

Not Knowing Laughter and Tears: Exploration on the Comedy in the Context of Survival Conditions

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ABSTRACT

Liu Zhenyun's "Laughter and Tears: A Novel" explores the path of reality through its bizarre plot, which is very insightful. This article mainly explores the comedic factors in the survival condition of this novel through the picture scroll of Yanjin people.

Keywords: "Laughter and Tears: A Novel", Survival condition, Comedy.

1. INTRODUCTION

"In the novel 'Laughter and Tears: A Novel', Liu Zhenyun, based on his deep recognition of the traditional novel, uses 'Uncle Liu's Painting' as a narrative opportunity to trace and inquire about a 'joke' life staged by the people of his hometown Yanjin." [1] At the same time, in this joke, there are also numerous hardships in life. The focus of the joke is to inquire about the way out of life and explore the comedic nature of life amidst these hardships.

2. PAINTINGS AND REALITY

Liu Zhenyun wrote "Laughter and Tears: A Novel" to commemorate Uncle Liu and his paintings, but if he really didn't have an understanding of real life, he couldn't connect so many paintings together and bring the characters to life. This book is clearly written with the word "worldly", and magic is just a momentary parabola. Many people are confused by the magical reincarnation of cherries and fortune tellers, but this book is composed of jokes from dreams, reflecting the present world rather than the other world.

The whole novel revolves around a day being like three autumns, aiming to express that life is like a white horse passing by. In the blink of an eye, several years have already passed, and some things that were originally considered significant are just like that in the blink of an eye. The whole book treats jokes as a key word for Yanjin people, while

Wuhan people are serious, and those who speak fluently become serious when they arrive in Wuhan. In Yanjin, no matter how big the matter is, people can call it the ghost of Hua Erniang. It is said that Hua Erniang caused a chemical reaction among Yanjin people. Yanjin people can explain all sad things with jokes, and explain a person's cause of death by pressing a stone on someone who doesn't know how to tell jokes. This kind of thinking has been very pioneering. Using jokes to explain a person's cause of death is more humorous than using diseases to explain a person's cause of death, making people less afraid of death and treating life as a comedy. This is the optimistic spirit people need today.

Guo Baochen was a Prime Minister in his previous life, but in this life he can only be a street sweeper. Through the fortune telling of Laodong, he warns everyone not to think about living a good life, otherwise he/she will end up like Guo Baochen. Sun Erhuo was a shameless person who ended up with dementia in old age. Sun Erhuo wanted to count his next life to the end, but before he could count it, Laodong died. In order to give an explanation to Sun Erhuo, Mingliang falsely claimed that he would become a monk in his next life. It may be nonsense, but it certainly includes subjective will. If someone did all the bad things in this life, he/she would have to endure hardship in the next life. In the past life, if someone did bad things, in the next life, he/she would have no life of great wealth and prosperity. In fact, these are all conveying the idea that everything we do should

leave a little blank space. Rich people cannot leave a single drop of money behind, poor people cannot be poor in everything, bad people cannot do all the bad things, and good people cannot do everything well.

The truth of reality goes beyond these. When Ming Liang enlightened Guo Zikai, he put it bluntly that power and money play a significant role in interpersonal relationships. When people are poor and down, there are no connections around them. When they are successful and proud, there are only connections around them.

When Ming Liang attended Fan Youzhi's daughter's wedding, he heard him say that his daughter Furong suggested not to sit at the main table because he was a cripple. After the wedding started, whether it was the main bride, the witness, or the guests, all the people who appeared were influential, either those who worked in real estate, finance, or the internet that had appeared on TV. They were chatting and laughing on stage. Seeing this, even Fan Youzhi himself said, fortunately, he didn't sit at the main table, otherwise he would have to make a fool of himself.

Later, Guo Zikai said to Ming Liang over the phone, "I've been in the UK for so many years, and I haven't asked my dad to come. Now that I want him to come, he became a fool." The tree wants to be quiet but the wind doesn't stop, and the son wants to raise but the parents couldn't wait."¹[2]^{p250-251} After hearing this, Ming Liang pointed out that it had nothing to do with the cultural differences mentioned by Guo Zikai, but rather with the timing being incorrect. Why? Guo Zikai's father, Guo Baochen, was a Prime Minister in his previous life. If he were also a Prime Minister in this life and wanted to visit the UK for a state visit, Guo Zikai and her British wife might not have had the opportunity to pay for the trip. If Guo Baochen gave her 20,000 pounds as pocket money before leaving, she would also take it. So the difference is not in culture, but in status. After Ming Liang arrived in Wuhan, Chen Changjie became tough because Ming Liang had spent most of his medical expenses. Only with economic power can one have status, and having status can one live a comfortable life. This sentence sounds very realistic, but this is reality.

"Daily life in Liu Zhenyun's pen is trivial, but everywhere is a roaring sound."³ There is also a

1. The books cited in this article are all from this version, with only page numbers indicated.

long section in the article that describes Li Yansheng's psychological activities, all closely related to money. Some readers can't help but complain when they see this long description in their hearts, losing the motivation to continue reading. But they also think that when people face a large amount of money expenditure in their daily lives, who is not mentally calculating? It is precisely this kind of psychological description that makes Chen Changjie true.

3. VIRTUALITY AND REALITY

Chen Changjie, Li Yansheng, Ming Liang, Dong Guangsheng, including Guo Baochen who swept the streets, all have official names, but Yingtao can only be called Yingtao. In the article, it is said that Yingtao has returned to her rightful place, referring to the White Snake of the Song Dynasty. Yingtao has no name from beginning to end, and they are inherently meaningless.

Yingtao and Hua Erniang have a commonality, they are both immortal people who possess both worldly desires and power above ordinary people. One can travel freely, while the other can determine a person's life and death. A person who never belonged to reality, married and had children in real life, and had all kinds of emotions and desires; A stone, which doesn't know that Hua Erlang, arrived in Yanjin and died from being stuck in a fishbone, has been waiting for two thousand years and freely wandered through people's dreams to seek jokes and some nonexistent things. This itself was just a joke.

A book composed of a series of jokes is inherently virtual. This constitutes the essence of this book - people are nothing but themselves. This book may seem like a joke, telling about human comedy, tragedy, the highlights of life, and the lows of life, but its intention is very high. People are struggling every day to live like Li Yansheng, whether to go to Wuhan or not. People always feel that the temporary sadness and joy are real. Therefore, when they are sad, they feel unbearable pain, and when they are happy, they feel like they have mastered the world. In the text, the White Snake is used as the eye to prove through the cycle of reincarnation that human beings have always existed. When people are alive, they do not think much about the previous life and always want to know what the next life will be like. In fact, subconsciously, people know that everything in the present and present life is only instantaneous. So, Liu Zhenyun told people that no matter what the

situation in this world is, treat it as a joke, or please themselves with a joke.

Chen Changjie and Yingtao completely disintegrated with just a handful of leeks, sharing a bed in the same home, but they no longer had the enthusiasm they had before. The most common thing they said was "boring". In this boring home, living a boring life ultimately led to tragedy. After several decades, Ming Liang would always see news reports of people hanging or jumping off buildings. Others would say "As for it?" in a bystander attitude, while Ming Liang would say "As for it, because it's 'boring'." [2]^{p105-106} Isn't Ming Liang returning from Wuhan to Yanjin because Wuhan is boring and Yanjin is not boring? Whether it's his grandmother or his father asking if it's because his stepmother treated him badly that he wants to return to Yanjin, he always recalls the experience of his mother being nailed with steel needles all over her body in Wuhan. He has no reason to suspect that his stepmother did it, but even so, he doesn't want to face that stepmother who ignores him every day. Because living in Wuhan is not exciting, he spent two months returning to Yanjin and his grandmother's yard. People who go to places with empty dates are far more energetic than the bustling Wuhan.

This novel also has a very wonderful plot that highlights human nature through prostitution. When can a person best reveal their true nature, without a doubt, when it comes to money and sex. Some people may talk about the dirty and evil of prostitution on the surface, but in reality, what they are thinking about is how to let the prostitutes serve them. Ma Xiaomeng used to be a prostitute in Beijing, and the whole town knew about it. At this time, Ming Liang had already married her. As a person, his first reaction must have been to feel embarrassed. Ming Liang naturally thought of divorce, but he still asked fortune tellers about it. This also shows that he wanted to find an excuse not to divorce. At the moment he asked, he didn't want to.

When he heard that he owed Ma Xiaomeng one life in his previous life and couldn't divorce, he remained calm and composed, hoping for such a result. He knew about Ma Xiaomeng's growth experience, and he knew that this girl had a very pure side in her heart. She was violated by her stepfather when she was young, but she kept it in her heart for the happiness of her mother. In the end, she went to Beijing to become a prostitute and used the money earned to open a clothing store. Is this

store dirty? It's not dirty. If people have to say that it is dirty, they can only say that the person watching the fire from afar pulled it clean and tidy. After the incident, Ming Liang only asked Ma Xiaomeng how many men she had sex with, but she didn't answer much because some men had erectile dysfunction. Later, Ming Liang also used this joke to escape from Hua Erniang's nightmare. Ming Liang not only did not use this matter to suppress Ma Xiaomeng all the time, but it may be because he himself is also a hardworking person, so he has enough empathy and compassion. On the contrary, he still feels indebted to Ma Xiaomeng as he did before. The most exciting portrayal of this book is undoubtedly that people find themselves in various helpless realities, explore ways out, and give fate a comedy.

There is a passage in Yu Hua's "To Live" that shares similarities with the meaning conveyed in "Laughter and Tears: A Novel". In other words, people live for the sake of living itself, not for anything other than living, such as money and fame. Living is the greatest meaning of life. In "Laughter and Tears: A Novel", fortune telling is a thread that runs through the entire text. Fate can be calculated, but life also has to be lived. People are born to live in this life. Some people seek fortune telling from Laodong, but he is likely not to do so. He once said that if a person can calculate their next life clearly, then what will they live in this life. It's better to consider everything as fate, but the premise is to do everything in one's life, live this life well, and even if there are regrets, leave them for the next life to make up for. This is life. "The novel 'Laughter and Tears: A Novel' is like Liu Zhenyun cooking a pot of delicious pig trotters as described in a book, with shaved hair and just the right amount of heat. With just a few sips of wine and jokes, it's life, as it says." [4]

4. HOME AND PRISON

The title of the book is "Laughter and Tears: A Novel", which actually aims to convey the idea of living in a place where one does not know the time flow. The "Tian Peng Marshal" that appears many times in the book is a place where one does not know the time flow. When Chen Changjie and Li Yansheng were young and singing dramas, they always liked to go to Tian Peng Marshal to eat some pig trotters, and as they ate, they all got married. Living on, Yingtao hung, Chen Changjie went to Wuhan, and Chen Changjie remarried. Eating and eating again, Ming Liang ran back to

Yanjin, then dropped out of school and became an apprentice to Tian Peng Marshal. Tian Peng Marshal has recorded too many experiences of Yanjin people, which is a place where one day is better than living in other places for three years.

Where are the places that feel more unbearable than three years after a day? These places including Yingtao's tomb, Yingtao's home, Ming Liang's home in Wuhan, Chen Changjie's home in Wuhan in the novel. Yingtao was hanged from a trivial life during her lifetime, and after her death, she was forced to play the role of White Lady by a rapist who was shot. She had no choice but to find Li Yansheng. This tomb is a place where one day is even more unbearable than three years. After death, Yingtao was not only raped by rapists, but also violated by others. This tomb containing ghosts is not only a tomb for corpses, but also a tomb for souls. After burying their souls, everyone can do as they please. The reason why the ghost is fierce is because no one can see it anymore.

As for Yingtao's home, after a sweet marriage entered a mundane state, all that remained was daily necessities. Was it really because of these things that they argue? They just wanted to find a vent. When explaining the cause of death, Yingtao said that it was because of leeks, but also because of leeks. She said it was not because of leeks, nor because of leeks. The first sentence points to Chen Changjie. If it weren't for Chen Changjie's changes that made her feel disappointed and her marriage unhappy, she would definitely tell a joke to Hua Erniang. Chives are just a representative, representing a bleak marital life, endless arguments, and endless boredom. The second sentence is about Hua Erniang making jokes. Yingtao loved listening to jokes the most before getting married. How could she not have said a joke at that time, but what she said that day was full of bitterness. Yingtao was forced to hang herself because she couldn't tell jokes, but before hanging, she said to Hua Erniang, "Erniang, you don't need to leave. I'll take a step first and hang herself with a rope." [2]^{p75} Is it not because of the optimistic spirit inherent in Yanjin people that they can remain so calm and calm in the face of life and death? Or to put it another way, it's because they have opened up and Yanjin people know that they have a next life and a previous life. Someone made a mistake in his previous life, so he has lived so hard in this life. If he pays off all the debts in this life, he can live well in the next life.

Ming Liang's home in Wuhan is neither good nor bad, but the thought of her mother's experience

in Wuhan makes her heart ache. The book does not specify whether he guessed who the person who sent his biological mother to that place was, but he should have guessed that it was either a stepsister or a stepmother, and the stepsister had no reason to take this photo, so it could only be a stepmother. Later, others asked him if he didn't want to be in Wuhan because his stepmother was not good to him? The question points to his stepmother, and the answer is about his own mother, which implies that he probably knows that the person who caused his own mother to die and still goes through hardships is his stepmother. In that home, one can feel the pain of one's own mother with just one breath, and before going to bed, one can think of the scene of one's own mother rolling in the thorny field. In one's sleep, one can dream of one's own mother covered in injuries. Home is a place that makes people feel like one day is better than three years, so the brightness must go.

Before Yingtao's death, Chen Changjie loved to tell jokes, but Yingtao's death made him unable to stay in Yanjin and he became serious when he went to Wuhan. Why? Because home became a shackle, it was a place where he couldn't bear to think of his deceased wife who had been hanged as soon as he entered the door. After arriving in Wuhan, even though Qin Jiaying had already reorganized his family, it was obvious that he was not very comfortable in this marriage. The two families were connected by their father and mother, and there was not much emotional connection between siblings. They were not as close as siblings in their original family, and the two families were like sharing a room without warmth. Yingtao leaked her feet because she knew about the sexual relationship between Qin Jiaying and Chen Changjie. She was angry that if Chen Changjie had been willing to do this to her, she would not have hung herself in the end. But does Chen Changjie love Qin Jiaying? Or is all of this just a release after being suppressed too much? It is not difficult to guess Chen Changjie's feelings. He knew that after his second marriage, he will no longer have the energy to find others. Therefore, when he managed this relationship, he had an extra politeness and a feeling of mutual respect, but more importantly, he was weighing the pros and cons. He knew that the money he earned had to support Qin Jiaying's children, otherwise it would be embarrassing; He knew that Qin Jiaying would no longer agree to support him after discovering that he had secretly sent money to Mingliang for so many years. He even feared sending money to his children, indicating that he

was also afraid that if he really divorced Qin Jiaying, he would really be lonely for a lifetime.

Qin Jiaying's psychology is not easy to understand at first glance. She said, "The couple has been together for ten years, and it turns out that you have always had two hearts; it's not about money, it's about making your son hate me every month when he receives money." [2]^{p137} These are two sentences. These two sentences have no logical relationship, at least she should not jump directly from criticizing Chen Changjie to criticizing Mingliang. Liu Zhenyun is truly "one sentence is worth ten thousand words". The word "two hearts" can reveal Qin Jiaying's thoughts. If she treated Ming Liang as a family, how could she said that Chen Changjie had two hearts? This was a stepmother who wanted her husband to abandon all those who only took care of herself and her daughter, so she used the word "two hearts" to express her dissatisfaction. The second sentence also said that Liang Liang would hate herself. She knew her actions would not be favored by a stepson, so she would use the word hate. Later, she said, "From now on, if you don't have money to send to your son, your son can't hate me anymore." [2]^{p137} This gave her an opportunity to always make Chen Changjie lean towards her side. If she really didn't want Ming Liang to hate her, then she should have asked Chen Changjie to continue supporting him in his studies. So Chen Changjie's life at his home in Wuhan was also lackluster. If we were to tell who the most miserable person in the book was, it must be Chen Changjie. In his early years, he was criticized for hanging a cherry, and his second marriage had no autonomy. Before he died, he lost his hard-earned money and had to watch the eyes of Qin Jiaying's mother and daughter in the hospital bed. He had no energy in his life.

5. CONCLUSION

The title of the book "Laughter and Tears: A Novel" has nothing to do with either Hua Erniang's pursuit of jokes or Cherry's own fate; It has nothing to do with Ma Xiaomeng's childhood experience, nor with the ending of Chen Changjie's later years with empty money. The official appearance of the four words "一日三秋 (yī rì sān qiū)" refers to the time when Ming Liang was searching for the jujube wood in front of his grandmother's courtyard. The antique collector Lao Jing wanted to carve something on the door plaque, but unfortunately, the wood was not enough to carve auspicious words like "prosperity" and "auspiciousness and good

luck" that many people have thought of. One guest said that carving "一日三秋". When explaining, he said, "Living here for a day is better than living elsewhere for three years." [2]^{p264} In the novel, it is also mentioned that a person lives for only a few moments, and the values conveyed in this article are those who live happily in a place.

"The title of 'Laughter and Tears: A Novel' includes the relationship between people: not seeing each other in a day, as if it were three autumns apart, as well as the relationship between people and things: placing it in a living room, interpreting it as staying here for a day, as if staying for three years; hanging it in a restaurant, interpreting it as eating once, can think for three years; talking about a joke, interpreting it as telling a joke, can laugh for three years." [5] Jokes are the eyes of books. Jokes carry laughter, as well as blood, tears, and bitterness. The various aspects of life are just like jokes. Facing the hardships of life with a smile on one's face, learning humor through hardships, and using a joyful way to relieve the cage in one's heart may be the way out in various survival conditions.

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