

Character names (adapted from Wiki)

Baoyu and Jinling's Twelve Beauties

- **Bao-yu Jia Baoyu** (simplified Chinese: 贾宝玉; traditional Chinese: 賈寶玉; pinyin: *Jiǎ Bǎo yù* ; Wade–Giles: Chia Pao-yu, Meaning: Precious Jade)
- **Dai-yu, Frowner Lin Daiyu** (Chinese: 林黛玉; pinyin: *Lín Dài yù* ; Wade–Giles: Lin Tai-yu, Meaning: Black Jade)
- **Bao-chai Xue Baochai** (simplified Chinese: 薛宝钗; traditional Chinese: 薛寶釵; pinyin: *Xuē Bǎo chāi* ; Wade–Giles: Hsueh Pao-chai, Meaning: Precious Virtue)
- ***The "Three Springs" —***
- **Yuan-chun, Her Grace, Imperial Concubine Jia Yuanchun** (simplified Chinese: 贾元春; traditional Chinese: 賈元春; pinyin: *Jiǎ Yuán chūn* ; Wade–Giles: Chia Yuan-chun, Meaning: First of Spring)
- **Tan-chun Jia Tanchun** (simplified Chinese: 贾探春; traditional Chinese: 賈探春; pinyin: *Jiǎ chūn* ; Wade–Giles: Chia Tan-chun, Meaning: Quest of Spring)
- **Ying-chun Jia Yingchun** (simplified Chinese: 贾迎春; traditional Chinese: 賈迎春; pinyin: *Jiǎ Yíng chūn* ; Wade–Giles: Chia Ying-chun, Meaning: Welcome Spring)
- **Xiang-yun Shi Xiangyun** (simplified Chinese: 史湘云; traditional Chinese: 史湘雲; pinyin: *Shǐ Xiāng yún* ; Wade–Giles: Shih Hsiang-yun, Meaning: Xiang River Mist)
- **Adamantina Miaoyu** (Chinese: 妙玉; pinyin: *Miào yù* ; Wade–Giles: Miao-yu, Meaning: Wonderful/Clever Jade)
- **Xi-chun Jia Xichun** (simplified Chinese: 贾惜春; traditional Chinese: 賈惜春; pinyin: *Jiǎ Xī chūn* ; Wade–Giles: Chia Hsi-chun, Meaning: Compassion Spring)
- **Xi-feng, Feng, Mrs Lian, Peppercorn Wang Xifeng** (simplified Chinese: 王熙凤; traditional Chinese: 王熙鳳; pinyin: *Wáng Xī fèng* ; Wade–Giles: Wang Hsi-feng, Meaning: Splendid Phoenix), alias **Sister Feng**.
- **Qiao-jie Jia Qiaojie** (simplified Chinese: 贾巧姐; traditional Chinese: 賈巧姐; pinyin: *Jiǎ Qiǎojiě* ; Wade–Giles: Chia Chiao-chieh, Meaning: Timely Older Sister)
- **Li Wan Li Wan** (simplified Chinese: 李纨; traditional Chinese: 李紈; pinyin: *Lǐ*

Wán ; *Wade–Giles*: Li Wan, Meaning: White Silk)

- **Qin Ke-qin, Qin-shi Qin Keqing** (Chinese: 秦可卿; *pinyin*: *Qín Kě qīng* ; *Wade–Giles*: Ch'in Ko-ching)

Other main characters

- **Her Old Ladyship, Grannie, Grandmother Jia Grandmother Jia** (simplified Chinese: 贾母; traditional Chinese: 賈母; *pinyin*: *Jiǎmǔ*), née Shi.
- **Jia She, Sir She Jia She** (simplified Chinese: 贾赦; traditional Chinese: 賈赦; *pinyin*: *Jiǎ Shè* ; *Wade–Giles*: Chia Sheh, Meaning: "To Pardon")
- **Jia Zheng Jia Zheng** (simplified Chinese: 贾政; traditional Chinese: 賈政; *pinyin*: *Jiǎ Zhèng* ; *Wade–Giles*: Chia Cheng, Meaning: "Political/Governance")
- **Jia Lian Jia Lian** (simplified Chinese: 贾琏; traditional Chinese: 賈璉; *pinyin*: *Jiǎ Lián* ; *Wade–Giles*: Chia Lien, Meaning: "Vessel for Grain at Ancestral Temples")
- **Caltrop, Lily Xiangling** (香菱, "Fragrant Water Caltrop") — the Xues' maid, born **Zhen Yinglian** (甄英蓮, literally "The real outstanding lotus", a homophone with "deserving pity"), the kidnapped and lost daughter to Zhen Shiyin (甄士隱), the country gentleman in Chapter 1. Her name is changed to Qiuling (秋菱) by Xue Pan's spoiled wife, Xia Jin'gui (夏金桂).
- **Patience Ping'er** (平兒, "Peaceful")
- **Xue Pan Xue Pan** (Chinese: 薛蟠; *pinyin*: *Xuē Pán* ; *Wade–Giles*: Hsueh Pan, Meaning: "To Coil (as a dragon)")
- **Granny Liu Granny Liu** (simplified Chinese: 刘姥姥; traditional Chinese: 劉姥姥; *pinyin*: *Liú Lǎolao*)
- **Lady Wang Lady Wang** (Chinese: 王夫人; *pinyin*: *Wáng Fū ren*)
- **Aunt Xue Aunt Xue** (simplified Chinese: 薛姨妈; traditional Chinese: 薛姨媽; *pinyin*: *Xuē Yí mā*), née Wang
- **Aroma Hua Xiren** (simplified Chinese: 花袭人; traditional Chinese: 花襲人; *pinyin*: *Huā Xírén* , Meaning: "Flowers Assail Men")
- **Skybright Qingwen** (Chinese: 晴雯; *pinyin*: *Qíngwén* , Meaning: "Clear Multicolored Clouds")
- **Faithful Yuanyang** (Chinese: 鸳鸯; *pinyin*: *Yuānyang*, Meaning: "Mandarin Duck")
- **Tealeaf Mingyan** (simplified Chinese: 茗烟; traditional Chinese: 茗煙; *pinyin*:

Míngyān, Meaning: "Tea Mist")

- **Nightingale Zijuan** (simplified Chinese: 紫鹃; traditional Chinese: 紫鵑; pinyin: *Zǐ juān* ; Wade–Giles: Tzu-chuan, Meaning: "Purple Cuckoo")
- **Snowgoose Xueyan** (Chinese: 雪雁; pinyin: *Xuě yàn* , Meaning: "Snowgoose")
- **Aunt Zhao Concubine Zhao** (simplified Chinese: 赵姨娘; traditional Chinese: 趙姨娘; pinyin: *Zhào Yí niáng*)

Notable minor characters

- **Qin Zhong** (秦鐘) — Qin Keqing's handsome younger brother. He looks like a girl as well as being as shy as a girl. He is a good friend and classmate to Baoyu, while the novel occasionally suggests that the relationship between the two might be more than just friends. He was bullied by another student at school, who say that he is **homosexual**. This turned the school upside-down when Baoyu and his servants try to defend Qin against the rogues. He has had a romantic relationship with a teenage nun later in the story. He dies young.
- **Jia Lan** (賈蘭) — Son of Baoyu's deceased older brother Jia Zhu and his virtuous wife Li Wan. Jia Lan is an appealing child throughout the book and at the end succeeds in the imperial examinations to the credit of the family.
- **Jia Zhen** (賈珍) — Head of the Ningguo House, the elder branch of the Jia family. He has a wife, Lady Yu, a younger sister, **Jia Xichun**, and many concubines. He is extremely greedy and the unofficial head of the clan, since his father has retired. He has an adulterous affair with his daughter-in-law, Qin Keqing.
- **Lady You** (尤氏) — Wife of Jia Zhen. She is the sole mistress of the Ningguo House.
- **Jia Rong** (賈蓉) — Jia Zhen's son. He is the husband of **Qin Keqing**. An exact copy of his father, he is the Cavalier of the **Imperial Guards**.
- **Second Sister You** (尤二姐) — **Jia Lian** takes her in secret as his concubine. Though a loose woman before she was married, after her wedding she becomes a faithful and doting wife. She is the elder sister of Third Sister You.
- **Lady Xing** (邢夫人) — Jia She's wife. She is **Jia Lian**'s mother.
- **Jia Huan** (賈環) — Son of Concubine Zhao. He and his mother are both reviled by the family, and he carries himself like a kicked dog. He shows his malign nature by spilling candle wax, intending to blind Bao Yu.
- **Sheyue** (麝月, **Musk**) — Baoyu's main maid after Xiren and Qingwen. She is beautiful and caring, a perfect complement to Xiren.

- **Qutong** (秋桐) — Jia Lian's other concubine. Originally a maid of Jia She, she is given to **Jia Lian** as a concubine. She is a very proud and arrogant woman.
- **Simple Sister Silly** (傻大姐) — A maid who does rough work for the Dowager. She is guileless but amusing and caring. In the Gao E and Cheng Weiyuan version, she unintentionally informs Daiyu of Baoyu's secret marriage plans.

Homophones

The **homophones** are one of the features of this book. In this book, many character and place names have a special meanings. Rouge Inkstone's note pointed out some of their hidden meanings. Homophones found by Redologies are marked with *.

[*citation needed*]

- Huzhou (胡州) — Groundless speaking (胡謔)
- Zhen Shiyin (甄士隱) — That under which true things are hidden (真事隱)
- Zhen Yinglian (甄英蓮, Zhēn Yīng lián) — Truly deserving pity (真應憐, Zhēn Yīng lián)
- Feng Su (封肅) — Custom (風俗)
- Huo Qi (霍啟) — Disaster starts / Fire is on* (禍起/火起)
- Jia (賈, the surname of the main family) - False, fake (假)
- Zhen (甄, the surname of the other main family) - Real, true (真)
- Jia Yucun (賈雨村(號雨村)) — Unreal words exist* (假語存)
 - Jia Hua (姓賈名化) - Unreal words (假話)
 - Shifei (字時飛) - That which is not real after all (實非)
- Qing Keqing (秦可卿) — Sensation should be despised *or* Sensation can overthrow (情可輕 *or* 情可傾)*
- Yuanchun, Yingchun, Tanchun, Xichun (元迎探惜) — Originally, should sigh (原應嘆息)
- Dian'er (靛兒) — Scapegoat (墊兒)*[*citation needed*]
- Zhang Youshi (張友士) — Something is going to be on (將有事)*[*citation needed*]
- Jia Mei (賈玫) — Suppose disappear (假沒, 假設沒有這個人)*[*citation needed*]
- Wei Ruolan (衛若蘭, Wèi ruò) — The given name Ruolan (若蘭) means "like an orchid." The family name Wèi (衛) has the same pronunciation as 味, meaning "scent or taste." Wei Ruolan is then a homophone for "with a scent like an orchid."*