dollars the old fellow could have bought himself a concubine,” she said.

Then she set about hurrying the woman along, but the latter sat motionless with Spring Treasure in her arms. The old woman shouted at her in a high-pitched voice:

『轎夫要趕到他們家裏喫中飯的，你快些預備走呀！』

可是婦人向她瞧了一瞧，似乎說：『我實在不願離開呢！讓我餓死在這裡罷！』

聲音是在她底喉下，可是媒婆懂得了，走近到她面前，迷迷地向她笑說：

『你真是一個不懂事的丫頭，黃胖還有什麼東西給你呢？那邊真是一份有喫有贖的人家，兩百多畝田，經濟很寬裕，房子是自己底，也僱着長工養着牛。大娘底性子是極好的，對人非常客氣，每次看見人總給人一些喫的東西。那老頭子——實在並不老，臉是很白白的，也沒有留鬍子，因為讀了書，背有些儂儂的，斯文的模樣。可是也不必多說，你一走下轎就看見的，我是一個從不說謊的媒婆。』

“The chair-bearers want to get back to their own place for dinner. You had better get ready to leave.”

The woman looked at her as though saying: “Really, I don’t want to go! Let me stay here and starve!”

The match maker understood what was on her lips. She went over to her and gave her an engaging smile.

“You are a simple wench, right enough. What more has Yellow-belly got to give you? Over there is a family that has enough to eat and to spare, two hundred acres of fields, enough money, their own house, hired men and cattle. The wife is very good-natured and extremely polite to others. Every time she meets people she makes them presents of food. As to the old fellow—he isn’t really old—he has a white face and no beard at all. From so much studying he has grown round-shouldered in an elegant way. But there’s no need for me to tell you. As soon as you step down from the sedan chair you will realize that I never tell lies in my match-making.”

婦人拭一拭淚，極輕的：

『春寶……我怎麼能拋開他呢！』

『不用想到春寶了，』老婦人一手放在她底肩上，臉湊近她和春寶。『有五歲了，古人說：「三週四歲離娘身，」可以離開你了。只要你底肚子爭氣些，到那邊，也養下一二個來，萬事都好了。』

轎夫也在門首催起身了，他們嚕嚕着說。

『又不是新娘子，啼啼哭哭的。』

這樣，老婦人將春寶從她底懷裏拉去，一邊說：

『春寶讓我帶去罷。』

小小的孩子也哭了，手脚亂舞的，可是老婦人終於將他抱到小門外去。當婦人走進轎門的時候，向他們說：

『帶進屋裏來罷，外邊有雨呢。』

The woman brushed away the tears.

"Spring Treasure," she said softly, "how can I give him up this way?"

"Don't worry about him," said the old woman, placing a hand on her shoulder, and putting her face close to the two of them. "He's three. The ancients said, 'Three or four years and he leaves his mother.' He's ready to leave you. If you'll just put forth an effort with your belly and bear a child or two while you are there everything will be fine."

The chair-bearers at the door were urging departure.

"She isn't a young bride," they grumbled, "to be doing so much crying!"

The old woman took Spring Treasure out of her arms.

"I'll take him with me," she said.

The child cried and struggled, but was finally bundled out through the side-door. Just as his mother was getting into the chair she called out to them:

"Bring him back into the house. It's raining out there."

她底丈夫用手支着頭坐着，一動沒有動，而且也沒有話。

* * *

兩村的相隔有三十里路，可是當轎夫的第二次將轎子放下肩時，就到了。春天的細雨，從轎子的布篷裏飄進，吹濕了她底衣衫。一個臉孔肥肥的，兩眼很有心計的約摸五十四五歲的老婦人來迎接她，她想：這當然是大娘了。可是只向她滿面羞澀地看一看，並沒有叫。她很親慝似地將她牽上沿階，一個長長的瘦瘦的而面孔圓細的男子就從房裏走出來。他向新來的少婦，仔細地瞧了瞧，堆出滿臉的笑容來，向她問：

『這麼早就到了麼？可是打溼你底衣裳了。』

而那個老婦人，却簡直了沒有顧到他底說話，也向她問：

『還有什麼東西在轎裏麼？』

『沒有什麼了，』少婦答。

Her husband sat resting his head on his hand, and neither moved nor spoke.

* * *

It was ten miles from one village to the other, but the second time the chair was set down they were there. The fine spring rain had blown in through the cloth curtain of the sedan chair and soaked her coat. She was welcomed by a plump-faced lady of fifty-four or -five, with crafty eyes. "That must be the wife," she said to herself, and looked at her in silence, full of embarrassment. The other conducted her in a friendly way to the steps, while a tall, thin man with a delicate round face came out from the house. After carefully scrutinizing the new arrival he smiled broadly and said:

"You arrived very early, didn't you? Are your clothes wet?"

The older woman paid no attention to his presence.

"Do you have any things in the chair?" she asked.

"No, I have nothing."

幾位鄰舍的婦人站在大門外，探頭張望的；可是她們走進屋裏面了。

她自己也不知道這究竟爲什麼，她底心老是掛念着她底舊的家，掉不下她底春寶。這是真實而明顯的，她應慶祝這將開始的三年的生活——這個家庭，和她所典給他的丈夫，都比曾經過去的要好，秀才確是一個溫良和善的人，講話是那樣的低聲，連大娘，實在也是一個出乎意料之外的婦人，她底態度之慇懃，和滔滔的一席話：說她和她丈夫底過去的生活之經過，從美滿而漂亮的結婚生活起，一直到現在，中間的三十年。她曾做過一次的產，十五六年以前了，養下一個男孩子，據她說，是一個極美麗又極聰明的嬰兒，可是不到十個月，竟患了天花死去了。這樣，以後就沒有再養過第二個。在他的意思中，似乎——似乎，——早就叫她底丈夫娶一房妾，可是他，不知是愛她呢，還是沒有相當的人——這一層她並沒有說清

A number of women from the neighbourhood had gathered outside the door and were peeping in as they passed into the house.

She did not understand why it was that she should keep thinking of her old home, and why she could not forget Spring Treasure. Certainly it was obvious that she ought to be congratulating herself on the three years of life that were commencing. Both this house and the husband to whom she had been leased were better than the ones she had left. The *hsiu-ts'ai* was unquestionably a kind and good man, with a quiet way of speaking, while even the wife was unexpectedly pleasant, with her attentiveness and her unceasing flow of chatter. She related the whole history of her life with her husband, from the time of her beautiful and happy marriage down to the present a period of thirty years. She had borne one child, she said, fifteen or sixteen years previously. It was a son, and, according to her, a very beautiful and clever child; but it had died of smallpox before it was ten months old. She had never had a second child. Apparently she had wanted her husband

楚：於是，就一直到現在。這樣，竟說得這個具着樸素的心地的她，一時酸，一會苦，一時甜上心頭，一時有鹽的壓下去了。最後，這個老婦人并將她底希望也向她說出來了。她底臉是嬌紅地，可是老婦人說：

『你是養過三四個孩子的女人了，當然，你是知道什麼的，你一定知道的還比我多。』

這樣，她說着走開了。

當晚，秀才也將家裏種種情形告訴她，實際，不過是向她誇耀或求媚罷了。她坐在一張櫥子的旁邊，這樣的紅的木櫥，是她舊的家所沒有的，她眼睛白晃晃地瞧着牠。秀才也就坐到櫥子底面前來，問她：

『你叫什麼名字呢？』

她沒有答，也沒有笑，站起來，走到床底前面，秀才也跟到床旁邊，帶笑地問她：

to marry a concubine, but, whether he had refused because he loved her or because he didn't love her, he had not done so up to the present. As she listened to her the simple-natured young woman felt alternately cheered and pained, elated and depressed. Finally the old lady referred to their expectations. This brought a blush to her face, but the old lady said:

"You have raised several children already. Of course you know all about it. I am sure you know more than I do."

And with this she left her.

That evening the *hsiu-ts'ai* also talked in great detail about family affairs, partly in a boastful way, to be sure, and partly to be attractive to her. She was sitting beside a chest of drawers, a red wooden one, such as she had never possessed in her own home. She was looking at it wide-eyed when he came and sat down in front of it.

"What is your name?" he asked her.

She did not return an answer or a smile, but, rising, went towards the bed. He followed, and laughingly asked her:

『怕羞麼？哈，你想你底丈夫麼？哈，哈，現在我是你底丈夫了。』聲音是輕輕的，又用手去牽她底袖子。『不要愁罷！你也想你底孩子的，是不是？不過——』

他沒有說完却又哈的笑了一聲，他自己脫去他外面的長衫了。

她可以聽見房外的大娘底聲音在高聲地罵着什麼人，她一時聽不出在罵誰，罵燒飯的女僕，又好像在罵她自己，可是因爲她底怨恨，彷彿又是爲她而發的。秀才在床上叫道：

『睡罷，她常是這麼嚕嚕嚕嚕的。她以前很愛那個長工，因爲長工要和燒飯的黃媽多說話，她却常要罵黃媽的。』

* * *

日子是一天天地過去了。舊的家，漸漸地在她底腦子裏疏遠了，而眼前，却一步步地親近她使她熟

“Are you shy? Ha! You’re thinking about your husband, eh? Well, I’m your husband now.” But his voice was gentle. He put out a hand and pulled at her sleeve. “Don’t be sad. I suppose you’re thinking about your child too. But——”

He did not finish what he was going to say. With another laugh he began to remove his outer gown.

She could hear the wife’s voice outside roundly cursing some one. She could not make out who it was. It might be the cook, or it might be herself. Somehow she appeared to be the cause of it.

“Come to sleep,” called the *hsiu-ts’ai* from the bed. “She is always carrying on like that. She used to be very fond of the hired man, and so she always scolds Mrs. Wang, the cook, because the hired man liked her.”

* * *

The days passed, one after the other. Gradually the thoughts of her old home grew distant, while her immediate surroundings

悉。雖則，春寶的哭聲有時竟在她底耳朵邊響，夢中，她有幾次的遇到過他了。可是夢是一個比一個縹渺，眼前的事務是一天比一天繁多。她知道這個老婦人是猜忌多心的，外表雖則對她還算大方，可是她底嫉妒的心是和偵探一樣，監視着秀才和她的一舉一動。有時，秀才從外面回來，先遇見了她而同她說話，老婦人就疑心有什麼特別的東西買給她了，非在當晚，將秀才叫到她自己底房內去，狠狠地訓斥一番不可。『你給狐狸迷着了麼？』『你應該稱一稱你自己底老骨頭是多少重！』像這樣的話，她耳聞到不止一次了。這樣以後，她望見秀才從外面回來而旁邊沒有她坐着的時候，就非得急忙避開不可。即使她在旁邊，有時也該讓開一些，但這種動作，她要做的非常自然，而且不能讓傍人看出，否則，她又要向她發怒，說是她有意要在傍人的前面暴露她大娘底醜惡。

became closer and more familiar to her. Sometimes she would hear Spring Treasure crying, and on several occasions she had dreamed about him. But the dreams grew more vague, while the duties with which she was surrounded increased daily. She discovered that the old lady was extremely suspicious. On the surface she appeared generous, but actually her jealousy turned her into a sleuth, for ever spying on every action of her husband in regard to the new woman. If the *hsiu-ts'ai* came in from outside and spoke with the other first she was immediately suspicious that he had brought something special for her, and it became imperative for her to call him into her room that very night and impose on him an angry lecture. "Are you bewitched by a fox?" "Do you know how much your old bones weigh?" Such expressions were commonly heard. From then on, if the young woman happened to be alone when the *hsiu-ts'ai* came in, she hastened to avoid him; Even if the old lady were near by it was wise to retire some distance, although she attempted to be as natural and unobtrusive about it as possible.

而且以後，竟將家裏的許多雜務都堆積在她底身上，同一個女僕那麼樣。她還算是聰明的，有時老婦人底換下來的衣服放着，她也給她拿去洗了，雖然她說：

『我底衣服怎麼要你洗呢？就是你自己底衣服，也可叫黃媽洗的。』可是接着說：

『妹妹呀，你最好到豬欄裏去看一看，那兩隻豬爲什麼這樣喁喁叫的，或者因爲沒有吃飽罷，黃媽總是不肯給牠吃飽的。』

八個月了，那年冬天，她底胃却起了變化：老是不想喫飯，想喫新鮮的麵，蕃薯等。但蕃薯或麵喫了兩餐，又不想喫，又想喫餛飩，多喫又要嘔。而且還想喫南瓜和梅子——這是六月的東西，真稀奇，向那裏去找呢？秀才是知道在這變化中所帶來的預告了。

Otherwise the lady would flare up and accuse her of trying to make her appear harsh in the eyes of bystanders. As time went on all the responsibilities of the house were heaped on to her shoulders, as though she had been a servant. She acted wisely, and often washed the old lady's clothes, although she was told:

"There is no reason for you to wash my clothes. Even your own clothes can be given to Mrs. Wang to wash."

Directly afterwards, however, the old lady would generally say, "Sister, go down to the pigsty, will you, please, and have a look around. I don't know why those two pigs should be making such a fuss. Probably they haven't enough food. Mrs. Wang always refuses to feed them."

After eight months, in the winter, her appetite underwent a change. She did not care to eat rice; only fresh noodles or sweet potatoes. After a few meals she was tired of these too. If she ate too much it would not stay down. She had a desire for squash and plums, but these grew in the sixth month. Where could one get

他鎮日的笑微微，能找到的東西，總忙着給她找來。他親身給她到街上去買橘子，又托便人買了金柑來。他在廊沿下走來走去，口裏唸唸有詞的，不知說什麼。他看她和黃媽磨過年的粉，但還沒有磨到三升，就向她叫：『歇一歇罷，長工也好磨的，年糕是人人要喫的。』

有時在夜裏，人家談着話，他却獨自拿了一盞燈，在燈下，讀起詩經來了：

『關關雎鳩，
在河之洲，
窈窕淑女，
君子好逑——』

這時長工向他問：

them now? The *hsiu-ts'ai* appreciated the message that these signs conveyed, and smiled the whole day long. Whatever it was possible to buy he procured for her. He went personally into the street to get her oranges, and ordered little golden oranges to be bought for her. He would walk up and down the veranda, muttering things to himself that no one heard. Once he saw her helping Mrs. Wang grind flour for the New Year cakes, and called to her before she had finished as much as three pints, "Take a rest. The hired man can do the grinding. They all share in the cakes, anyhow."

Sometimes in the evenings, while the others were chatting, he would bring a lamp and sit by himself, reading from the *Book of Odes* in the lamplight.

Hark! from the isle in the stream the voice.
Of the fish hawks that o'er their nest rejoice!
From them our thoughts to that young lady go.
Modest and virtuous, loth herself to show.
Where could be found, to share our prince's state.
So fair, so virtuous, and so fit a mate?

Then the hired man would say to him:

「先生，你又不去考舉人，還讀牠做什麼呢？」

他却摸一摸沒有鬚子的口邊，悅悅地說道：

「是呀，你也知道人生底快樂麼？所謂：

「洞房花燭夜，

金榜掛名時。」

你也知道這兩句話底意思麼？這是人生底最快樂的兩件事呀！可是我對於這兩件事都過去了，我却還有比這兩件更快樂的事呢！」

這樣，除出他底兩個妻以外，其餘的人們都大笑了。

這些事，在老婦人眼睛裏是看得非常氣惱了。她起初聞到她底受孕也歡喜，以後看見秀才的這樣奉承她，她却怨恨她自己肚子底不會還債了。有一次，次年三月了，這婦人因爲身體感覺不舒服，頭有些痛，睡了三天。秀才呢，也願她歇息歇息，更不時的問她

“Why do you still study those things, sir? You are not sitting for an examination now.”

Then he would stroke his smooth cheeks and answer merrily:

“Aha! Do you know about the joys of life too?”

“Flower-candles for the wedding night.

A list of gold for the candidates' names.

“Do you understand those two phrases? Those are the two happiest events in a man's life. Both of them belong to my past, and yet I have a joy now greater than either of them.”

When he said this every one except his two wives would burst into laughter.

These things were very annoying to the old lady. At first she had been pleased over the woman's pregnancy, but when she noted how the *hsiu-ts'ai* humoured her she was angry that her own belly had not been able to pay the debt. On one occasion—it was in the third month of the following year—the young woman remained in bed for three days because of a slight illness and a headache. The *hsiu-ts'ai* was quite willing for

要什麼，而老婦人着實地發怒了。她說她裝嬌，嚕嚕嚕嚕的也說了三天。她先是惡意地噙嘲她：說是一到秀才底家裏就高貴起來了，什麼腰酸呀，頭痛呀，姨太太的架子都擺出來了；以前在她自己底家裏，她不相信她有這樣的嬌養，恐怕竟和街頭的獺狗一樣，肚子裏有着一肚皮的小狗，臨產了，還要到處的奔求着食物。現在呢，因爲『老東西』——這是秀才的妻叫秀才的名字趨奉了她，就裝着嬌滴滴的樣子了。

『兒子，』她有一次在廚房裏對黃媽說：『誰沒有養過呀？我也曾有過十個月的孕，不相信有這麼的難受。而且，此刻的兒子，還在「閻羅王的簿裏，」誰保的定生出來不是一隻獺蝦蟆呢？也要等真

her to rest. Not only so, but he was continuously asking her whether she needed anything. This sent the old lady into a violent temper. She said the woman was putting on airs, and muttered about it for three days, heaping malicious ridicule on her. As soon as the woman had arrived, she said, she had taken on a high opinion of herself, what with her pains in the side and her pains in the head—strutting about like a first-class concubine. She was quite sure that she had never been so ‘pampered while she had been in her own home. There she had probably been obliged to do as the bitch on the street does—go hunting her own food with a bellyful of puppies inside her. Now, just because that old rascal—this was what she called her husband—was comforting her, she was pretending to be delicate.

“A son!” she once said to Mrs Wang. “We have all had children. I carried one myself for ten months. I’ll never believe it is as bad as all this. In any case, this son of hers it still on the roll-book of the underworld. Who can guarantee that it won’t be an ugly toad when it is born.

的「鳥兒」從洞裏鑽出來看見黑白了，才可在我底面前顯威風，擺架子，此刻，不過是一塊血的貓頭鷹，就這麼的裝腔，也顯得太早一點！」

當晚這婦人沒有喫晚飯，這時她已經睡了，聽了這一番婉輕的冷嘲與熱罵，她嗚嗚咽咽地低聲哭泣了。秀才也帶衣服坐在床上，聽到混身透着冷汗，發起抖來。他很想扣好衣服，重新走起來，去打她一頓，抓住她底頭髮，狠狠地打她一頓，洩洩他一肚皮的氣。但不知怎樣，似乎沒有力量，連指也顫動，臂也酸軟了。一邊輕輕地嘆息着說：『唉，一向實在太對她好了。結婚了三十年沒有打過她一掌，簡直連指甲都沒有彈到她底皮膚上過，所以今日，竟和娘娘一般地難惹了。』

同時，他爬過到牀底那端，她底身邊，向她耳語說：

『不要哭罷，不要哭罷，隨她吠去好了！她是闖過的母鷄，看見別人的驕卵是難受的。假如你這一次真能養出一個男孩子來，我當送你兩樣寶貝——我有

After the little beast has crawled out it will be time enough for her to strut haughtily in front of me, but it is a little early for her to be puffing out now, while it is still a lump of flesh."

The young woman had not eaten that night. She listened in bed to all these abusive sneers, and cried quietly to herself. The *hsiu-ts'ai*, sitting half undressed on the bed, broke into a cold sweat and trembling as he heard it. He had the impulse to rise, dress himself, and administer a beating to her, pull out her hair, give her a sound thrashing, to give vent to his wrath. But he seemed not to have the strength. His fingers were trembling, and his arms felt weak. "Alas!" he sighed. "I have been too kind to her. During thirty years of married life I have never slapped her; never even flicked her with my finger-nail. And now she is as irritable as a crusty dowager."

He moved closer to the young woman and spoke in her ear:

"Don't cry! Don't cry! Let her bark! She's only a castrated hen who can't stand seeing others hatching out eggs. If you really bear a son this time I have two jewels for you. I have a green

一隻青玉的戒指，一隻白玉的……』他沒有說完，可是他忍不住聽下門外的他底大妻底喋喋的譏笑的聲音，他急忙地脫去了衣服，將頭鑽進被窩裏去，湊向她底胸腔，一邊說：

『我有白玉的……』

肚子一天天地膨脹的如斗那麼大，老婦人終究也將產婆婆定了，而且在別人的面前，竟拿起花布來做嬰兒用的衣服。

酷熱的暑天到了盡頭，舊歷的六月，他們在希望的眼中過去了。秋開始，涼風也拂拂地在鄉鎮上吹送。於是有一天，這全家的人們都到了希望底最高潮，屋裏底空氣完全地騷動起來。秀才底心更是異常的緊張，他在天井上不斷地徘徊，手裏捧着一本歷書，好似要讀牠背誦那麼的唸去——『戊辰，』甲戌，』『壬寅，』老是反覆地輕輕地說着。有時他底焦急的眼光向一間關了窗的房子望去——在這間房子

jade ring and a white jade——” The continued jeering of his wife outside interrupted him. He threw off his clothes and pulled the blankets over his head. Laying his face on her breast, he whispered:

“I have a white jade . . .”

Day by day the abdomen grew more distended, until it was the size of a bushel measure, and the old lady finally made arrangements for a midwife. She even went to the length, while other people were looking, of getting out brightly coloured cloth and sewing clothes for the baby.

The cruel hot summer had come to an end, and the whole family had passed the sixth moon in an attitude of expectancy. At the start of autumn cooler breezes began to caress the village. Then one day the hopes of the household rose to high-water mark. The atmosphere in the home was one of thrills, and the *hsiu-ts'ai* especially was in a tense state. He walked back and forth continuously in the courtyard, carrying an astrological almanac, out of which he appeared to be memorizing something. “The Tiger influence is dominant,” he muttered over and over

內是有產母底低聲呻吟的聲音；有時他向天上望一望被雲籠罩着的太陽，於是又走向房門口，向站在房門內的黃媽問：

『此刻如何？』

黃媽不住地點着頭不做聲響，一息，答：

『快下來了，快下來了。』

於是他又捧了那本歷書，在廊下徘徊起來。

這樣的情形，一直繼續到黃昏底青烟在地而起來，燈火一盞盞的如春天的野花般在屋內開起，嬰兒纔落地了，是一個男的。嬰兒的聲音是很重地在屋內叫，秀才却坐在屋角裏，幾乎快樂到流出眼淚來了。全家的人都沒有心思喫晚飯，在平淡的晚餐席上，秀才底大妻向用人們說道：

『暫時瞞一瞞罷，給小貓頭避避晦氣；假如別人

to himself. Sometimes his anxious eyes turned towards the closed window of a room in which could be heard the low voice of the midwife. Sometimes he stared up at the cloudcovered sun.

“How is it now?” he asked of Mrs Wang, who stood inside the door of the room.

Mrs Wang nodded silently at him several times, adding after a moment:

“It will be here soon! It will be here soon!”

Then he took his almanac and began walking up and down the courtyard again.

This went on until the twilight haze had commenced to rise from the ground, and the lamps blossomed out here and there like flowers in spring. Then the child—a boy—was born. One could hear his voice as he was crying lustily from the room, and the *hsiu-ts'ai* sat in a corner ready to cry with happiness. No one in the house had any desire to eat, but they gathered about the plain supper table. There the wife said to the servants:

“Keep the matter hidden for a while, so that the little baby may escape noxious influences.

問起，也答養一個女的好了。」

他們都微笑地點點頭。

一個月以後，嬰兒底白嫩的小臉孔，已在秋天底陽光裏照耀了。這個少婦給他哺着奶，鄰舍的婦人圍着他們瞧，有的稱讚嬰兒的鼻子好，有的稱讚嬰兒底口子好，有的稱讚嬰兒底兩耳好；更有的稱讚嬰兒底母親，也比以前好，白而且壯了。老婦人却正和老祖母那麼的吩咐着，保護着，這時開始說：

『夠了，不要弄他哭了。』

關於孩子底名字，秀才煞費苦心地想着，但總想不出一個相當的字來。據老婦人的意見，還是從『長命富貴』或『福祿壽喜』裏揀一個字，最好還是『壽』字，或與『壽』同意義的字，如『其頤』，

If anyone asks, say that it is a girl that has been born."

Then they all nodded and smiled knowingly.

After a month the baby's soft white face appeared in the autumn sunshine. He was being nursed by the young woman, surrounded by curious women from the neighbourhood. Some of these praised the child's nose, some his mouth, and some his two ears. Others remarked that the mother was looking well, better than before; she had grown fairer and put on flesh. But the old lady was about, giving commands and dispensing care in the manner of an old grandmother, and she now said:

"That's enough! Don't start the child crying!"

Regarding a name for the baby the scholar indulged in long and painful meditation, but was not successful in finding appropriate characters. The old lady's notion was to select a name from the phrase "Long Life, Riches, and Honour," or from "Happiness, Prosperity, Joy, and Old Age." Best of all, she thought, would be the "Longevity" character or one of its

『彭祖』等。但秀才不同意，以爲太通俗，人云亦云的名字。於是翻開了易經，書經，向這裏面找，但找了半月，一月，還沒有恰貼的字。在他底意思：以爲在這個名字內，一邊要祝福孩子，一邊要包含他底老而得子底蘊義，所以竟不容易找。這一天，他一邊抱着三個月的嬰兒，一邊又向書裏找名字，戴着一副眼鏡，將書遞到燈底旁邊去。嬰兒的母親呆呆地坐在房內底一邊，不知思想着什麼，却忽然開口說道：

『我想，還是叫他「秋寶」罷。』屋內的人們底幾對眼睛都轉向她，注意地靜聽着：『他不是生在秋天嗎？秋天的寶貝——還是叫他「秋寶」罷。』

synonyms, such as "Ripe Old Age." The *hsiu-ts'ai*, however, did not agree, considering these names too common and trite. But, though he pored over the *Book of Changes* and the *Book of History*, hunting for something out of these volumes, a half month, a whole month, passed without his having discovered a name that struck him as suitable. He wished the name, on the one hand, to pronounce a blessing on the child, and, on the other hand, to express by implication the fact that he had secured the son at an advanced age. It was not easy to do this. One day he was sitting with the three-months-old baby on his knee, holding his book under the lamplight and peering through a pair of spectacles still in search of a name out of it. The mother was sitting idle at one side of the room, with her thoughts far away. Suddenly she spoke up:

"I think it would be nice to call him 'Autumn Treasure.'" All who were in the room turned their eyes towards her and listened. "He was born in the autumn, wasn't he? A precious gift from the autumn! Call him 'Autumn Treasure.'" "

秀才呆了一息，立刻接着說道：『是呀，我真煞費心思了。我年過半百，實在到了人生的秋期；孩子也正養在秋天；「秋」是萬物成熟的節季，秋寶，實在是一個很好的名字呀！而且書經裏沒有載着麼？「乃亦有秋，」我真乃亦有「秋」了！』

接着，又稱讚了一通嬰兒的母親：說是呆讀書實在無用，聰明是天生的。這些話，說的這婦人連坐着都覺得侷促不安，垂下頭，苦笑地又含淚的想：

『我不過因「春寶」想到罷了。』

秋寶是天天成長的非常可愛地離不開他底母親了。他有出奇的大的眼睛，對陌生人是不倦地注視地瞧着，但對他底母親，却遠遠地一眼就知道了。他整天地抓住了他底母親，雖則秀才是比她還愛他，但不

“Excellent!” The *hsiu-ts'ai* took her up immediately. “What a lot of effort I wasted! Yes, I have reached the autumn of life. I’m over fifty. Then the child was born in autumn, and autumn is the ripening season for all nature. ‘Autumn Treasure’ is a perfect name! Besides, it can be found in the *Book of History*. ‘Still there will be autumn harvest,’ it says, and, indeed, I am having my harvest!”

Then he praised the child’s mother, saying that mere study was worthless after all, and that intelligence was a gift from Heaven. These remarks made the woman feel very uncomfortable. She dropped her eyes, and mused bitterly and tearfully,

“It was only that I was thinking of Spring Treasure!”

Autumn Treasure grew daily sweeter and more attached to his mother. He had amazingly large eyes, with which he stared long and inquisitively at strangers, although he recognized his own mother at a glance, even from a distance. All day he clung to her, but in spite of the *hsiu-ts'ai*’s great affection for him the child did not

喜歡父親，秀才底大妻呢，表面也愛他，似愛她自己親生的兒子一樣，但在嬰兒底大眼睛裏，却看她是陌生人，也用奇怪的不倦的視法。可是他的執住他底母親愈緊，而他底母親離開這家的日子也愈近了。春天底口子咬住了冬天底尾巴；而夏天底脚又常是緊隨着在春天底身後的；這樣，誰都將孩子底母親底三年快到的問題橫放在心頭上。

秀才呢，因爲愛子的關係，首先向他底大妻提出來了；他願意再拿出一百元錢，將她永遠買下來。可是他底大妻底回答是：

『你要買她，那先給我藥死罷！』

秀才聽到這句話，氣的只向鼻孔放出氣，許久沒有說；以後，他反而做着笑臉的：

『你想想孩子沒有娘……？』老婦人也尖利地冷笑地說：

care for his father. The wife of the scholar was superficially fond of him and gave the impression that she loved him as much as a child of her own, but in the baby's large eyes she remained a stranger and was favoured with the persistent stare of curiosity. The tighter the hold that he took on his mother, the nearer approached the day of her departure. Spring came biting on the tail of winter, while summer's feet followed close behind. So the fact of the nearing end of the mother's three years began to figure prominently in the minds of all.

The *hsiu-ts'ai*, because of his love for the son, took up the matter first with his wife. He wished, he said, to pay another hundred dollars and purchase the woman in perpetuity.

"If you want to buy her just give me poison first!" was his wife's answer.

The *hsiu-ts'ai* said nothing for a long time, merely snorting with rage. Then he forced a smile and asked.

"Don't you think a child without its mother——?"

『我不好算是他底娘麼？』

在孩子底母親的心呢，却正矛盾着這兩種的衝突了：一邊，她底腦裏老是有『三年』這兩個字，三年是容易過去的，於是她底生活便變做在秀才底家裏底用人似的了。而且想像中的春寶，也同眼前的秋寶一樣活潑可愛，她既捨不得秋寶，怎麼就能捨得掉春寶呢？可是另一邊，她實在願意永遠在這新的家裏住下去，她想，春寶的爸爸不是一個長壽的人，他底病一定是在三五年之內要將他帶走到不可知的異國裏去的，於是，她便要求她底第二個丈夫，將春寶也領過來，這樣，春寶也在她底眼前。

有時，她倦坐在房外的沿廊下，初夏的陽光，異常地能令人昏朦的起幻想，秋寶睡在她底懷裏，含着

“So you don’t consider me a suitable mother for him?” replied the old woman sarcastically.

In the mind of the child’s mother a struggle was going on between two conflicting feelings. In the first place, she had long had echoing in her brain the words ‘three years.’ Three years, she had thought, would pass quickly, and so she had accepted the life of a slave in the *hsiu-ts’ai*’s house-hold. She found the Spring Treasure of memory as lively and appealing in her thought as the Autumn Treasure of reality. If she could not bear to give up the latter, how much less could she relinquish the former! She had an earnest desire, on the other hand, to spend the rest of her life in this new home. She felt that Spring Treasure’s father had not long to live, that his sickness would very likely carry him off within three or four years to the unknowable realm. She planned to ask her second husband to adopt Spring Treasure so that he could be with her also.

Daydreams came most easily in the early summer sunshine on the veranda outside the house. Sometimes as she sat there nursing

她底乳，可是她覺得彷彿春寶同時也站在她底旁邊，她伸出手去也想將春寶抱近來，她還要對他們兄弟兩人說幾句話，可是身邊是空空的。

在身邊的較遠的門口，却站着這位臉孔慈善而眼睛凶毒的老婦人，目光注視着她。這樣，她也恍恍惚惚地敏悟：『還是早些脫離罷，她簡直探子一樣地監視着我了。』可是忽然懷內的孩子一叫，她却又什麼也沒有的只顧着眼前的事實來支配她了。

以後，秀才又將計劃修改了一些，他想叫沈家婆來，叫她向秋寶底母親底前夫去說，他願否再拿進三十元——最多是五十元，將妻續典三年給秀才。秀才對他底大妻說：

『要是秋寶到五歲，是可以離開娘了。』

他底大妻正是手裏捻着念佛珠，一邊在唸着『南無阿彌陀佛，』一邊答：

Autumn Treasure in her bosom she seemed to see Spring Treasure too standing beside her. She would put out a hand to draw him closer, and begin to talk to the two brothers—but the other was not there.

In the doorway not far off stood the old woman with the kindly face and cruel eyes, watching her attentively. Then she would come to a startled realization. “Better to get away as soon as possible! She watches me just like a spy!” When, however, the child in her arms gave a cry she knew that nothing else mattered but this, and this controlled her.

Later on the scholar-father modified his plan somewhat. He decided to send for the Sun woman and have her go to Autumn Treasure’s mother’s first husband to ask whether he would be willing for thirty dollars—at the very most fifty—to renew the lease on his wife for another three years.

“When Autumn Treasure is five,” he said to his wife, “then he can leave his mother.”

The old lady was saying her prayers, with a Buddhist rosary in her hand. She continued to mutter “*Mamu Amitabba*” as she replied.

「她家裏也還有前兒在，你也應放她和她底結髮夫婦團聚一下罷。」

秀才低着頭，斷斷續續地仍然這樣說：

「你想想秋寶兩歲就沒有娘……」

可是老婦人放下念佛珠說：『我會養的，我會管理他的，你怕我謀害了他麼？』

秀才一聽結末一句話，就拔步走開了。老婦人仍在後面說：

「這個兒子是幫我生的，秋寶是我底；絕種雖然是絕了你家底種，可是我却仍然喫着你家底飯。你真被迷了，老昏了，一點也不會想了。你還有幾年好活，却要拚命拉她在身邊，雙連牌位，我是不願意坐的！」

老婦人似乎還有許多刻毒的銳利的話，可是秀才遠遠的走開聽不見了。

"She has a child of her own at home. You ought to give her the opportunity of associating with her lawful husband again."

He hung his head and said hesitatingly:

"But think of Autumn Treasure being deprived of his mother at the age of two!"

"I can raise him," said the old woman, putting down her rosary. "I can look after him. Are you afraid I'm going to assassinate him?"

At her last words he rose and strode away. She continued to call after him:

"It was to help me that we had this son. Autumn Treasure is mine. And though it is your family, not mine, which would be in danger of extinction, nevertheless I have to eat the food of your family. You have gone daft, childish with age. You have lost all your senses. How many more years do you have to live that you hang on to this woman with might and main? I don't intend my memorial table to sit beside a rival!"

But he had moved too far away to hear the rest of the vicious and cutting things that the old lady had to say.

在夏天，嬰兒底頭生了一個瘡，有時身體稍稍發些熱，於是這個老婦人就到處的問菩薩，求佛藥，給嬰兒敷在瘡上，或灌下肚裏，嬰兒的母親覺得並不十分要緊，反而使這樣小小的生命哭成一身的汗珠，她不願意，或將喫了幾口的藥暗地裏拿去倒掉了。於是這個老婦人就高聲嘆息，向秀才說：

『你看，她竟一點也不介意他底病，還說孩子是並不怎樣瘦下去。愛在心裏的是深的；專疼表面是假的。』

這樣，婦人只有暗自揮淚，秀才也不說什麼話了。

秋寶一週紀念的時候，這家熱鬧的排了一天的酒筵，客人也到的三四十，有的送衣服，有的送麵，有的送銀製的獅頭，給嬰兒掛在胸前的，有的送鍍金的壽星老頭兒，給孩子釘在帽上的，許多禮物，都在客

During the summer a boil came out on the baby's head, and sometimes he suffered from a slight fever. The old lady, therefore, busied herself consulting the gods and procuring Buddhist remedies to rub on the boil or pour into the baby's stomach. The mother did not consider the matter serious, and she objected to having the child kept in a perspiration from crying so much. She often threw out the medicine secretly after it had been barely tasted.

"You see!" complained the old lady to her husband, sighing loudly. "She isn't at all concerned over the baby's illness, and won't admit that he is getting thinner. Love in the heart is deep, but love on the surface is merely false."

The young woman wept secretly, and the *hsiu-ts'ai* said nothing.

On the occasion of Autumn 'Treasure's first birthday there was a busy celebration all day long, to which thirty or forty guests came. Some brought gifts of clothing, some brought noodles, some brought silver lions to be hung about the baby's neck; others brought gilded images of the

人底袖子裏帶來了。他們祝願着嬰兒的飛黃騰達，讚頌着嬰兒的長壽永生；主人底臉孔，竟是榮光照耀着，有如落日的雲霞反映着在他底頰上似的。

可是在這天，正當他們筵席將舉行的黃昏時，來了一個客，從朦朧的暮光中向他們底天井走進，人們都注意他：一個憔悴異常的鄉人，衣服補衲的，頭髮很長，在他底腋下，挾着一個紙包。主人駭異地迎上前去，問他是那裏人，他口吃吃的答了，主人一時糊塗的，但立刻明白了，就是那個皮販。主人更輕輕地說：

『你爲什麼也送東西來呢？你真不必的呀！』

來客膽怯地向四週看看，一邊答說：

『要，要的……我來祝祝這個寶貝長壽千……
……』

God of Long Life to be sewn on the baby's cap. Presents of every kind emerged from the sleeves of the guests. They wished the child an illustrious career and immortal life, while the host's face glowed as though his cheeks reflected the glories of a sunset.

Towards evening of that day, just as the feast was beginning, there came a guest into the courtyard, walking through the twilight mist. The people, staring at him, saw a frightfully haggard country yokel, with clothes all patched and with very long hair, carrying a paper package under his arm. The host went over in surprise to receive him, and asked him where he came from. The tongue-tied response conveyed nothing to the host until of a sudden he understood: this must be that trader in skins!

"Why have you brought a present?" he asked in an undertone. "You really didn't need to do that!"

The guest looked timidly about him before answering.

"I want—I wanted to—I came to wish the lady long life and a thousand——"

他是沒有說完，一邊將腋下的紙包打開來了，手指顫動的打開了兩三重的紙，於是拿出四隻銅製鍍銀的字，一方寸那麼大，是『壽比南山』四字。

秀才的大娘走來了，向他仔細一看，似乎不大高興。秀才却將他招待到席上，客人們互相私語着。

兩點鐘的酒與肉，將人們弄得胡亂與狂熱了：他們高聲猜着拳，用大碗盛着酒互相比賽，鬧得似乎房子都被震動了。只有那個皮販，他雖然也喝了兩杯酒，可是仍然坐着不動，客人們也不招呼他。等到興盡了，於是各人草草地喫了一碗飯，互祝着好話，從兩兩三三的燈籠光影中，走散了。

He broke off to pull out the paper package, and with trembling fingers removed two or three layers of paper. Then he produced four characters each about an inch square, made of brass and coated with silver. The characters read: "Longevity Rivalling Southern Mountain."

The *hsiu-ts'ai*'s wise approached and inspected the visitor, appearing not too pleased. The *hsiu-ts'ai*, however, conducted him to the festal board, where the guests were already whispering to one another.

Two hours of meal and wine put the company into a state of maudlin boisterousness. They played at 'guessing fingers' in loud voices, filled up large bowls with wine and challenged each other to drink, and made so much confusion generally that the house tottered. The skin-trader alone, although he drank two cups of wine, remained still and silent, nor did any of the guests pay the least attention to him. When the influence of the wine was wearing off each guest hastily gulped down a bowl of rice, uttered congratulations, and the company departed by twos and threes, carrying lanterns.

而皮販，却喫到最後，用人來收拾羹碗了，他才離開了桌，走到廊下的黑暗處。在那裏，他遇見了他底被典的妻。

『你也來做什麼呢？』婦人問，語氣是非常悽慘的。

『我那裏又願意來，因為沒有法子。』

『那末你爲什麼來的這樣晚？』

『我那裏有買禮物的錢呀？！奔跑了一上午，哀求了一上午，又到城裏買禮物，走得乏了，餓了，也遲了。』

婦人接着問：『春寶呢？』

男子沉吟了一息答：

『所以，我是爲春寶來的。……』

『爲春寶來的？』婦人驚異地回音似的問，男人慢慢地說：

『從夏天來，春寶是瘦的異樣了。到秋天，竟病

The skin-trader ate till the last, and only when the servants came to clear away the dishes did he finally leave the table. He sought out a dark corner of the veranda, and there met his leased wife

"Why did you have to come?" she asked in a melancholy tone.

"You don't think I wanted to come. I couldn't help it!"

"Then why did you come so late?"

"How do you think I got the money to buy a gift? I tramped about the whole morning, begged and pleaded the whole morning. Then I had to go to the city for the birthday present. The walking made me tired and hungry—and it made me late."

"And Spring Treasure?" asked the woman quickly.

The man heaved a sigh.

"It's about Spring Treasure that I came."

"About Spring Treasure?" she echoed in alarm.

"All through the summer," he said slowly, "Spring Treasure grew terribly thin, and with

起來了。我又那裏有錢給他請醫生喫藥，所以現在，病是更厲害了！再不想法救救他，眼見得要死了！」靜寂了一刻，繼續說：『現在，我是向你來借錢的……』

這時婦人底胸膛內，簡直似有四五隻貓在抓她，咬她，咀嚼着她底心臟一樣。她恨不得哭出來，但在人們個個向秋寶祝頌的日子，她又怎樣好跟在人們底聲音後面叫哭呢？她吞下她底眼淚，向她底丈夫說：

『我又那裏有錢呢？我在這里，每月只給我兩角錢的另用，我自己又那裏要用什麼，悉數補在孩子底身上了。現在，怎麼好呢？』

他們一時沒有話，以後，婦人又問：

『此刻有什麼人照顧着春寶呢？』

『托了一個隣舍。今晚，我仍舊想回家，我就要走了。』

他一邊說着，一邊揩着淚。女的同時哽咽着說：

the autumn he has fallen sick. I hadn't the money, of course, to get a doctor or medicines for him, so now he is worse. If we don't do something for him it looks as if he will die." He paused a moment. "And so—I came to borrow some money from you. . . ."

It seemed to the woman as though there were cats clawing and biting her breast and gnawing at her vitals. She wanted to weep, but on a day like this, when all had been voicing happy wishes for Autumn Treasure, how could she follow with sobs? Restraining her tears, she said:

"I have no money, either. Here they allow me only two mao a month for spending money. As a matter of fact I have no use for it, so that it all goes for the baby. What can we do?"

"They were both silent for a while.

"Who is looking after Spring Treasure now?" the woman asked.

"I left him in charge of a neighbour. I expected to be back again by this evening. I had better start now."

He wiped the tears from his eyes.

『你等一下罷，我向他去借借看。』

她就走開了。

* * *

三天以後的一天晚上，秀才忽然問這婦人道：

『我給你的那隻青玉戒指呢？』

『在那天夜裏，給了他了。給了他拿去當了。』

『沒有借你五塊錢麼？』秀才憤怒的。

婦人低着頭停了一息答：

『五塊錢怎麼夠呢！』秀才接着嘆息說：『總是前夫和前兒好，無論我對你怎麼樣！本來我很想再留你兩年的，現在，你還是到明春就走罷！』

女人簡直連淚也沒有的呆着了。

幾天後，他還向她那麼的說：『那隻戒指是寶貝，我給你是要你傳給秋寶的，誰知你一下就拿去

"Wait a moment," said the woman, a lump rising in her throat. "I'll see if I can borrow from him."

And she went.

* * *

Some days later the *hsiu-ts'ai* suddenly asked her one evening:

"Where is the green jade ring that I gave you?"

"I let him have it that night. He took it to pawn."

"Didn't I lend you five dollars?" he asked angrily.

"Five dollars wasn't enough."

"Ah, yes!" sighed the gentleman. "It's always the first husband and the first son of whom you think, no matter how I treat you. Well, I had been thinking of keeping you another two years, but you had better leave next spring."

The woman was too amazed to cry.

A few days later he referred to the matter again. "That ring was a treasure. I gave it to you so that you could hand it on to Autumn

當了！幸得她不知道，要是知道了，有三個月好鬧了！」

婦人是一天天地黃瘦了。沒有精采的光芒在她底眼睛裏起來，而譏談與冷罵的聲音又充塞在她底耳內了。她是時常記念着她底春寶的病的，探聽着有沒有從她底本鄉來的朋友，也探聽着有沒有向她的本鄉去的便客，她很想得到一個關於『春寶的身體已復原』的消息，可是消息總沒有；她也想借兩元錢或買些糖果去，方便的客人又沒有，她不時的抱着秋寶在門首過去一些的大路邊，眼睛望着來和去的路。這種情形却很使秀才底大妻不舒服了，她時常對秀才說：

『她那裏願意在這裏呢，她是極想早些飛回去的。』

Treasure. I never dreamed that you would pawn it at the first opportunity. It's lucky that *she* doesn't know about it. Otherwise there would be a good three months of wrangling."

The woman grew paler and thinner day by day, and a dull look crept into her eyes, while her ears rang with the mockery and abuse that was thrown at her. She thought constantly of Spring Treasure and his sickness, and kept on the watch for friends from her village, or travellers who might be going to it. She waited anxiously for the news that the boy had recovered completely, but no news came. She also sought to borrow a dollar or two and to buy delicacies to send him, but there was no one to take the things. Much of the time she sat holding Autumn Treasure at the side of the highway that ran past the door, watching those who came and went. This situation was very annoying to the old lady, and she constantly said to the old man:

"Don't you see she doesn't like being here at all? She wants nothing better than to fly home as soon as possible."

有幾夜，她抱着秋寶在睡夢中突然喊起來，秋寶也被嚇醒，哭起來了。秀才就追逼地問：『你爲什麼？你爲什麼？』

可是女人拍着秋寶，口子哼哼沒有答。秀才繼續說：

『夢着你底前兒死了麼，那麼地喊？連我都被你叫醒了。』

女人急忙地一邊答：『不，不，……好像在我底前面有一壙新墳呢！』

秀才沒有再講話，而悲哀的幻像更在女人底前面展現開來，似她自己要走向這墳去。

冬末了，催離別的小鳥，已經到她底窗前不住地叫了。先是孩子斷了奶，又叫道士們來給孩子渡了一個關，於是孩子和他親生的母親的別離——永遠的別離的運命就被決定了。

On several nights, dreaming with Autumn Treasure in her arms, she cried out suddenly, waking the baby and making him cry. The scholar persecuted her with questions. "What's the matter? What's the matter?"

There was no reply from the woman, who was patting and crooning to Autumn Treasure.

"Did you dream that your other son was dead? How you yelled! You have wakened me!"

"No, no!" she said hastily. "I thought I saw a tomb in front of me."

He asked nothing further, and the mournful vision continued to unfold before the woman. She would have liked to walk into that tomb.

Winter drew to an end, and the little birds that were sending her away had begun to sing uninterruptedly beneath her window. First the child was weaned, Taoist priests being called in to assist the baby over this crisis in his life. Then the separation—the separation for ever of the child from its natural mother—was decided on.

這一天，黃媽先悄悄地向秀才的大妻說：

『叫一頂轎子送她去麼？』

秀才的大妻還是手裏捻着念佛珠說：『走走好罷，到那邊轎錢是那邊付的，她又那裏有錢呢，聽說她底親夫連飯都沒得喫，她不必擺闊了。路也不算遠，我也是曾經走過三四十里路的人，她底脚比我大，半天可以到。』

這天早晨當她給秋寶穿衣服的時候，她底淚如溪水那麼地流下，孩子向她叫，『嬭嬭，嬭嬭，』——因爲老婦人要他叫她自己是『媽媽，』只準叫她是『嬭嬭』——她向他咽咽地答應。她很想對他說幾句話，意思是：

『別了，我底親愛的兒子呀！你底媽媽待你是好的，你將來好好地待還她罷，永遠不要再記念我了！』可是她無論怎樣也說不出。她也知道一週半的

On that day Mrs Wang asked the *hsiu-ts'ai's* wife quietly,

“Shall I call a sedan chair for her?”

“Let her walk,” said the old lady, still counting over the beads of her rosary. “The fare would have to be paid at that end, and what money does she have? I understand her husband hasn’t even food to eat, so she needn’t be asking for luxuries. It isn’t so far, anyway. I have walked ten to fifteen miles myself in my time, and her legs are longer than mine. She can do it in half a day.”

As she dressed Autumn Treasure that morning the mother’s tears flowed in a torrent. The child kept saying, “Auntie, Auntie!” This was the name that the scholar’s wife had ordered should be used, as she wished the baby to call her ‘Mamma.’ The mother answered the baby with sobs. She would have liked to say something to him, something like,

“We are leaving each other, my darling baby, ‘Mamma’ will be good to you. Be kind to her in return and never think of me again.” The words would not come out. In any case, a baby

孩子是不會了解她底話的。

秀才悄悄地走向她，從她背後的腋下伸進手來，在他底手內是十枚雙毫角子，一邊輕輕說：

『拿去罷，這兩塊錢。』

婦人扣好孩子底鈕扣，就將角子塞在懷內的衣袋裏。

老婦人又進來了，注意着秀才走出去的背後，又向婦人說：

『秋寶給我抱去罷，免得你走時他哭。』

婦人不做聲響，可是秋寶總不願意，用手不住地拍在老婦人底臉上。於是老婦人生氣地又說：

『那末你同他去喫早飯去罷，喫了早飯交給我。』

黃媽拚命地勸她多喫飯，一邊說：

『半月來你就這樣了，你真比來的時候還瘦了。你沒有去照照鏡子。今天，喫一碗下去罷，你還要走

only a year and a half old would understand nothing.

The *hsiu-ts'ai* came sadly up to her and slipped his arm through hers. In his hand were ten twenty-cent coins.

"Take them," he said gently, "these two dollars."

She finished fastening the buttons on the child's clothes, and dropped the coins into her own inner pocket.

The old lady came in, and watched the retreating back of the *hsiu-ts'ai*. Then she said:

"Let me have Autumn Treasure, so that he won't cry when you leave."

The woman said nothing, but the baby refused, and slapped the old lady repeatedly on the face, making her very angry,

"Well, take him and have breakfast with him, but turn him over to me afterwards."

Mrs Wang urged her to eat heartily.

"You have been acting like this for two weeks and you are much thinner than you were. Have you looked in the mirror? Take a whole

三十里路呢。」

她只不關緊要地說了一句：「你對我真好！」

但是太陽是升的非常高了，一個很好的天氣，秋寶還是不肯離開他底母親，老婦人便狠狠將他從她懷裏奪去，秋寶用小小的脚踢在老婦人底肚子上，用小小的拳頭搔住她底頭髮，高聲呼喊地，婦人在後面說：

「讓我喫了中飯去罷。」

老婦人轉過頭，汹汹地答：

「趕快打起你包袱去罷，早晚總有一次的！」

孩子底哭聲便在她底耳內漸漸地遠去了。

打包裹的時候，耳內是聽着孩子的哭聲。黃媽在旁邊，一邊勸慰着她，一邊却看她打進什麼去。終於，她挾着一只舊的包裹走了。

她離開他底大門時，聽見她底秋寶的哭聲；可是慢慢地遠遠地走了三里路了，還聽見她底秋寶的哭

bowl of rice to-day. You have ten miles to walk yet."

The woman answered lifelessly, "You have been good to me."

The sun had risen very high and the weather was splendid. Autumn Treasure still would not leave his mother, until the old lady dragged him violently from her arms. He kicked her in the stomach with his little feet and pulled her hair with his tiny hands, yelling loudly. The mother, standing behind them, said:

"Let me stay till after the noon meal."

The old lady turned on her savagely.

"You make up your bundle in a hurry and get out. You have to leave some time."

The baby's crying sounded more distant to her.

As she was tying up her belongings she heard him crying again. Mrs Wang stood beside her, trying to cheer her up and at the same time noting what she was taking away. Finally the woman set out, the old bundle under her arm.

As she went through the front door she heard Autumn Treasure again, and even after

聲。

暖和的太陽所照耀着的路，在她底面前竟和天一樣無窮止的長。當她走到一條河邊的時候，她很想停止她底那麼無力的脚步，向明澈可以照見她自己底身子的水底跳下去了。但在水邊坐了一回之後，她還得依前去的方向，移動她自己底影子。

太陽已經過午了，一個村裏的年老的鄉人告訴她，路還有十五里。於是她向那個老人說：

『伯伯，請你代我就近叫了一頂轎子罷，我是走不回去了！』

『你是有病的麼？』老人問。

『是的，』

她那時坐在村口的涼亭裏面。

『你從那裏來？』

婦人靜默了一時答：

『我是向那裏去的；早晨我以爲自己會走的。』

a mile of slow, weary walking the cries seemed still there.

The road stretched away before her under the burning sun, endless as the sky. When she reached a creek she thought of ending this wearisome tramp, and leaping down into the clear, mirror-like water. But after sitting awhile beside the stream she again moved her shadow forward in the same direction.

It was past noon. An old peasant in one of the hamlets told her that five miles of the journey remained.

"Uncle," she said to him, "would you be kind enough to get me a sedan chair from the neighbourhood. I can't walk home."

"Are you sick?"

"Yes."

She was sitting in the pavilion at the entrance to the village.

"Where did you come from?"

She hesitated before replying.

"I'm just going in that direction. I thought this morning that I could walk it."

老人憐憫地也沒有多說話，就給她找了兩位轎夫，一頂沒篷的轎。那時是下秧的時節。

下午三四時的樣子，一條狹窄而污穢的鄉村小街上，抬過了一頂沒篷的轎子，轎裏躺着一個臉色枯萎如同一張乾癟的黃菜葉一樣的中年婦人，兩眼朦朧頹唐地閉着。嘴裏的呼吸只有微弱的吐出。街上的人們個個睜着驚異的目光，憐憫地凝視着過去。一羣孩子們，爭噪地跟在轎後，好像一件奇異的事情落到這沉寂的小村鎮裏來了。

春寶也是跟在轎後的孩子們中底一個，他還在似趕豬那麼地譁着轎走，可是當轎子一轉一個彎，却是向他底家裏去的路，他却伸直了他底譁着的兩手而奇怪了，等到轎子到了他家裏的門口，他簡直發呆似地遠遠地站在前面，背靠在一株柱子上面向着轎，其餘的孩子們膽怯地探頭的圍在轎的兩邊。婦人走出來了，她昏迷的眼睛還認不清站在前面的，穿着襤褸的衣服，頭髮蓬亂的，身子和三年前一樣的短小，那個

The old man said a few words to her and found her two bearers and a chair—one without a canopy, because it was the planting season.

About four o'clock in the afternoon a chair with no canopy was borne down the dirty narrow street of the village. In it lay a middle-aged woman with a face withered and faded as a dry leaf of yellow cabbage. Her eyes were closed and her breath came feebly. The people in the street stared at her in surprise and pity, while a group of children ran noisily after the bearers as though some wonder had descended on the village.

Spring Treasure was among the children who followed the chair. He hooted behind it as though driving a herd of pigs, but when it turned a corner down the street which led to his home he stretched out his arms in amazement. He watched it stop at his own door, and stood stupefied, leaning against a post, while the other children gathered timidly around it. The woman got out, but she was too dazed to see that Spring Treasure was there, dressed in rags, with hair unkempt, and hardly larger or taller than

八歲的孩子是她底春寶。突然，她哭出來的高叫了：

『春寶呀！』

一羣孩子們，個個無意地喫了一驚，退散了。而春寶簡直嚇的躲進屋裏，他父親那裏去了。

婦人在灰暗的屋內坐了許久許久，她和她底丈夫都沒有句話。夜色降落了，他下垂的頭昂起來，向她說：

『燒飯喫罷！』

婦人就不得已地站起來，向屋角上旋轉了一周，一點也沒有氣力地對她丈夫說：

『米缸內是空空的。……』

男人冷笑了一聲，答說：

『你真在大戶人家底家裏生活過來了！米，盛在那隻香烟盒子內。』

當天晚上，男子向他底兒子說：

『春寶，跟你底娘去睡！』

而春寶却靠在灶邊哭起來了。他底母親走近他，一邊叫：

he had been three years before. 'Suddenly she called out with a sob:

"Spring Treasure!"

The other children were startled. As for Spring Treasure, he fled in terror to his father in the house.

In the dirty, gloomy room the woman sat a long time, but not a word passed between her and her husband. When twilight fell on them he lifted his bowed head and said to her:

"You had better get supper ready."

She forced herself to rise, and went to a corner of the room. After a moment she said weakly:

"The rice-bin is empty."

The man gave her a sardonic smile.

"You have been living in the house of the great. Rice? It's in that cigarette-box."

That night the man said to his son,

"Spring Treasure, you sleep with your mother."

The boy, who was standing near the stove, began to cry. His mother went near him, murmuring,

『春寶，寶寶！』可是當她底手去撫摸他底時候，他又閃開了。男子加上說：

『會生疏得那麼快，一頓打呢！』

她眼睜睜地睡在一張醜陋的狹板床上，春寶陌生似地睡在她底身邊。在她底已經麻木的腦內，彷彿秋寶肥白可愛地在她身邊掙動着，她伸出兩手想去抱，可是身邊是春寶。這時，春寶睡着了，轉了一個身，他底母親緊緊地將他抱住，而孩子却從鼾聲的微弱中，臉伏在她底胸膛上，兩手撫摩着她底兩乳。

沉靜而寒冷的死一般的長夜，似無限地拖延着，拖延着……

一九三〇，一，二十。

“Spring Treasure, my precious!” but as she reached out to fondle him he darted away.

Acting strange already? A beating is what you’ll get!”

She lay with wide-open eyes on the dirty narrow cot, Spring Treasure beside her, strange and unfamiliar. Into her dull brain came the impression that it was Autumn Treasure, fat and lovable, at her side. She put out her arms to take him without recognizing who he was. In his sleep he had turned over, and as she clasped him tight the boy, snoring gently, buried his face between those breasts that his hands instinctively clutched.

Quiet and cold as death the long interminable night dragged on . . . dragged on . . .

1, 20, 1930.

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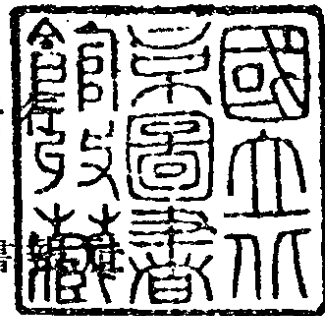
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