

YŪGAO

The Twilight Beauty



The *yūgao* ("twilight beauty"; more literally, "evening face") is a vine that the chapter introduces this way: "A bright green vine, its white flowers smiling to themselves, was clambering merrily over what looked like a board fence." Near the start of the chapter a mysterious woman sends Genji a fan to go with some *yūgao* flowers that he has just had picked. Written on the fan he finds a poem:

*"At a guess I see that you may indeed be he: the light silver dew
brings to clothe in loveliness a twilight beauty flower."*

He answers:

*"Let me then draw near and see whether you are she, whom glimmering dusk
gave me faintly to discern in twilight beauty flowers."*

RELATIONSHIP TO EARLIER CHAPTERS

The story in "The Twilight Beauty" begins in the summer when Genji is seventeen and continues up to the tenth month. Genji seems to have been inspired to pursue both Utsusemi and Yūgao by the "rating women on a rainy night" conversation in "The Broom Tree."

PERSONS

- Genji, a Captain in the Palace Guards, age 17
- Genji's nurse, the Dazaifu Deputy's wife, now a nun (Daini no Menoto)
- Koremitsu, Genji's foster brother and confidant
 - The Adept, Koremitsu's elder brother
 - A young woman, about 19 (Yūgao)
 - The lady of the cicada shell (Utsusemi)
 - The daughter of the Iyo Deputy (Nokiba no Ogi)
 - The Iyo Deputy (Iyo no Suke)
 - The Rokujō Haven, widow of a former Heir Apparent (Rokujō no Miyasudokoro)
 - Chūjō, a gentlewoman in the Rokujō Haven's service
 - Ukon, Yūgao's nurse
 - The steward
 - His son, a member of the Palace Guards
 - The Secretary Captain, Genji's friend and brother-in-law (Tō no Chūjō)
 - His wife, daughter of the Minister of the Right (Shi no Kimi)
 - His daughter with Yūgao, the "pink," 3 (Tamakazura)
 - A Doctor, Genji's former teacher